

Grassy Narrows Mercury Care Home Agreement

Frequently Asked Questions.

SUMMARY

On April 2, 2020 Grassy Narrows First Nation secured a written contract from Canada to provide the full funding required to build a Mercury Care Home in the community following Grassy Narrows' design.

WHAT IS IN THE AGREEMENT?

- a. \$19.5M to build the Mercury Home based on Grassy Narrows' conceptual design and cost estimate.
- b. Commitment to fund federal services at the Mercury Home long-term, based on Grassy's plan.
- c. The Minister will meet the Chief 14 days after the federal budget to put a \$ figure on services funding based on Grassy Narrows' plan.
- d. The Minister will seek authority from Cabinet or Treasury Board to give services operations funding to Grassy Narrows through a 30 year up front payment or trust.
- e. The Minister will seek authority to fund services that are not Federal and not Provincial.

WHAT IS NOT?

- a. There is no \$ amount for services funding until after the federal budget (see c. above).
- b. Cabinet approval is needed before service operations funding will be put in a trust or 30-year up front payment (see d. above).
- c. Some services may require Ontario's support and that is not secure yet (although the NW LHIN has committed in a letter to provide required physician services).

d. The funds will not flow until later funding agreements, committed to in the agreement, are completed.

IS THIS AGREEMENT ENFORCEABLE?

Any government that does not live up to their full promises to Grassy Narrows will face intense resistance from Grassy Narrows and a huge public backlash.

This is also a legally binding contract. If Canada does not follow through on this agreement then Grassy Narrows can enforce the agreement in court. Canada is also required to always uphold the honour of the Crown by dealing fairly with First Nations. Breaking promises would not be honourable and that can be taken to court.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS OFFERS?

- a. This has the full funding that building the Mercury Home is estimated to cost (\$19.5M). Previous offers only had half of that (\$10.5M), or said amount “to be determined.”
- b. This agreement accepts Grassy Narrows’ conceptual design and functional services plan as the basis for the building and the services. Previous offers rejected Grassy Narrows’ design and left most of the key services out.
- c. This agreement commits to provide long term funding for federal health service operations in the Mercury Home, and it commits the Minister to try to put the funds in a trust or 30 year up-front lump sum payment to Grassy Narrows. Previous offers said that Canada could take away the funding at any time without any reasons.

DID GRASSY NARROWS COMPROMISE?

Grassy Narrows was demanding that Canada provide the full 30-year lifecycle costs of the facility (\$88.7M) in a trust. This agreement does not provide that needed security yet. Grassy Narrows will hold the Minister to his solemn promise that he will honour his word and do the right thing as soon as he gets the authority he needs from the federal budget, Cabinet, and the Treasury Board.

WHEN WILL THE HOME BE BUILT?

The agreement commits to try to speed up the usual construction process and aims to have the building built in 24-36 months. If Canada cooperates that is achievable.

WILL THIS TAKE AWAY FROM GRASSY'S OTHER FUNDING?

The agreement clearly says that this will not take away any standard funding that Grassy gets for health, wellbeing, housing, or other capital projects.

WHAT ELSE DOES GRASSY NARROWS NEED?

There is still a long road before Grassy Narrows has mercury justice and before Grassy Narrows can restore what mercury has damaged. Some of the needed steps include:

- a. Completing the Mercury Home and ensuring that it has full services funded securely for the long term.
- b. Compensating every Grassy Narrows person for the impacts of the ongoing mercury crisis.
- c. Supporting Grassy Narrows in restoring their thriving health, culture, livelihood, lands, and waters.
- d. Respecting Grassy Narrows' decisions over their lives, lands and waters.