

March 2, 2006

BUILDING A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS) combines traditional and contemporary health and family healing services to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal communities. AHWS is a unique partnership between the Ontario government and 15 Aboriginal organizations, First Nations and Métis, serving Aboriginal peoples in Ontario residing on reserve and in urban/rural areas. The partnership ensures that Aboriginal peoples in Ontario have a direct say in services that are a priority for their communities. Programs and services are designed, delivered and managed by Aboriginal peoples.

AHWS Programs and Services

- Shelters for Aboriginal women and children seeking refuge from violence
- Crisis intervention programs in 47 remote First Nations communities to respond to risks to personal health or family well-being, such as youth suicide and family violence
- Aboriginal Health Access Centres to provide primary health care and other health services
- Community wellness programs that promote individual and family health and healing and work to reduce health and other risks to family and community well-being
- Healing lodges for Aboriginal people looking for traditional healing approaches to treatment for sexual assault, addictions and family violence
- Treatment centres for Aboriginal youth fighting addictions.

AHWS Investments

- The Ontario government's 2004 Budget provided an additional \$25 million to AHWS increasing the total provincial government investment to \$191.5 million over five years
- More than \$1.6 million to hire 31 new community wellness and crisis intervention workers
- More than \$1.4 million for new mental health demonstration projects
- \$400,000 for new healing, mental health and addiction services in Toronto
- \$150,000 to reinstate translator programs
- \$500,000 for northern/isolated communities to help manage costs associated with living in remote areas of Ontario.

AHWS Questionnaire Results

- 97 per cent of AHWS clients felt that the service they received either met or exceeded their expectations
- Over 90 per cent of AHWS clients said that services were provided in a timely manner
- Over 80 per cent of the people using AHWS programs and services said that they had gained new knowledge or skills
- 68 per cent of respondents experienced an improvement in their family situation.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs and Ontario Women's Directorate provide core funding for the Strategy, which was introduced in 1994. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds the Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, delivered by the Strategy since 2000.

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