

Motion

Mental Health Court Diversion Program

WHEREAS rates of mental illness in the Northwest Territories are disproportionately high in comparison with other Canadian jurisdictions;

AND WHEREAS a high proportion of persons involved in police incidents suffer from mental illnesses;

AND WHEREAS national research indicates that securing mental health services without resorting to the usual criminal justice system can greatly reduce the likelihood of further offenses by helping individuals receive appropriate treatment;

AND WHEREAS introduction in other Canadian jurisdictions of mental health courts as diversion programs from the criminal justice system are proving successful in improving illness treatment success rates and providing cost benefits to the policing, court and corrections services;

AND WHEREAS there are examples of provincial mental health courts developed through partnerships between existing programs and without the introduction of additional resources;

AND WHEREAS mental health court diversion programs have been designed to ensure that the rights of the accused and the public, and the integrity of the criminal justice system, are protected according to the principles of the Criminal Code;

AND WHEREAS mental health court diversions hold offenders accountable for their behaviour while promoting their access to effective treatment;

AND WHEREAS the highly successful model of mental health court diversion programs is adaptable to the NWT policing and criminal justice system;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Health and Social Services is in the process of reorganizing its mental health services based upon the Framework for Action for Mental Health and Addiction Services;

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Date of Notice:	August 22, 2011	Moved by:	Mr. Bromley
Date of Introduction:	August 25, 2011	Seconded by:	Ms. Bisaro
Disposition:	Carried RV		
Carried:	August 25, 2011	Ruled Out of Order:	

AND WHEREAS the recommendations of the Phase III report of the Coalition Against Family Violence emphasize the need for diversion of offenders into treatment programs;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Justice has pioneered its Community Justice program, providing progressive alternatives for rehabilitating offenders who accept responsibility for their actions, community input in solving problems, and reducing the need for incarceration in appropriate cases;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories begin research to examine options and potential benefits for introduction of a mental health court diversion program as an adjunct to the NWT court system;

AND FURTHER that this Government make note of this initiative as a recommendation included in the transition advice being offered to the 17th Legislative Assembly.