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For Immediate Release

Process under way to take over child welfare services

The Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) is developing a plan that will eventually see the transfer of child welfare services from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to the Nunatsiavut Government.

“For years the Nunatsiavut Government has recognized the need to explore the devolution of child protection services from the provincial government,” notes Health and Social Development Minister Gerald Asivak. “We have made considerable progress in many areas, to the point where we feel we now have the capacity to move forward with taking over these vital services.”

Section 17.5 of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement allows the Nunatsiavut Government to make laws in Labrador Inuit Lands and in Labrador Inuit communities in relation to social, family, youth and children’s services.

DHSD has had success in moving forward with some aspects of child welfare including: participation in the Inuit child welfare review; implementation of the Family Connections Program (prevention and intervention); foster home recruitment/retention; and supervised access for families with children in care. There is ongoing work with the provincial Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development regarding policy development, training and education, data sharing and implementation of the Child Youth Advocate’s Report – *A Long Wait for Change*.

Once developed, the plan will be presented to the Nunatsiavut Executive Council for approval prior to any negotiations with the provincial and federal governments on the devolution of child welfare services. The goal is to have the services transferred within three years.

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