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GOVERNMENT RECONSIDERS SOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOOD BASKET

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister has directed department officials to examine the food allowance under the social assistance income support program.

“I have asked the department to do three things: to develop a nutrition guide that will also provide advice on how to shop on a budget; to take a look at how the ‘food basket’ is calculated; and to examine how the food allowance can be linked to the Consumer Price Index,” Minister Glenn Hart said.

The minister lauded the Yukon Antipoverty Coalition for its work this week on the Family Food Challenge. Six families undertook to eat only what they could buy on the social assistance food allowance. The amount was specific to each family unit.

“We haven’t heard reports from all of them yet but I understand it was a challenge to eat nutritiously throughout the week,” Hart added.

The department has been working internally with a nutritionist to determine the appropriateness of the existing food allowance which is currently \$6.50 per day, per person, or \$49.60 per week.

“Social assistance is the last resort for individuals who have no other resources to fall back on, however, as a government we are committed to ensuring that our social safety net is adequate to keep people healthy and a nutritious diet is part of that,” Hart said.

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