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**New Act Opens Up Adoption Files Unless Vetoed**

WHITEHORSE – The new *Child and Family Services Act* will come into effect on April 30, 2010 and will include significant changes in how the Department of Health and Social Services deals with adoption disclosures.

“This new, progressive legislation will mean significant changes to the way the department delivers its programs for families and children,” Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said. “It reflects feedback and comments received from a variety of stakeholders over the past six years.”

The new legislation allows for more openness around adoption-related records, making it easier for birth parents and people who were adopted to find each other. However, in situations where they wish not be contacted, birth parents and children involved in previous adoptions can maintain confidentiality by filing a no-contact declaration.

“For adoptions finalized under the previous act, individuals who wish to maintain confidentiality must file a disclosure veto or no-contact declaration to prevent identifying information from being released through the birth registration or adoption order,” Hart said.

People wishing to file a disclosure veto or no-contact declaration have until April 29, 2010 to do so. After that, adopted people aged 19 or over and birth parents will be able to access their individual information.

“This section of the new act is progressive and up-to-date, meeting best practices in place in some jurisdictions across the country,” Hart added.

A national advertising campaign as well as contact with other adoption agencies across the country will be used to inform birth parents and adoptees of their options.

-30-

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