

## **ADDICTIONS FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA REPORTS :**

### **THE COST OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE HAS REACHED RECORD LEVELS**

(**Winnipeg** – April 26, 2006) – A new cost study partnered by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), and several other federal and provincial organizations has revealed that substance abuse in Manitoba and across Canada is significant and has risen dramatically. The study, released today by the CCSA, reports that substance abuse in terms of its direct impact on health care and criminal justice costs and its indirect toll on productivity resulting from premature death and disability has increased nationally from \$18.5 billion in 1992 to \$39.8 billion in 2002. Manitoba is now ranked seventh out of thirteen provinces and territories regarding the costs of substance abuse to the provincial economy.

John Borody, Chief Executive Officer, AFM says, “The total annual cost of alcohol, illegal drugs and tobacco abuse in Manitoba is now estimated at \$324 million (based on 2002 data), which represents a cost of \$281 to each individual in Manitoba”.

There is no doubt that costs have risen and that problems linked to substance abuse loom larger today than they did ten years ago. Cost comparisons with Canada’s first cost study (based on 1992 data) are difficult and it is therefore incorrect to say that costs have doubled. Some of the explanations for the increase are due to Canada’s growing and aging population, the tragic increase in overdoses, the inclusion of Hepatitis C and HIV, as well as the changing patterns of substance abuse including heavy drinking.

#### ***The study reveals that:***

Overall health care costs attributed to **Alcohol abuse** in Manitoba account for nearly \$114 million and an estimated 30% of all recorded criminal offences are attributable to alcohol at a cost of \$28.5 million.

**Illegal drug costs** in Manitoba cost the health care system nearly \$35 million with 22.1% of recorded criminal offences attributable to illegal drug use at a cost of \$24.5 million.

**Tobacco** imposes the greatest cost to the Manitoba health care system with just over \$175 million in direct and indirect costs.

*(For a detailed breakdown on the estimated costs, including regional analysis, please refer to the Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada, <http://www.ccsa.ca/CCSA/EN/TopNav/Home/>)*

The data supports Manitoba being one of the provincial leaders with its tough anti-drunk driving legislation. Although we have made some strides in this area, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba says alcohol was more of a problem in 2002 than it was in 1992. Increases in alcohol-attributed deaths and illness over the past decade can be linked to changes in patterns of use, including consumption of five or more drinks on a single occasion.

John Borody says, “Given the fact that 80% of costs of substance abuse are attributed to alcohol and tobacco indicates a clear need for greater attention to alcohol policy by government and other stakeholders”. Borody adds, “In fact, when you compare the costs of substance abuse with the costs related to heart disease or cancer, the urgency for action is evident”. The estimated National direct health care costs of substance abuse for 2002 amount to \$8.8 billion and are higher than either the direct health care costs of Cardio Vascular Disease (\$7.3 billion) or cancer (\$2.7 billion).

***To arrange an interview, please contact:***

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### **About the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba**

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba has been enhancing the health of Manitobans for the past 50 years by reducing the harm and addressing the impact of alcohol, other drugs and gambling through leadership in education, prevention, rehabilitation and research

[www.afm.mb.ca](http://www.afm.mb.ca)