



## OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

PO Box 2703 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6  
phone (867) 667-5081 fax (867) 393-7444  
shay.smart@yla.gov.yk.ca

### NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release 10-31  
November 16, 2010

### **OLD CROW H. PYLORI PROJECT UNDERWAY**

**Old Crow:** An important health study is now underway in Old Crow by request of the community. Researchers from the Canadian Northern *Helicobacter pylori* (CANHelp) Working Group will launch research into the bacteria in Old Crow on November 20, 2010. Community participation in the study is essential to determine the extent of *H. pylori* in Old Crow and the bacteria's likely impacts and transmission patterns.

"The *H. pylori* bacteria can cause serious stomach-related health issues, and it is prevalent in some Arctic communities," said Darius Elias, MLA for Vuntut Gwitchin. "That's why I am encouraging as many community members as possible to take the breath test that will help determine how common *H. pylori* is in Old Crow."

This is the first Yukon-based *H. pylori* study. A similar research project in Aklavik, NWT has been underway since 2007. That study has found that almost 60% of residents tested carried the bacteria, which can lead to stomach ulcers and, in rare cases, cancer. Most people infected with *H. pylori* will exhibit no symptoms and can carry the bacteria for many years without incident.

In 2008, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation passed a resolution calling for research on *H. pylori* infection in Old Crow. Elias has also been working to raise awareness of the issue within the community about the bacteria and its potential effects. "We have successfully lobbied for this research to take place in Old Crow, and we are committed to this research reflecting community priorities," said Elias. "Widespread community participation is what will make this possible."

Janis Huntington, the CANHelp project manager, can be contacted for more information on the research. She can be reached at [Janis.Huntington@ualberta.ca](mailto:Janis.Huntington@ualberta.ca) and (780) 492-2525.

-30-

For additional information contact:  
Shay Kokiw 667-5081