

Drug Treatment Courts Receive Additional Funding

For immediate release, May 29, 2003: The Toronto Drug Treatment Court and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) join together in applauding the announcement made today by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Martin Cauchon and the Minister of Health Anne McLellan, that the Government of Canada will provide additional funding for Canadian Drug Treatment Courts.

“The funding announced today demonstrates the Federal Government’s commitment to an innovative response to drug related crime and substance use problems,” said Brian Parris, Co-Chair of the Toronto Drug Treatment Court’s Community Advisory Committee.

The Toronto Drug Treatment Court (TDTC) is a voluntary program that provides court-supervised treatment for people addicted to cocaine or heroin, who have been charged with drug offenses involving those substances. Clients who complete the program receive a non-custodial sentence instead of the incarceration that they would normally be facing. The majority of clients have a long history of involvement with drugs and the criminal justice system.

The TDTC is in its fifth year of operation and the preliminary results of the ongoing evaluation indicate that the program is a promising form of intervention for a population with multiple, highly complex needs. There has been a noticeable decrease in drug use and re-offending amongst participants. The program consists of a combination of regular court appearances, judicially supervised treatment and an extensive community based support network.

“Toronto Drug Treatment Court offers some of the most difficult-to-reach members of our society an opportunity to turn their lives around. Drug Treatment Courts must be seriously considered as part of a comprehensive National Drug Strategy,” said Dr. Paul Garfinkel, CAMH President and C.E.O.

The TDTC was the first Drug Treatment Court outside of the United States and has developed a model of service delivery that has been replicated by numerous other countries including Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand and Scotland. Drug Treatment Courts are an important tool in maintaining public safety while addressing the treatment and social needs of offenders.

CAMH is a Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization Collaborating Centre and a teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto.

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