

Manitoba Addictions Awareness Week

The Cost of Substance Use:

A recent study (2002) released by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), has revealed that:

- **Substance abuse in Manitoba and across Canada has risen dramatically**
- The total annual cost of substance abuse in Canada is \$39.8 billion, which represents a cost of \$1,267 to each individual Canadian
- Substance abuse is defined for the purposes of this study as **"what occurs when substance abuse results in death and illness that impose an economic cost on society"**

The CCSA study indicated that for us in Manitoba that:

- The total annual cost of alcohol, illegal drugs and tobacco use is an estimated **\$324 million**, which represents a cost of **\$281** to each individual in Manitoba
- Our province is now ranked **seventh** out of **thirteen** provinces and territories regarding the costs of substance abuse to the provincial economy

The CCSA study indicates that **80% of the costs of Substance abuse in Canada are related to alcohol and tobacco**. The cost break down is as follows:

- Tobacco imposes the greatest cost at 17 billion (42.7%)
- Alcohol accounts for 14.6 billion (36.6%)
- Illegal drugs (marijuana, cocaine, etc) costs \$8.2 billion (20.7%)
- These costs are directly related to **health-care costs**, as well as **overdoses, accidents and related illness**. Other costs include **missed work and law enforcement**
- The survey results suggest that the increase in alcohol-related death and illness may be related to **changes in patterns of use**. The survey noted that more Canadians drink at **levels associated with greater risk** (more than five drinks on an occasion)

Also noted in the study was the number of Canadian deaths attributed to different substances.

- **An estimated 37,209 Canadians died from tobacco use**. Cancer was the leading cause of death (17,679) followed by cardiovascular disease (10,853) and respiratory disease (8282). Tobacco-related deaths resulted in 515,607 years of life lost.
- **A total of 4,258 deaths were attributed to alcohol**. Cirrhosis was the leading cause of death (1,246) followed by motor vehicle collisions (909) and alcohol related suicides (603). Alcohol related deaths resulted in 191,136 potential years of life lost.
- **A total of 1,695 Canadians died as a result of illegal drug use**. The leading causes of death were overdose (958), drug-attributed suicide (295), drug-attributed hepatitis C infection (165), and HIV infection (87). Deaths related to illegal drug use resulted in 62,110 years of life lost. Although less Canadians die from illegal drug use more are younger people, and so the impact is more in terms of life lost.