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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 28, 2018****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Hon. Alfred Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 41-18(3):
PINK SHIRT DAY**

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is national Pink Shirt Day. Wearing pink today symbolizes that we, as a society, will not tolerate bullying of any kind. This day of recognition and action was started in 2007 by two young men in Nova Scotia, David Sheppard and Travis Price. As an act of protest and support, they gave pink shirts to their fellow students, after a grade 9 student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school.

These two young men raised global awareness of bullying, starting from one school in Cambridge, Nova Scotia. In the last year, more than 180 countries have participated in this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I provided pink lapel flowers for all of the Members to wear in the House today. We have done this for a number of years, to show support for victims of bullying and cyber bullying. It is also a reminder that there are many people working hard to bring this issue off the internet and out of the dark corners of our schools. I am proud to see all the pink in the House today, marking our collective accomplishment that bullying in any form is unacceptable.

In 2013, the Legislative Assembly passed Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Education Act to establish a definition of bullying; provide for the establishment, by regulation, of a Territorial School Code of Conduct; and require education authorities to ensure the development of safe school plans. The Northwest Territories Safe and Caring Schools Regulations and Territorial Code of Conduct were

established in 2016. The safe schools plans have now been created throughout our education system.

Mr. Speaker, schools across the North are working to create safe and welcoming learning environments for all students. Our schools are actively engaging students of all ages in wellness, resiliency, and inclusion activities, and making sure that all students are, and feel they are, valued members of their community. We have seen some marked successes stemming from these actions, with students growing into advocates and ambassadors. We must continue the work we began in 2013 to make our schools safe places for all members of the school community.

The 2018 national theme for Pink Shirt Day is cyber bullying. The Pink Shirt Day organization states that, in today's digital world, it can be impossible to escape online bullying, whether it takes the shape of harassment, spreading rumours, sharing embarrassing information, or threats. This year, Pink Shirt Day is encouraging everyone, young and old, to combat cyber bullying by thinking twice before posting something negative, and instead using the internet to spread positivity.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that all of our schools across the Northwest Territories will be marking Pink Shirt Day. I look forward to seeing the wash of pink across the North. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-18(3):
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL MEETING**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment to support the Intergovernmental Council towards implementation of the vision of cooperative and collaborative management of lands and resources, as set out in the Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement. I am pleased to report that the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management took place on Friday, December 15, 2017, here in Yellowknife.

The Intergovernmental Council, or IGC, was created as part of the devolution process and provides the opportunities for member governments to collaborate on issues of land and resources, while acknowledging their respective jurisdictions.

The agenda for the meeting, which is jointly developed, identified topics for discussion, including a report on the activities of the Intergovernmental Council Secretariat; the Arctic Policy Framework; and the need to develop a formalized working relationship.

Some of the outcomes and additional items discussed at the meeting included:

- Identifying the need to complete the Intergovernmental Council long-term strategic plan in 2018. The strategic plan will include timelines, indicators, and required resources;
- The establishment of a working group tasked with developing formal government-to-government working relationships;
- Determining how best to collaborate and maximize federal government Indigenous funding programs; and
- Continued work with Indigenous governments to develop a northern approach to the Arctic Policy Framework, including the NWT chapter.

A summary of these items has been provided to the chair of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, who also attended the meeting and is also posted on the IGC website.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to report that the Government of the Northwest Territories has committed to working with the Indigenous governments to host a Northern Summit on Economic Development which will take place later this year. Invitations to the summit will be extended to a range of partners, including industry and representatives from the federal government.

I want to acknowledge and thank our Indigenous government counterparts for their ongoing commitment to the goals and objectives identified in the devolution agreement. By signing on to this agreement, we agreed to work together, and I am optimistic that our accomplishments to date are indicative of that collaborative approach. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-18(3):
GROWTH IN THE NWT TOURISM SECTOR

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is just a bit different. Just a bit different is the tagline of NWT Tourism's new marketing campaign. It capitalizes on the unique Northern realities that make our territory a special and spectacular travel destination. As we continue to build our territory's tourism industry, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is investing to maximize the economic growth and diversity that this sector can provide.

Guided by our Tourism 2020 plan, we are investing in training, capacity building, and product development. We are working to ensure that tourism operators have a skilled workforce to draw and rely on and that activities and packages are tailored and available for travellers who arrive to share and experience our territory.

