



News Release

For Immediate Release
April 23, 2010

Education, Health and Fiscal Discipline: The 2010-11 Budget

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI -- A plan to improve education and health care services combined with a high degree of fiscal discipline forms the backdrop of the 2010-11 budget plan, says Provincial Finance and Municipal Affairs Minister Wes Sheridan.

“Although the global economy has suffered from recession, Prince Edward Island has managed quite well over the last two years,” Minister Sheridan said.

The plan to move kindergarten to the public school system as a full-day program – and supports for early childhood education – are some of the central planks in the budgetary plan.

Highlights include:

- This Budget will result in a deficit for the 2010-11 year of \$54.9 million – an improvement of over \$30 million from last year’s Budget. This represents a significant positive shift in the trajectory of the Province’s finances.
- An additional \$13.6 million will be invested in early learning and education to build opportunities for Island children.
- As kindergarten moves into the public school system as a full-day program, Government’s investment in that crucially important sector will rise from \$3.2 million to \$10 million this fiscal year.
- After too many years of neglect, new funding of \$2.5 million plus additional kindergarten-related savings will be invested in the Early Childhood Sector, which will help to maintain child care spaces and improve services for children.
- In keeping with Government’s commitment to the safety of children, an additional 51 school buses will be purchased – equipped with safety seats for new kindergarten students, like the 100 buses

already purchased over the past two years.

- Government's total commitment to post-secondary education will increase by over \$9 million this fiscal year – from \$80 million to more than \$89 million.
- Health care investments will rise by \$24 million – reflecting Government's understanding that this system must continually modernize and improve.
- Spending on home care will increase to a total of \$13 million.
- Funding for drug programs will increase by over \$1.3 million – and forecast savings of \$1.2 million from new generic drugs will be reinvested in the program.
- A further \$938,000 will be invested in the new Provincial Stroke Care Model, which increases funding to an annual total of \$2.1 million.

In addition to new emergency room staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, additional funding of \$400,000 will be provided to improve ground ambulance services and for a new community paramedicine pilot project.

Government is continuing its plan to attract new physicians to the Province, increasing investment in the highly successful Family Medical Residency Program by over \$600,000 to a total of \$1.5 million.

Working with the Federal Government, nearly \$10 million in new funding will be provided in agriculture over the next four years, to assist producers to reduce input costs, introduce new crops and enhance competitiveness.

In recognition of its 100th anniversary, \$65,000 will be provided to the Women's Institute to support recruitment and promotional efforts.

Plans to encourage rationalization within the lobster industry will continue, as demonstrated by the \$3 million already invested in sustainability measures.

Through the Office of Energy Efficiency, Government will invest \$1.5 million in programs to assist Islanders in making their homes more energy efficient.

Social supports for Islanders in need will increase, particularly through a \$270,000 increase in shelter allowances.

The Budget documents are available at Island Information Service, Jones Building, 11 Kent Street, or at www.gov.pe.ca/budget

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