



**National Association of Friendship Centres
275 MacLaren Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0L9**

**May 31, 2005
For Immediate Release**

Press Release

Friendship Centres Demonstrate Outside Policy Retreat

(May 31, 2005) – Ottawa, Ontario – The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) demonstrated outside of the historic policy retreat between the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal leadership today.

“Friendship Centres need to be full and equal partners at the table”, stated NAFC President Vera Pawis Tabobondung. “We are the only national Aboriginal service delivery provider, yet we are not invited to talk about service delivery issues.”

The NAFC has been excluded from all planning and process meetings leading up to the policy retreat. This despite over 600 letters of concerns being sent to the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs from Friendship Centres across the country.

“We have recieved no response from the federal government regarding our concerns”, noted Nelson Mayer, NAFC Vice-President. “We cannot sit back while the policy agenda is set without us”.

Most troubling is the fact that policy accords are being set without Friendship Centre inclusion. Clear service delivery issues such as housing, life long learning and health are being discussed making the Friendship Centre exclusion all the more shocking.

“Our exclusion means that Friendship Centres will continue to be left out of policy discussions with the federal government”, commented Peter Dinsdale, Executive Director. “At some point the federal government will need to bring service providers into the conversation. The question is when? Where is our policy accord?”

The National Association of Friendship Centres is the only national Aboriginal organization providing programs and services through 117 Friendship Centres across the country.

Contact:

Peter Dinsdale
Executive Director
pdinsdale@nafc.ca
Work (613) 563-4844 ext. 318
Cell (613) 327-5270
www.nafc.ca