In today's competitive tourism marketplace, programs like our Tourism and Business Mentorships, the Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution, and Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing offer examples of how the Government of the Northwest Territories is working and investing to ensure that we are, and continue to be, just a bit different.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is another half to our tourism equation. We can have the best tour operators and packages in the world, but if no one travels here, we will not have a tourism industry. It is NWT Tourism, under contract to our government, that is responsible for marketing and selling our spectacular territory to the world.

To remain competitive, our marketing needs to be nimble, to derive opportunities from trends, and to recognize our strengths and build on them. The Northwest Territories Tourism Marketing Plan for 2018-2019, which will be tabled later today, does just that. It includes a transition from print to online content marketing and a digital audit to gauge attitudes and sentiments about the Northwest Territories.

To better reach potential travellers, Northwest Territories Tourism will use social media platforms in each targeted market to deliver their messages. The Explorers' Guide will get a new look, styled as a lure piece rather than a catalogue.

While NWT Tourism will maintain its broad marketing reach, increased emphasis will be placed on Asia this year, especially China, where we are seeing exponential visitor growth and around which we can leverage broader Canadian investments focused on the Year of Canada-China tourism.

To support this new approach and add to its marketing assets, NWT Tourism will be investing in the second of five region-specific photo shoots this

year. Each of our regions has something spectacular to offer visitors and travellers. These shoots capture that, focusing on one region per year and rotating annually. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the new fiscal year and prepare to implement the new and innovative approaches highlighted in our marketing plan, we are also approaching a new camping season.

In what was a record-breaking 2016-2017 season that saw over \$200 million in visitor spending, I am pleased to advise Members that a new high was also set for people enjoying our territorial parks. Our parks welcomed over 35,000 overnight visitors in 2017, an increase of 20 per cent over the previous camping season.

It is yet another indicator of the growth that we are seeing in our tourism industry. More so, Mr. Speaker, it demonstrates that our partnership approach to developing the NWT's tourism industry is yielding the results we are looking for and that it is contributing to the growth and diversification of our economy.

What the Northwest Territories offers travellers is just a bit different, and it is this difference that truly makes the territory a world-class destination. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ROAD TO RESOURCES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about the old Canadian idea about the Roads to Resources. The idea started in the 1930s but was popularized by the Diefenbaker government in the 1950s as a way to open the "frontier," as they thought of us in the old days.

The idea of generating wealth and creating opportunity is not out of date, Mr. Speaker. The road to the Slave Geological Province can be an important element in creating new paths to prosperity for the NWT.

Mining, as we know, provides generational opportunities for individuals, families, and communities. It provides training that can create portable skills, which can build long-standing careers. It provides wealth at the community level and investment in community infrastructure.

The life of any major project extends from exploration to development to production to eventual rehabilitation and reclamation. At all these stages, jobs, training, and opportunities are created. The benefits start with a good income, a good job for this year and many more to come. They develop skills in trades like carpentry, heavy equipment operation, construction, kitchen management and food services, electrical, and mechanical. More still, they help grow our knowledge economy, building expertise in geoscience, design, environmental science, project management, engineering, and traditional knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, in the past, the mining industry has been seen as a grubby, destructive, fly-by-night business, but today's industry is actively working to break that mould. It respects communities and Indigenous landowners. It commits to projects from exploration through to remediation. Today's miners aren't just hard rock drillers with headlamps, picks, and shovels. They are geological and environmental engineers.

Above and beyond mining, Mr. Speaker, this road will offer access to a region currently only accessible by air and winter road. That can provide more opportunities in tourism and recreation.

I know that there are deep concerns related to environmental impacts of this road, specifically for caribou habitat. Mr. Speaker, part of building the knowledge economy lies in finding ways that allow us to pursue development without environmental degradation.

Challenges always face us. We need to build on our skills, knowledge, creativity, and the resources of our people to surmount these challenge. We know we will have obstacles to overcome, Mr. Speaker. That should not stop us from moving forward on our long-term economic goals. I will have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the privileges of being the Member for Hay River North is having the opportunity to rise in this House and acknowledge the contributions of the many residents and organizations who give freely their time to help make Hay River the great community that it is.

