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News Release
Communiqué

September 13, 2005
For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR THE SIOUX LOOKOUT MENO-YA-WIN HEALTH CENTRE

SIOUX LOOKOUT, Ont - Roger Valley, Member of Parliament for Kenora, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of State (Public Health), and the Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long Term Care attended a ceremony today to celebrate the construction of the Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre. The project, half of which is being funded by the province of Ontario, is being made possible by a one-time federal contribution of $37.4 million to the Province.

“This contribution is just one step in the process, and the Government of Canada remains true to its commitments under the Four Party Agreement. We will continue to reinvest in the health of First Nations people in the Sioux Lookout Zone to ensure that it has in place health care services that are efficient, effective and sustainable,” said Mr. Valley on behalf of federal Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh.

"This contribution demonstrates Canada’s commitment in the 1997 Sioux Lookout Four Party Hospital Services Agreement. This is a prime example of how the Government of Canada is working in partnership with the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, the Province of Ontario, and the Municipality of Sioux Lookout to build the new, state-of-the-art Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre for residents in the Sioux Lookout area and its northern communities,” said Minister Bennett.

“We are extremely pleased to be working with the federal government, the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, the Municipality of Sioux Lookout, and the Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre to provide an integrated state-of-the-art hospital for residents of the area of Sioux Lookout and its northern communities,” said Smitherman. "Our government is committed to ensuring that every Ontario citizen has access to quality health care services, and this much needed First Nations’ Centre of Health Excellence is going to play a huge role in doing exactly that."

Mr. Smitherman designated Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre as a Centre of Excellence. He indicated that this is a crucial step that will enable Meno-Ya-Win to assume leadership in the development of culturally sensitive healthcare across Northwestern Ontario.

The Mayor of the Municipality of Sioux Lookout and representatives of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, who are signatories in the Four Party Agreement, were also on-hand to witness this important milestone.

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“The people of Nishnawbe Aski welcome the funding for the development of a new health facility, however the greatest need is for both levels of government to play an ongoing role in delivering quality health care to First Nation community members from the far North,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

“The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is pleased that the Federal Government will contribute $37.4 million for construction of the new Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre. This was achieved while keeping the 1997 Four Party Agreement intact. This contribution is very important to the construction of the new health centre in Sioux Lookout,” said Sioux Lookout Mayor Cathy Kiepek.

The commitment to build a new hospital comes from a Four-Party Agreement between Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, Canada, Ontario, and the Town of Sioux Lookout. Along with the federal contribution of $37.4 million, Ontario will provide half the capital funding for this new facility, including the $6.5 million Ontario has already provided to support the planning and design of this new facility.

The hospital plans to begin construction of the new facility in 2006-2007.

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