



National Aboriginal Diabetes Association – Press Release 2/24/10

Government Remains Mute Regarding Future of the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative

With the sunset date for the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) rapidly approaching, the government has yet to confirm whether or not funding will continue after March 31st.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The ADI provides critical funding for community-led diabetes prevention and management programs and services to over 600 Aboriginal communities across Canada, where diabetes has reached epidemic levels.

Without a financial commitment from the federal government to renew the ADI, funding for grassroots national organizations like the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association (NADA), who develop culturally relevant diabetes prevention and management resources, will terminate.

Any termination of ADI funding will also have a devastating impact on the 600 Aboriginal communities working to combat the diabetes epidemic. Programs and services that are essential in bringing a halt to this deadly disease will cease to operate without ADI funding.

The diabetes epidemic will only get worse.

THE IMPACT OF DIABETES AMONG ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The prevalence of diabetes among Aboriginal communities in Canada has reached alarming levels:

- Aboriginal Peoples' risk of developing type 2 diabetes is 3 to 5 times higher than non-Aboriginal Canadians
- Aboriginal People living with diabetes have increased rates of heart disease, kidney disease, blindness, infectious disease and amputations
- Over 20 per cent of the Aboriginal population is now living with diabetes
- Most disturbing is that Aboriginal teens and children are now being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes – a situation virtually unheard of in the general Canadian population

Across Canada, Aboriginal People simply do not have the same access to physicians, specialists and hospitals as most other Canadians do. The ADI distributes critical funding so that Aboriginal People living with diabetes can access programs and services to assist them in properly managing their condition within their home communities.

WHAT IS NEEDED



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The current diabetes public health emergency can only be halted through properly funded Aboriginal community-based programs and services.

NADA is asking for a commitment by the government to renew funding for the ADI so that diabetes prevention and management programs can continue and expand in Aboriginal communities throughout Canada.

A commitment by the federal government to renew the ADI could:

- Continue with programs and services for those living with diabetes and pre-diabetes
- Translate research into practical applications for managing diabetes for both health care professionals and people living with diabetes
- Meet the specific and cultural needs of populations at risk
- Establish annual and multi-year targets in a number of clearly defined areas
- Develop a culturally relevant Aboriginal Youth Diabetes Prevention Strategy

There must be transparency from the government, whereby plans for the future of its critical programs are made clear.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

The sunset date for the ADI is March 31st, yet there has been no clear answer regarding its future.

The ADI was established with the aim of reducing the incidences and prevalence of diabetes among Aboriginal communities, and while considerable progress has been made, there still remains much more to do.

The federal government must continue its commitment to Aboriginal People living with diabetes by renewing the ADI.

Sincerely,

Dina Bruyere B.A., LL.B.
Executive Director
National Aboriginal Diabetes Association
174 Hargrave Street
Winnipeg, MB. R3C 3N2

Ph: 204-927-1220
Fax: 204-927-1222
Email: dbruyere@nada.ca