Today, it is my pleasure to tell you about the good work being done by the members of the Catholic

Women's League of Assumption Catholic Church in Hay River. The parish council in Hay River is part of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, a national organization which is rooted in Christian values and which calls upon its members to serve God by serving others.

The members of the Catholic Women's League are tireless fundraisers and volunteers, and they contribute to a number of good causes.

The league's main annual fundraiser is a Mother's Day tea and raffle which is always well attended. I am telling you this now, Mr. Speaker, so that you and all of my colleagues in this House can get your tickets early and join us for tea in Hay River this May.

The league provides funds to Hay River schools to support the breakfast program, which helps get students to school and make sure they are able to learn. The league makes a monthly donation to the Hay River Soup Kitchen, which, unfortunately, struggles to meet a growing demand.

At Christmastime, the Catholic Women's League is very busy. Members provide a Christmas donation to the Family Support Centre and give gifts and quilts to our residents in long-term care facilities. They are also active internationally and sponsor a child through the Hay River-based charity which provides tuition and supplies so that children in Ghana can attend school.

These are just a few of the ways that the league supports our community. Many of the members are also active volunteers outside of the league, as well. Their overall contribution is beyond measure. Included among the 60 members are co-presidents Shirley Gutierrez and Dee Dee Lepine and board members Sheila Ryan-Hachey, Teresa Swallow, Sylvia Boyer, Marilyn Green, Liz Buckley, Doris Cadrone, Tessie Gonzalez, Rosa Loutit and Yvonne Maurice.

I want to thank all members of the Catholic Women's League of Assumption Catholic Church in Hay River for all they have done and continue to do for our community. Mr. Speaker, I have said before that Hay River is a beautiful place to live. It is safe to say that its natural beauty is rivalled only by the beautiful hearts of the giving and caring people who call it home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' Statements. Member for Nunakput

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS FROM
NUNAKPUT

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the following athletes, coaches, cultural delegates, and mission staff representing the Nunakput region at the 2018 Arctic Winter Games in Hay River next month. Mr. Speaker, the following names are Jennifer Giffin, Casey Tai, Junji Tai, Matthew Anikina, Noel-Leigh Cockney, Cole Felix, Karlene Green, Jasmine Gruben, Jemra Gruben, Brayden Gruben, Kristen Jacobson, Mikayla Jacobson, Kobe Keevik, Agnes Krengnektak, Henson Nasogaluak, Joe-David Nasogaluak, Larsen Nasogaluak, Clorese Nogasak, Robin Jr. Raddi, Sophie Stefure, Kyran Alikamik, and Jacob Kengenber. Also, Mr. Speaker, my step-daughter, Marie Carpenter, who is a Page here today.

Mr. Speaker, I wish all the athletes luck at the winter games, most importantly to have fun and make new friends all over the circumpolar world, work hard in school, and make time for family before attending the games. I would also like to recognize two New Youth Ambassadors from my riding: Alexandria Sayers and Mahlena Ross-Gruben. We as a community are always proud to see our youth involved in anything that improves their leadership and skills. It is an honour to have them represent and inspire other communities. Good luck, play fair, and represent the Northwest Territories proudly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FROZEN ROCK STUDIO

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Frozen Rock studios, an artistic studio located in my riding of Kam Lake. Frozen Rock Studios is the creation of three notable NWT carvers: Eli Nasogaluak, of Tuktoyaktuk, John Sabourin, of Fort Simpson, and Derrald Taylor, also from Tuktoyaktuk, who now all call Yellowknife home.

These stone, snow, and ice carvers have been doing their work in the North for much of their lives, working to sustain themselves from their artwork; and most importantly, offering a reflection of our northern culture. All three artists are well known in the North, throughout this country, and in many nations across the world. They have helped spread the word of our culture through competitions they have attended and participated in at all levels. All three have won in snow and ice carving categories and have even won the Canadian championships. Their artwork is now located throughout the North, the South, and all over world.

Our NWT carvers have worked tirelessly to spread the word of our northern culture through their art

and have created Frozen Rock Studios, located at 5 Coronation Drive, in my riding of Kam Lake, to keep doing just that.

While still in its infancy stages, these studio sessions are now available to the public and to tourists alike in workshops. These workshops allow even the most amateur of guests to create their own takeaway soapstone art, under the guidance of our NWT carvers. This passing along of thousands of years of NWT culture is a unique experience that all can take pride and participate in.

