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INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ESTIMATING THE AVOIDABLE COSTS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE


Prevention Treatment Enforcement Harm Reduction

Canada's Drug Strategy
Working together to reduce
the harmful use of substances

International Guidelines for Estimating the Avoidable Costs of Substance Abuse

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Canada's Drug Strategy
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Presentation key features

- Purpose of the presentation
- Developing guidelines for estimating the avoidable costs of substance abuse; an international initiative
- What are avoidable costs?
- Why estimate avoidable costs?
- Key features of the proposed guidelines
- Current status and next steps

Purpose of this presentation

- Inform CICAD member states of the availability of new international guidelines, including proposed methodologies, for estimating avoidable costs of substance abuse
- Inform CICAD member states of the need to “pilot” these new proposed guidelines

An international initiative

- Health Canada has convened an international group of experts for developing avoidable cost guidelines
- Representatives from countries and organizations include:
Colombia, Switzerland, France, the European Union, United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Health Organization, CICAD, and Canada
- Two consultants, internationally recognized in the field of cost estimation, were hired to prepare the guidelines based on the input received from the group of international experts

What are avoidable costs?

- Estimates of the total costs of substance abuse comprise both avoidable and unavoidable costs
- Unavoidable costs comprise the costs which are currently borne relating to drug abuse in the past together with the costs incurred by the portion of the population whose level of drug consumption will continue to involve costs
- Avoidable costs are those costs which are amenable to public policy initiatives and behavioural changes

Why estimate avoidable costs?

- Avoidable cost estimates provide an indication of the benefits potentially available to a community as a whole as a result of directing public resources to specific policies, strategies and programs
- Avoidable cost estimates provide valuable economic information on the basis of which a more efficient allocation of resources could be achieved
- Avoidable cost estimates help to identify information gaps, to target problems, to identify potential solutions, effective strategies, policies and programs

Key features of these guidelines

- The objective of the guidelines for estimating the avoidable costs of substance abuse is to provide a methodological and data framework for analysis rather than rigidly prescribed methodologies
- Contextual information (objectives, benefits) and definition of concepts
- Proposed methodologies and related challenges
- Special considerations concerning developing countries
- Bibliography and appendixes, including WHO tables (e.g. health conditions attributable to substance abuse)

Current status and next steps

- Guidelines to be finalized in December 2005
- Implementation of pilots to test the proposed methodologies
- Publication on Health Canada and WHO Websites