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**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT TO FUND FLEXIBLE LENGTH WITHDRAWAL
MANAGEMENT BEDS FOR PEOPLE WITH METHAMPHETAMINE USE DISORDER**

**Announcement Further Expands Treatment Options
Available to Manitobans: Friesen**

Manitoba has signed on to the Government of Canada's Emergency Treatment Fund, increasing funding to establish flexible length withdrawal management and recovery beds, and establish mobile clinical support services in Winnipeg and Brandon that are appropriate for people who use methamphetamine.

The announcement was made today at the Crisis Response Centre in Winnipeg by Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen and International Trade Diversification Jim Carr, and member of Parliament for Winnipeg South Centre on behalf of Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, Canada's minister of health.

"While opioid-related overdoses continue to have a devastating impact, Manitoba has also faced the challenge of rising rates of problematic methamphetamine use," said Carr. "This bilateral agreement will facilitate and increase access to essential treatment services in Manitoba, services tailored to help people with problematic substance use. We must continue to work in a comprehensive and collaborative way to address substance use and to help Canadians access treatment and supports."

"Manitoba has responded to the unique challenge that methamphetamine use presents to our communities with a number of initiatives including the opening of five Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinics," said Friesen. "Collaborating with our federal partners will further expand the treatment options available to Manitobans, providing them the right care at the right time."

Typically, individuals access withdrawal management and recovery beds for seven to 10 days. People with meth addiction require longer, more flexible periods of withdrawal management and recovery; often up to 30 days. The creation of flexible length withdrawal and recovery beds to specifically help those suffering from meth addictions was recommended in the Virgo report, which outlined a mental health and addictions strategy for Manitoba.

The bilateral agreement provides nearly \$4.2 million in matching funding, to be used by March 2023, to Manitoba under the federal government's Emergency Treatment Fund. The funding will be used to address this recommendation, with a local agency or agencies contracted to provide the service.

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Prairie Mountain Health will issue a request for proposals (RFP) in the new year to address the need for withdrawal and clinical support services for meth users. This will include a call to create mobile withdrawal services. Similar to a program used in B.C., the plan calls for those with addiction to be placed in open treatment bed spaces at addiction treatment centres,

with mobile teams providing daily support to these individuals. These teams would typically include a nurse and addictions worker.

The tendering process is anticipated to be complete in the spring, with the service expected to begin operations thereafter. The minimum number of people expected to benefit from these additional withdrawal management services annually is 130 people.

“Today’s federal and provincial investments for withdrawal management addiction treatment and recovery beds are a major step in improving the quality and options of care for Manitobans struggling with methamphetamine addictions,” said Dr. Jitender Sareen, medical director, mental health program, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. “This important new resource will fill a well-recognized gap in our system, and enhance Manitoba’s capacity to provide evidence-based mental health and addiction treatment.”

Manitoba has initiated a number of measures this year to address the growing problem of substance use disorder. Those measures include:

- the opening of five RAAM clinics throughout the province, streamlining the system and providing access to primary care for Manitobans struggling with substance use;
- adding six mental health inpatient beds at Health Science Centre Winnipeg;
- doubling the number of women’s treatment beds to 24 from 12, at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba’s Portage Avenue site;
- equipping paramedics with olanzapine to treat agitated patients at risk of developing meth psychosis; and
- issuing a request for proposals from local residential addictions facilities to treat people with co-existing addiction and mental health issues, allowing them to stay closer to home and their support network.

“We believe the creation of flexible length withdrawal beds, as well as accompanying clinical support services, to treat people recovering from meth addiction will make a meaningful difference as we all work together to respond to the sharp rise in use of this devastating drug in our communities,” said Friesen.

For more information on the Emergency Treatment Fund, go online to:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/problematic-prescription-drug-use/opioids/responding-canada-opioid-crisis/emergency-treatment-fund.html>