Northern carvers Eli, John, and Derrald are responding to the call of our government's desire to spread the word of the North and its cultures. This hands-on carving workshop approach is doing exactly what we want for our locals and tourists alike. Each session they complete means that a handmade piece of northern culture is taken away by someone to another corner of the world. It is important for us to recognize and support these carvers, and encourage them to continue doing this valuable act of cultural exchange.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEART AND STROKE MONTH

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, February sees many Canadians celebrate Valentine's Day, expressing their love to friends and family; but there's no reason to limit that to just one day a year. I encourage everyone to look beyond the post-Valentine's chocolate sales and take a few moments to talk about heart disease.

February is also Heart Month, a time when the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation ramps up its efforts to raise awareness as well as funds for its life-saving research efforts. Mr. Speaker, we know that the heart plays a critical role in our health. Our hearts keep us alive, but we often don't appreciate this hard-working muscle like we should. When the heart is healthy, it works steadily 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to pump blood through our bodies; but when it's not healthy, we're in serious trouble.

Together with cancer, cardiovascular disease, or heart disease, is the leading cause of death for NWT men and women, and accounted for nearly half of all Canadian deaths in 2014. Those are intimidating numbers, Mr. Speaker, but we are not powerless. Although some heart conditions are congenital, affecting people from birth, up to 80 per cent of coronary heart disease and one third of cancers can be prevented with simple lifestyle changes: quitting smoking; eating well; staying active; and limiting alcohol consumption. Each of these things helps keeps heart disease away.

Your heart will also be happier if you're able to take steps to manage stress in your life, like talking to friends and family about things that are bothering you, and to practice your traditional lifestyle. That could mean staying active through hunting, trapping, wood-cutting, or going out on the land, and eating our delicious country foods. It's surely no coincidence that making these kinds of lifestyle changes can improve our physical and mental health across the board, not just for our hearts.

Mr. Speaker, every year scientists, doctors, and other researchers make new advances in the fight against heart disease, from new pharmaceuticals and surgeries, to public awareness campaigns, to new diagnostic techniques. There is hope and there are ways for all of us to help. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS LEGISLATION CONSULTATIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like governments across Canada, the GNWT is working to meet the federal government's deadline for the legalization of marijuana later this year. In the fall of 2017, the GNWT consulted with communities in the Northwest Territories about the proposed legislation to make marijuana legal in the Northwest Territories.

Unfortunately, Fort McPherson was left out of this consultation. The Hamlet Council, the Tetlit Gwich'in Band, and the Designated Gwich'in Organization are not happy about that. As they pointed out in a press release earlier this month, the hamlet has concerns about legalization and the serious implications it has for communities struggling with addictions issues. They also noted that there is a lot of public interest in the issue, which merits more examination and conversation.

Unfortunately, when the GNWT took its consultation to communities, there was no invitation to and no direct correspondence with the mayor, hamlet council, or the residents of Fort McPherson about the consultation planned for Tsiigehtchic. Surely, this should have been done.

While the GNWT may have failed Fort McPherson in this matter, there is an opportunity for this oversight to be corrected, and I am looking to my Regular MLA colleagues to step up and do what the GNWT wouldn't. When the cannabis bill is referred to the standing committees for review, the committees will have a chance to do their own consultation on the proposed legislation. I will be speaking with the chairs of the appropriate standing committees to request a commitment to visit Fort McPherson during that upcoming consultation

process. The community has a strong interest in this issue and they deserve to be heard. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT must do better when it undertakes consultation on important issues. In the consultation of cannabis legislation, a simple letter of invitation could have been signalled to the people of Fort McPherson that their input on this issue is important and valued. Instead, they were passed over and let down. I trust that my Regular Member colleagues will do what they can to help bring consultation on the cannabis bill to Fort McPherson, and I give the community this public commitment that I will do everything in my power to make that happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member's statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PREMIER'S RED ALERT STATEMENT

MR. MCNEELY: Mr. Speaker, Northerners need to be the ones making decisions about their future. We are the ones who live here and we know what is best for our regions and our communities. This is why I support the Premier taking a stand on the Northwest Territories red alert last November. The Sahtu region has a vast store of renewable and non-renewable resources. We want to develop those resources so we can get the economic benefits from them and keep people off government support programs.

