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**YUKON GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY WELLNESS COURT**

Whitehorse – Justice Minister Marian C. Horne announced today that a Community Wellness Court will be officially opened this afternoon by Territorial Court Judge Karen Ruddy. The Yukon and federal governments committed \$609,000 toward the establishment of this innovative initiative under the Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan.

“Establishing the Community Wellness Court is part of the Yukon government’s commitment to integrate a therapeutic problem-solving court into the Yukon justice system. Offenders with challenges such as addictions, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), or mental health problems will now be able to work with the court to address their treatment needs,” Horne said.

Offenders who are willing to participate may be eligible for a comprehensive treatment plan that includes court-supervised substance abuse treatment, random drug testing, incentives and sanctions, clinical case management and social services support.

“We are committed to helping those who wish to participate in improving their lives,” Horne added.

The Community Wellness Court will evolve and adapt over time, through regular community input from local non-government organizations, First Nations and service providers.

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