



November 27, 2007

**More than 600 families benefit from provincial drug treatment program**

*Edmonton...* A review of AADAC services provided under the new legislation to protect youth abusing drugs shows that more than 600 families have benefited from the drug treatment program.

The report found that almost half of the youth served under the *Protection of Children Abusing Drug Act* (PChAD) continued on to voluntary treatment after being discharged. As well, more than half of the youth in the program reported an improvement in their quality of life one month after discharge, notably in the areas family relationships and physical health.

“The results of the PChAD evaluation confirm the importance of government, community and families working together for Alberta’s youth,” said AADAC Chair, Harvey Cenaiko. “It is encouraging to see that this program has been successful in connecting youth and families to the treatment they need to better their lives. Without this legislation many of these youth would not have sought the valuable treatment available at AADAC.”

Overall results of the evaluation showed that PChAD is successful in providing another option to parents/guardians in their efforts to support youth dealing with substance abuse issues. The evaluation showed that:

- From July 1, 2006, to August 31, 2007, there were 618 admissions into PChAD programs.
- About half (49 per cent) of youth who participated in the evaluation sought voluntary treatment when they were discharged.
- More than half (58 per cent) of youth reported an improvement in their quality of life one month after discharge, especially in the areas of family relationships and physical health.
- Although most parents and guardians (81 per cent) perceived that five days is too short, most youth (86 per cent) thought this was too long for the program.
- Results show that the more involved the parent or guardian is in the treatment plan process and follow-up services, the higher his or her satisfaction with PChAD services.

The *Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act* came into effect on July 1, 2006. An evaluation of PChAD services was conducted in 2006-07 by AADAC and research partner Pivotal Research. [The full summary report, is available by visiting www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com)

AADAC is an agency of the Government of Alberta and reports to the Minister of Health and Wellness. It operates and funds services in 51 communities throughout the province that address problems related to alcohol, other drugs and gambling, and undertakes related addictions research.

- 30 -

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## **PChAD Overview:**

Under PChAD, a parent or a guardian of a child who is using alcohol and/or other drugs in a way that severely endangers themselves or others can apply to the Provincial Courts to have the child placed in a protective safe house for up to five days. During this court-ordered confinement, AADAC provides detoxification services, assessment for the abuse of drugs and alcohol, and works with the child and parent/guardian to develop a voluntary treatment plan that can be used after the child leaves the protective safe house. There are various options for continued treatment, depending on the client's specific circumstance and needs. Some of these include outpatient counselling, intensive day treatment or a stay at a residential centre for treatment.

In 2006, AADAC received \$14 million from the Alberta government to develop programs to support the legislation. Protective safe houses were opened in five locations: Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, and Picture Butte. AADAC addictions counsellors provide client-centred assessment services, guardian support and, where possible, further treatment planning. AADAC supervises detoxification and assessment in the protective safe house environment that often results in the child and family becoming engaged in the treatment process. AADAC has contracts with McMan Youth Family & Community Services and Hull Child & Family Services to operate the protective safe houses.

## **STATISTICS**

Admissions: From July 1, 2006, to August 31, 2007, there were 618 admissions into PChAD protective safe house sites. Of these admissions 498 youth received one PChAD order while 120 youth received more than one order. Of the 120 youth some may have received one additional order while a small number of youth have received up to five orders. Reasons for subsequent orders vary and include youth relapse, parents wanting longer mandatory detoxification/ support and youth high risk lifestyles.

Client Profile: Assessments found youth admitted to the program have significant problems with their alcohol and drug use. Based on 498 client self-reports, clients were:

- 45 per cent male and 55 per cent female
- 56 per cent between 12 – 15 years old
- 44 per cent between 16 – 17 years old
- 58 per cent were still in school, 42 per cent were not in school

Substances Used: Youth admitted to a protective safe house are asked to identify the substances they have used one or more times in the past 12 months. Based on youth self-reports, the majority of youth used more than one substance concurrently:

- 98 per cent drank alcohol
- 96 per cent smoked marijuana
- 57 per cent used cocaine
- 73 per cent used psychedelics
- 18 per cent used crystal methamphetamine
- 91 per cent smoked tobacco

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**Referrals to Voluntary AADAC Services**

343 youth have chosen to continue with AADAC's treatment services and 449 family members have been involved in the treatment process.

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