Mr. Speaker, developing our resources in a responsible manner is a fundamental principle of prudent land management stewardship. Northerners know best how to develop responsibly and safely. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu isn't seeing any signs from Canada that they understand how important resource development is for our region, or that they are in any hurry to get the economy of our region restarted.

Mr. Speaker, we need the Government of Canada to help us do that by investing in infrastructure projects like the Mackenzie Valley highway. We also need to know they support resource development as the engine of the Sahtu region and the Northwest Territories economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have negotiated land claims and the devolution to give our people the power to make their own decisions in important areas like economic development, but we are still having difficulties exercising those powers, Mr. Speaker,

especially when the federal government still retains decisions that affect our independence.

Mr. Speaker, Ottawa agreed to review the transfer of authorities it held back under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act within five years of devolution. That review comes to us next year, and we need to get ready by reminding the federal government that decisions about the North need to be made here by Northerners. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Asserting for more authority through the Red Alert announcement by our Premier last November was a positive step and something we should all support. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later for the Honourable Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN STAFFING CONCERNS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about capacity issues in the Office of the Public Guardian, specifically about the size of the caseload the guardian herself is expected to manage. The Public Guardian takes care of people who can't take care of themselves. Young adults who have been diagnosed with FAS, people with severe mental illness or intellectual disabilities, and older adults with dementia are all potential candidates for public or private guardianship depending on their circumstances. These, of course, are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

When I last spoke about capacity issues, the Public Guardian's Office was swamped with applications for assessments for guardianship. It is my understanding that waiting times for assessments have decreased because the office has a larger pool of assessors to draw on. That is a positive change. Mr. Speaker, what hasn't changed is the capacity of the Office of the Public Guardian to deliver services to her clients who have guardianship orders in place. An external review shows the Office from Public Guardian's caseload continues to grow, but her budget doesn't. It also identified operational concerns such as the relevance of the operations manual and the lack of recommended audits.

There are 76 clients under public guardianship who live throughout the North and Western Canada. In order to monitor and help make important decisions

about their health and well-being, the Guardian needs to develop a relationship with each person by visiting them at least once a year. It is my understanding this isn't happening because there just isn't time for her to undertake these visits, provide oversight of 77 private guardianship orders, and manage the application process.

Mr. Speaker, this is a crucial and one-of-a-kind service. The Public Guardian's caseload is obviously too much for one social worker. The office requires at least one more staff in order to provide the engagement and oversight these vulnerable clients need. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MIDWIFERY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I will return again to a program which has probably had one of the longest gestation periods in the history of this Assembly: midwifery. I have recounted in past statements a history which stretches back to 2012 when public advocacy prompted the government to commission a midwifery review and expansion analysis report. Options for implementation were developed leading up to a full rollout in 2016-2017.

In 2015, the Minister said he was still committed to introducing midwifery, but with no money, a further study and public consultation would take place. Another study was completed, and not surprisingly, stakeholder feedback is again strongly in favour of expansion of midwifery services and improved maternal care. As to concrete plans for launching a service, there is nothing in the latest report or the 2018-2019 budget.

The department responded to committee questions by saying it is getting ready to prepare to begin to develop a program. A senior midwifery consultant has been hired. That position is laying the groundwork for future action by the Advisory Committee on Midwifery, including its role and establishment of a territorial midwifery program.

As to new midwives providing birthing support, nothing yet. One bright light is that, effective June 2017, women who must leave their communities for birth can now have an escort accompanying them. This is not a solution, as we are doubling on travelling and accommodation costs for escorts where a good part of this money could be spent on implementing midwifery.

For the third budget, now, I am back asking questions about midwifery. The Minister champions system transformation, and now is the time to get

on board with midwifery. I will have questions for the Minister of Health on the concrete next steps to finally live up to the promises on the expansion of midwifery in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the past four months, I have heard a number of issues with the contractor that provide medical travel from Fort Simpson. I have heard of flights being delayed, rerouted, and even cancellations. This is not good for our residents. I have heard about at least 15 situations in this time. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share a couple of stories here today.

