



News Release

For Immediate Release

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MANY ADDICTS NOT GETTING TREATMENT: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) Up to 90% of the people estimated by the province to need addiction treatment may not be getting it, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2008 Annual Report*, released today.

McCarter noted that “there are lots of reasons for this: in some cases, the services are not readily available; in other cases, service providers don’t know who needs treatment, and, often, addicts just don’t ask for help.”

The Report looked at programs treating substance-abuse and problem-gambling addictions, which cost \$129 million in the 2006/07 fiscal year. Some of the problems it found included long waiting lists, funding inequities, and not enough local treatment services for young addicts.

The audit also found that while the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the province’s Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) aimed to provide addiction treatment as close as possible to the client’s home, they sent about 200 youths for treatment outside Canada, at an average cost of \$40,000 each, between 2004/05 and 2007/08.

Among the Auditor General’s recommendations:

- The Ministry should work to “better identify the population needing treatment for addictions” and develop approaches that will “encourage individuals with addictions to seek the necessary treatment services.”
- The Ministry and the LHINs need to better understand why some regions get as little funding as \$3 per capita while others get as much as \$41.

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