



News Release

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For immediate release

New report provides comprehensive overview of health indicators in northern Saskatchewan

Providing an overview of the health and living circumstances of the people of northern Saskatchewan, the ***Northern Saskatchewan Health Indicators Report 2011*** was released today by the province's three northern health authorities. Prepared by the Population Health Unit, which provides public health and population health services to the Athabasca Health Authority, the Keewatin Yatthe Health Region and the Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region, the report highlights community characteristics, explores determinants of health (those things that influence individual and community health and wellness), and offers indicators on the health status and well-being of the northern population. Information is provided for the three northern health authorities in comparison to Saskatchewan as a whole, to other northern regions in Canada, and how things are changing over time.

"It's encouraging to see that there has been some remarkable progress in the north in some conditions such as diarrheal and vaccine-preventable diseases," said Dr. James Irvine, medical health officer for the three northern health authorities. "While infant mortality is going down, and life expectancy is going up, disparities remain. In northern Saskatchewan, there are disproportionately high rates of injury, tobacco use, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections."

Many factors influence health. Dr. Irvine hopes that the 192 page document will serve as a catalyst for action to address challenges, while building on the strengths of our northern communities, partnerships, cultures and traditions. Previous health indicator reports for northern Saskatchewan were published in 1998 and 2004. These reports had been used extensively by northern health authorities and other organizations, agencies, and community groups.

"This report will be very useful for setting priorities and planning programs for our health services," said Ron Woytowich, Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority chair. "We are reminded of the need to work in partnership with other sectors, and advocate for improvements in northern social and economic conditions, since we know that these can have impacts on health."

The full report, as well as a four-page summary, is available for download on the Population Health Unit website: www.populationhealthunit.ca

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