



# Questions and Answers

## Youth Substance Use and Addictions Strategy August 2009

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### New Youth Substance Abuse and Addictions Treatment Program

#### **What types of service will the new treatment program offer?**

The provincial program will offer counseling, educational curriculum (for study continuity for in school youth, or building toward GED or school re-entry for out of school youth), life and coping skills development, problem gambling support, recreational activities, family and parental support and provision for supervised housing if required. The program will offer one-on-one treatment, group treatment and an individualized case process tailored to specific client needs. There will be a maximum of 10 youth participants for each 8-week program.

#### **Where will the treatment program be located?**

Planning groups recommended that the treatment program be located in a major urban area with a variety of recreational and service supports located nearby. The Charlottetown area was chosen by Government based on its high youth population within the city and surrounding areas and related service demands. A 4000 sq. foot section of the Royalty Centre off Enman Crescent in Charlottetown has been chosen by Government as the program delivery site.

#### **How will youth access the program?**

The program will accept 10 youth for each 8-week program throughout the year. Referrals to the Youth Day Treatment Program will be carried out through Youth Addiction Counsellors at Addiction Services sites across Prince Edward Island - Alberton, Summerside, Mt. Herbert, Montague or Souris. Assessment will be carried out by Counselors who will determine appropriate treatment plans for the individual which may include individual counseling, the day treatment program, mental health counseling, or residential programming.

Counselors first meet with youth to carry out an assessment to determine a treatment plan which may or may not include the 8-week day treatment program. Not all youth experiencing substance use challenges are appropriate to participate in the program and may be better served in their community or through alternative treatment approaches. Youth will be first assessed and counselled on an individual basis for appropriateness or readiness for referral to extended treatment programming.

During the assessment and initial treatment process, youth counsellors may work with other health professionals to determine the appropriate treatment approach to meet the individual and their family's needs. Staff at the Youth Day Treatment Program will not accept direct referrals for assessment, and will redirect referrals to appropriate Youth Addiction Services sites across the province.

**Aside from the new services being developed with the strategy, what services are currently available on PEI to support youth and families dealing with substance use and addiction?**

There is a range of treatment, prevention, education and early intervention efforts offered through addiction services, schools, hospitals, correctional services, and community groups across the province. Addiction service staff collaborate with schools, police, correctional services, community services, youth workers, community organizations, mental health services, and cultural group representatives for populations such as the aboriginal community. There are also youth focused detoxification services at the Provincial Addictions Treatment Facility in Mount Herbert.

The new programming effectively builds on the range of prevention, treatment and early intervention efforts already offered across the province. Youth assessed to be in need of residential care are referred to the Portage facility in Sussex, New Brunswick. Approximately 10 to 15 PEI youth are referred to the Portage facility each year.

**Public Awareness/ Education**

***How is the province working to educate youth and parents on the effects of alcohol and other drug use and abuse?***

Alcohol is the most highly abused drug on P.E.I. - with marijuana being second. Many other drugs, including prescription drugs, are being abused by lesser percentages of the population but remain critical in terms of prevention, education and treatment.

The Department of Health is building prevention, education and early intervention programming in collaboration with other government departments and communities across the Island. Key activities include establishing an annual community and government-based stakeholder forum, developing community-based prevention and education activities, building online information and interactive web-based resources for youth and parents and continuing to review and enhance school-based prevention, education and early intervention initiatives.

The Department of Health has hired a full time Provincial Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Coordinator to work with communities across PEI to develop collaborative strategies that support parents and youth affected by substance use and addiction challenges. Numerous community meetings continue to be held and presentations have been developed and are being scheduled to help guide parents and youth when dealing with substance use and addiction issues.

The Department of Health has also been successful in acquiring federal funding to hire two additional youth addiction counselors and an early intervention specialist to provide support communities during afternoons, evenings, and weekends. Hiring efforts are currently underway for these positions. These new roles are in addition to youth addiction counseling and family counseling at Addiction Service sites across the province. The work schedule will cover afternoon and evening support, one to nine p.m., seven days a week in a rotating schedule in communities across the province.

Over recent months, a newspaper, radio, television and internet youth substance use and addiction public awareness campaign was developed and initiated. The campaign features stories of three Island youth who are in recovery from substance abuse. Posters, brochures and information guides on various substance use issues (e.g. information guides, alcohol, marijuana, hallucinogens, crack/cocaine, and tobacco brochures are being developed and distributed across the province) for parents and youth. A new written guide for parents in development and the Prevention, Education, and Early

Intervention Coordinator has begun delivering presentations to parents and community groups to build a collaborative effort to help address the issue.

The public education campaign will continue to be developed and implemented through the coming months and years.

### ***What is currently happening?***

In March and April of 2009, a five-member program team was hired and began detailed development of all components of the 8-week day treatment program. Numerous program procedures/ guidelines, group and individual work are currently in development for various types of youth (e.g., aboriginal, justice clients, male/ female, or those with special needs) who may participate in the program.

A tender is being issued for renovations to the Royalty Centre in an area adjacent to space currently occupied by Canada Games staff. Some of the space Canada Games is utilizing in the building will be vacated in early October and will also be renovated for program delivery. It is anticipated that the program will begin accepting youth participants referred through Addiction Services in early November of this year.

Aside from youth and family counselors based at Addiction Service sites across the province, the province hired a new Provincial Prevention, Education and Early Intervention Coordinator in March of this year to begin development and implementation of media and community-based prevention and education activities. Several meetings have already been held with Islanders interested in becoming involved in this effort.

The province was recently successful in developing a proposal to receive federal funding for three additional community-based positions to support youth and families dealing with youth substance abuse. Positions include two full time youth addiction counselors and one early intervention specialist over the next three years. Recruitment efforts for these roles are underway and it is hoped the positions will be filled during August of 2009. The positions will cover afternoon and evening support, 1:00 to 9:00 p.m., seven days a week in a rotating schedule in communities across the province.

### **How did the strategy develop - who was involved in the planning ?**

Over the past two years, the P.E.I. Youth Substance Use and Addiction Strategy was developed through extensive research and planning done through a community and government-based advisory committee and three working groups. The strategy is lead by the Department of Health. Representatives from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Office of the Attorney General (Community and Correctional services), and Social Services and Seniors are represented on the planning committees as well as numerous municipal police, RCMP, aboriginal, and other community groups. The working groups meet regularly to develop recommendations for government in the areas of prevention, education, early intervention, treatment, counseling, and after care. The working groups consulted with experts in the addictions field, including representatives from the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse (CCSA), to examine best practices. They also studied treatment and prevention programs in all of the Atlantic provinces and across the country to provide initial recommendations for programming and services on PEI.

**How are other partner government departments connected to the strategy?**

The following three departments are represented on the strategy's Advisory Committee and are involved in a variety of department driven and collaborative initiatives associated with youth substance use and addiction.

**The Department of Education** offers a wide range of educational opportunities at various grade levels related to substance use or abuse, and positive lifestyle choices. The Department works closely with addiction services staff to help meet the needs of youth and families.

**The Office of the Attorney General/ Community and Correctional Services** is partnering with Justice Canada to develop programming which aims to support youth who are clients of the justice system or correctional services and who are also dealing with substance abuse challenges. The Department works closely with Addiction Services staff to support youth in this area.

**The Department of Social Services and Seniors** are developing a 30-bed facility to focus on residential needs of youth at risk.

**For further information contact:**

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