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CHANGE NNAAP PROGRAM INTO AN INITIATIVE WHICH RELATES TO THE CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY PROBLEMS OF INDIAN-INUIT PEOPLE.

The National Native Alcohol Abuse Program (NNAAP) was established in 1975 as a joint venture by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Department of National Health and Welfare as a response to the increasing problem of alcohol abuse in Indian and Inuit communities.

Critical Problems: All Native leaders agree that their most critical community problems result from alcohol abuse. Fully one-third of all deaths among Status Indians and Inuit are alcohol related, while over 60% of the Indian "children in care" arrive in that situation as a direct result of alcohol abuse. Total costs attributable to Indian and Inuit alcohol abuse approach \$150 million per year. The social costs are inestimable. This is the harsh reality which so many Non-Native people cannot appreciate, and from which the disabled Indian and Inuit person cannot escape.

Devastating Impact: Alcohol abuse is only symptomatic of deeper problems in Indian and Inuit communities. The impact of modern Canadian society has been devastating. People have become dislocated from

family and friends. Juvenile crime, child neglect, social tension and communicable diseases have become major social problems. Unfortunately, many Indian and Inuit people turn to alcohol as an escape from a grim future. Alcohol is a major and increasing cause of handicap and disability, especially among children who are born with fetal alcohol syndrome.



Changes Needed: The NNAAP program was designed to help communities counter the debilitating effects of alcohol abuse. Conceptually, the program is sound, but it requires major changes in its terms of reference, its organization and its administration in order to be more effective.

- **Confusion:** There is confusion at this time over who should receive support from this program and for what reasons. For example, even though it is called "Native" it does not include Non-Status Indians or Metis within its mandate; nor does it fund projects in the field of drug abuse, gas-sniffing, or glue-sniffing.
- **Complaints:** There have been complaints that the program is preoccupied with unrealistic evaluation criteria. In other words, the expectations on the part of Government officials have been very high, yet no reasonable yardstick has been developed to determine what would constitute a "success". This puts considerable pressure on the program organizers because they do not really know how it is that they are expected to justify further Government spending.
- **Inflexibility:** The program lacks flexibility in administration. For example, moneys are given out strictly on a single year basis—and are restricted to specific kinds of expenditures. This means that the local projects cannot be