On New Year's Eve, the flight from Yellowknife to Fort Simpson return was cancelled. The airline decided to provide a different flight route, starting from Edmonton to Yellowknife via Fort Simpson via Inuvik. This meant patients had to travel at least an additional six hours instead of a regular one-hour flight.

However, some patients had to travel to Edmonton for cancer treatment. This added at least another two hours to their travel if they were able to catch the flight going to Edmonton. If they were able to catch the flight, it was without their luggage. Others who did not catch the flight, they had to overnight in Yellowknife, get up early to catch the flight to Calgary, and then on to Edmonton to make their appointment.

On the same flight, there was a person who broke his leg during the holidays. They were looking at him to go on this flight. This was not a good idea, and the patient decided that he was not going to do this. I wish the flight was an anomaly, but it wasn't. I have heard of this situation happening at least twice more.

The second story happens more frequently. A flight that is scheduled to leave Yellowknife in the morning to Fort Simpson gets changed until 5:00 that night. However, instead of going to Fort Simpson, they have to go to Hay River, and then onto Fort Simpson. This does not help patients who are returning home. Sure, they get a meal voucher, taxi fare, but they don't want to be walking around the city. Some do not get offered a hotel room, especially for patients who have been up early to catch a flight from Edmonton to Yellowknife. You want to get home to your own beds. The patients from Fort Simpson now miss their appointments.

I realize that the NWT has very harsh and unpredictable weather which can lead to a variety of issues, from planes going mechanical to limited visibility and ice problems, all of which can result in flights being cancelled and patients missing appointments. However, it seems to be too much of a regular occurrence for patients from the Nahendeh riding. To add to the issue, more work is placed on the medical travel staff to have to try and make arrangements and make appointment changes.

Mr. Speaker, I have given some examples, but I realize I only have two and a half minutes. I will close here. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I'm going to talk about the effects of alcohol in our small communities. Mr. Speaker, I do believe that, in my 10 years here in the Legislative Assembly, this will be the first time I am going to attempt to do a complete Member's statement in my language.

Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided]. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would recognize my relative, Eli Nasogaluak, who my colleague from Kam Lake made a statement about, as well as Derrald Taylor from Tuktoyaktuk, and also to my wife Yvonne who is here today, and my step-daughter Marie who is somewhere in here as a Page. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish everyone a good day.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River South.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a few people here today; Cathie Bolstad, the CEO of NWT Tourism. Welcome to the house, Cathie. Ainsley Lamontagne, marketing director from NWT Tourism. Everyone is going to get a kick out of this year. I'll do a little shout-out to Lillian Elias, my cousin from the Beau-Del. She is

doing interpretation in Inuvialuit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize John Sabourin, Eli Nasogaluak, and Derrald Taylor. They are three world-class artists from my riding of Kam Lake who work at Frozen Rock Studio. Thank you very much for being here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the two interpreters we have from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Mr. Tommy Unka and Mary Rose Sundberg. I would also like to recognize my new CA, Pascal Erasmus, who is in the gallery today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Yellowknife North constituent Cathie Bolstad, also executive director of NWT Tourism. Welcome and thank you for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Yvonne with the original, I have to get used to the new last name, Nakimayak. Sorry about that. With family ties back in the Norman Wells Sahtu area, and Ms. Cathie Bolstad, who I've met over the years here promoting a thriving industry. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 178-18(3):
MEDICAL TRAVEL

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my Member's statement with some questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. My first question for the Minister: does the department track how many patients from the Nahendeh riding missed appointments or have to reschedule appointments because of flight changes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our responsibility is to provide healthcare to the residents of the Northwest Territories. Yes, many residents do have to travel to Yellowknife or other locations to receive their care. Through medical travel, we book our flights on scheduled flights. We work with our residents to make sure that they know the information. The Member is right. From time to time, there are cancellations of flights. We do live in the Northwest Territories, where we do have adverse weather and other things that affect us.

We don't track the cancelled flights, Mr. Speaker, but we work with our residents to make sure that, if there is a cancellation, we get them on the next appropriate or available flight. If appointments have to be cancelled, then we work with them to reschedule those appointments and make them happen as quickly as we can. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we know we live in the Northwest Territories. We know there are challenges and we work to resolve those problems. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I realize we live in the Northwest Territories, but, again, if a contractor is not providing the services, we need to make sure we do deal with that. Has the department approached the contractor or have they approached the Department of Infrastructure to help get this situation fixed?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As much as I'd like to be able to control the weather, we can't. When there are flights cancelled as a result of weather, we work with our residents to make sure that those appointments are rescheduled and the flights rescheduled appropriately. The Member has brought that concern from his region to me. I share his frustration on the number of cancellations that occurred.

