

# Mental health workers dispatched to Attawapiskat

By Jim Windle

**TORONTO** — Liberal speaker of the house, Dave Levac, has agreed to allow an emergency debate on the suicide crisis at Attawapiskat reserve in Northern Ontario. The debate was called for by NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus, who is of Aboriginal blood.

The state of emergency was called following 11 suicide attempts so far in the month of April and 28 recorded attempts in March.

"These nightmares and tragedies should serve as

wake-up calls that there isn't time to wait," Angus said in a letter requesting the debate.

"An emergency debate is required in order to allow parliamentarians to address this crisis and show that as parliamentarians we are willing to work together because the days of shrugging off the tragedies or tinkering with Band-Aid solutions are over."

Mental health workers had arrived in the community of about 2,000 people. On Monday, Health Minister Jane Philpott announced that five

mental health workers have been dispatched to Attawapiskat.

"This is one of the most serious and pressing tragedies that our nation is facing," she said.

"I am devastated by the situation that is taking place in Attawapiskat. I am working with my colleague, the minister of indigenous and northern affairs to respond to this tragedy.

"We are responding to both the immediate needs and long-term needs of this community."