

FOR RELEASE  
May 5, 2016

## **Mental Wellness Strategy released with support of First Nations, mental health group**

WHITEHORSE—Health and Social Services Minister Mike Nixon along with Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie, Kwanlin Dün Chief Doris Bill and Mental Health Association Yukon vice-chair Kim Solonick today released Forward Together: Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy.

"Together with our First Nation and community partners, we are taking action to improve the mental wellness and mental health of Yukon citizens," Nixon said. "I want to thank everyone who participated in the development of this strategy, which is the result of months of hard work and collaboration. We look forward to working together in the months ahead to implement the plan."

The 10-year strategy is a living document that will change over the coming decade as Yukon government continues to conduct research, adopt new practices and learn from experience. The strategy's immediate focus is on the next two years.

"The Kwanlin Dün First Nation is pleased to lend its support to this long overdue strategy," Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Doris Bill said. "The wellness of our citizens and residents, on all levels – including mental health – must be a priority. We are looking forward to a collaborative government-to-government effort in the next steps of planning and implementation of the mental wellness strategy."

Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Ruth Massie said: "The importance of community awareness and involvement to address community needs for mental health is significant. This strategy outlines the important work that needs to be done in the territory and offers realistic solutions by working together in a positive, collaborative approach to addressing mental wellness issues."

Mental Health Association Yukon vice-chair Kim Solonick said: "A collaborative mental health strategy is critical for the wellbeing of all Yukoners. Mental Health Association Yukon is committed to fully engaging with the Yukon government and other stakeholders on this living document."

Nixon added: "After meeting with multiple stakeholders and our First Nation partners, and after reviewing materials released locally and nationally, we identified three priorities: improving access; focusing on child, youth and family; and building community capacity through training and development. This will be our direction for the next 24 months."

A Mental Health Forum will take place next month. Details of the Mental Health Innovation fund will be forthcoming within the next few weeks. Criteria for this fund was also the subject of consultation with partners and stakeholders.

Learn more: Forward Together: Yukon Mental Wellness Strategy at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca).

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*News Release #16-172*



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