

## Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN)

### Follow-ups from the meeting held on May 29, 2023, regarding the Main Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2024

#### Cost of Safer Inhalation Kits

**MP Vidal:** My second question is also pretty simple as well. I have a picture here that was sent to me by a constituent. It's a picture of a package of stuff that was found on the ground outside a service station in my riding. What it is, it's a Ziploc bag with a Canada flag, an Indigenous Services of Canada logo that's identified as a safer inhalation meth kit. My question is really simple in regards to the estimates. Can you tell me how much was spent on these kits last year in Canada? What is the plan in these estimates for how much we're going to spend on these kits in the coming year.

**Minister Hajdu:** We can get back to you, MP Vidal, what an estimated cost for safer inhalation kit would cost. I can tell you that it will be enormously cheaper than the treatment of a variety of different infection diseases from using contaminated inhalation kits.

#### Response:

ISC does not have a national initiative or program related to safe inhalation meth kits. Rather, the Department works with partners and communities to fund activities that respond to the unique mental wellness needs and priorities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.

Eligible activities can include harm reduction approaches, such as safer inhalation kits which are a cost effective harm reduction approach. Safer inhalation kits are one measure to prevent the spread of Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections (STBBIs), as people who use crystal meth and/or crack are at greater risk of contracting/transmitting HIV and Hep C.

In ISC Saskatchewan Region, First Nations communities requested that the Department coordinate the purchase and distribution of safer inhalation kits for crystal meth through funds allocated to addressing increasing rates of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. In 2022-23, ISC Saskatchewan Region spent approximately \$23,000 on safer inhalation kits for crystal meth, with a per kit cost of \$2.76. In 2023-24, it is anticipated that approximately \$20,000 will be spent by ISC First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Saskatchewan Region for the purpose of safer inhalation kits for crystal meth.