

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ALCOHOL & DRUG CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL

Post Office Box 1769, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories / (403) 873-7155

THE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES
FOR THE AVAILABILITY AND SALE OF
ALCOHOL

GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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MR. SPEAKER, HONOURABLE MEMBERS, MR. COMMISSIONER
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:


The N.W.T. Alcohol and Drug Coordinating Council has, through the Community Resource Development Grants and in cooperation with the Federal agencies, developed in various communities programs of prevention, education and treatment. While these efforts may be significant in managing some of the problems associated with alcohol misuse, the production of alcohol problems demands consistent legislation and policies.

The development of orderly responsive legislation has been hampered, in the Coordinating Council's view, by the lack of an operational philosophy from which consistent policy would flow. Consequently, in response to a request from the Minister of Social Development the Alcohol and Drug Coordinating Council developed the following philosophy, objectives and suggestions of preventive measures for consideration by Territorial Council.

The N.W.T.A.D.C.C. recommends to Territorial Council serious consideration and adoption of this statement in order that legislation or policy establishes a consistency in the development of behavioral standards. We would further suggest that it may also facilitate some answers to the problems created by the availability of alcohol.

Even if this statement is not accepted we strongly recommend to Territorial Council that a consistent philosophy be adopted.

Yours sincerely,



Murray Sigler,
Chairman.

Philosophy

The Coordinating Council's philosophy on alcohol may be summed up as follows:

- that alcohol (C_2H_5OH) is a drug of the sedative hypnotic and psychoactive type - a Central Nervous System depressant of limited medical value;
- the major benefits of alcohol centre around social values held by various elements of society at large, values which generally relate to social and/or religious customs, traditions, or superstitions;
- alcohol is not a commodity of basic societal need;
- misused (by self infliction) or uncontrolled by legislation will cause varying degrees of social disruption, poisoning and serious health problems of epidemic proportions;
- the availability/accessibility to alcohol by an individual in society is a personal privilege and not a personal right;
- society has a right and a responsibility to define the limits of the privilege, sanction its use and, indeed, punish those who abuse their privilege by removing the individual's privilege and by other means.

Objectives

1. The Government of the N.W.T.'s primary objective throughout the Liquor Ordinance should reflect its values of health, economic and social well being of the residents.
2. The Government of the N.W.T. by making alcohol available does not agree with, nor condone, the misuse of alcohol, drunkenness or the associated problems and shares the attitude of the Minister of National Health and Welfare;* Because these conditions are in fact self inflicted by individuals and are therefore preventable, policies and programs of the Government shall reflect this concept as a criterion of eligibility/participation.

*New Perspectives on the Health of Canadians, the Honourable Marc Lalonde, Minister of National Health and Welfare.

3. The Government of the N.W.T. should continue to define the scope and limits of the privilege to drink alcohol; i.e. legislation should clearly define the Government's policies on control, restriction, prohibition, enforcement, sale, manufacturing, and transportation of alcohol; and provide substantial consequences of abusing the privilege.
4. The Government of the N.W.T. recognizes that where severe legislative restrictions are applied consideration for adequate compensation to businesses who have made investments related to the sale of alcohol should apply.

Preventive Measures

The following are specific items discussed by the A.D.C.C. and are put forward to Council as policy items for consideration. They are not all-inclusive nor should they be considered as items to solve the problems exclusively.

- a) Pricing: The present pricing policy for alcohol is inconsistent relative to the cost of local basic commodities. It is unfair in that several communities on the N.W.T. highway system are in fact paying the bulk of the cost of the transportation costs while others are not.

The price of alcohol should reflect the concept of encouraging people to drink in controlled environments, therefore it would be wise to reconsider the present pricing policy. Ideally the price to each community, regardless of circumstances, should reflect the real cost plus the standard markup. It is not suggested the prices in the southern N.W.T. outlets should be lowered.

c) **Quality, Standards and Style of Outlets:** Regulating measures should be reviewed on these items as they have a measurable effect on consumption patterns. For instance a self serve liquor store increases impulse buying; quality and standards have an effect on patrons and their behavior in licensed premises. Number of uncontrolled outlets have an effect in the overall consumption pattern which determines the level of problems encountered.

The problems created by liquor stores and uncontrolled bootlegging operations could perhaps be prevented by developing a controlled social facility in a given community through legitimate local authority.

- d) **Community Standards:** In addition to the Community Resource Development Grants Program further consideration should be given to encouraging the development of behavior standards set by the community. Behavioral standards are reflected by the judiciary in the manner of prescribing penalties. These penalties have a significant effect in determining the criteria for acceptable behavior.
- e) **Community Sanctions:** Consistent with our philosophy community sanctions should be aimed at the individual who abuses privileges rather than at the community as a whole (e.g. properly enforced interdiction rather than prohibition).

APPENDIX

Definitions

- a) Prevent: To keep from occurring; to hinder or stop from doing something; to act ahead of; to anticipate; to precede; to interpose a hinderance.
- b) Prevention: Noting or pertaining to prevention of disease; serving to prevent or hinder; 'preventive medicine'; a preventive agent or measure.
- c) Concept of Prevention: Defined as it applies to alcohol and drug problems. "Anything that reduces likelihood that alcohol and drug problems will develop".
- d) Primary Prevention: The adoption of drinking or non-drinking patterns that do not lead to problems.
- e) Secondary Prevention: The identification and modification of high risk drinking patterns before problems arise.
- f) Tertiary Prevention: Modification of high risk drinking patterns before further problems occur or limiting disabilities.
- g) Philosophy: (For this Purpose) a system of principles for guidance in practical affairs.
- h) Alcohol: C_2H_5OH ethyl alcohol; a drug of the sedative hypnotic and psychoactive type. A Central Nervous System depressant of limited medical value.