Following up on our discussions, the department did follow up with one of our main contractors from Medical Travel, who does the majority of the flights in the Nahendeh region. They indicated to us that it has been a particularly harsh winter. As a result, they have had to either reschedule or cancel a number of their flights.

Once again, our priority is to making sure our residents get the care they need and they're getting the appointments. We work with our residents. Yes, sometimes that means that appointments have to be cancelled, but we work with them to reschedule them as quickly as possible and to get them on flights as quickly as possible. It's not as always as

smooth as we'd like, but we're committed to providing that service to our residents.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I guess I disagree. If it's not weather, I can guarantee you it was a beautiful day on New Year's Day and it wasn't the weather. Again, that is an issue.

I'm going to move on to something else in regard to my Member's statement. It is my understanding that there is close to zero vacancies of hotels and boarding beds in Yellowknife during various moments in the year. What does the department plan on doing to help alleviate this type of situation where patients have to wait at the airport due to no fault of their own?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I understand that some of the issues, according to the Member, might have been something other than weather, but I would like to point out that the beautiful Northwest Territories is 1.1 million square kilometres of land and 33 communities ranging from the Beaufort Delta to Fort Smith, including Yellowknife. I've been in Yellowknife on one of the most beautiful days and talked my friend up in Inuvik who had 40 below weather, blizzard, and no flights for landing. It is possible to have good weather in one location and bad weather in another location.

With respect to the Member's question, we do have some boarding room capacity. There are certainly only a certain number of beds in that thing. We also know that, with the increased demands around tourism, which we all know is a great thing, it does make it a little bit more difficult to get rooms. When we know we can't get rooms, we will work with our residents for non-emergency issues and try to schedule them for when we can get capacity. I strongly encourage residents to keep following up with medical travel and make sure we are having that conversation so that we can get them in as quickly as we can. We work with our residents.

The issue about where do people stay during a day trip, that is an issue that has been brought up by many Members, the Members from Sahtu, Hay River, and others. We are currently working on a review of medical travel, and we are hoping to find a way to resolve that particular issue. I am hoping to bring the medical travel review to committee by the end of March so that we can have a discussion on these types of issues.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to have to rebut that. I have been in the Northwest Territories all my life. Yes, it is 1.3 million great square kilometres, 33 communities. The day I

am talking about, the plane went from Edmonton to Fort Simpson to Inuvik to Yellowknife. It hit four communities. Again, this airline company or the contractor didn't provide the service that was much needed.

I realize sending patient escorts out earlier than required might not be the best solution. I have heard it before about the potential appointments being cancelled, capacity issues with boarding homes, et cetera. I can't argue with those points. What is the department going to do to help patients who seem to be continually put out by this type of situation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I hear the Member. We do know that there is some frustration with individuals who are uncomfortable with going the day of their appointments just in case there is a cancellation. There is some frustration there. Patients can go early. They can book the flights themselves and seek reimbursement. The reimbursement is based on the rate that we would pay. We have a standing offer agreement with a number of our airlines, which is a little cheaper than what residents would pay if they booked themselves. We can reimburse them up to that rate.

If there are unique situations, the residents can approach Medical Travel to see if there is an option for them to come early. We are open to those in unique situations on a case-by-case basis. There are a couple of options that are available for our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh. I was just being generous. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 179-18(3):

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC GUARDIAN STAFFING CONCERNS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I said in my statement, the caseload for the Public Guardian is completely unmanageable because of the number of public and private guardianship orders she needs to supervise. My question for the Minister is: when does the Minister plan to increase the number of staff who work directly with clients? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member did bring this to my attention early in the life of this Assembly. As a result, I did order a review to be done. There were 16 recommendations that came out of that review. Many of them required us to do things like providing

some additional training supports. It did talk about increasing the staff. One of the things we wanted to do before we actually moved forward with a request for additional financial resources is to make sure we are spending our money wisely.

We have developed new procedures manuals. We have developed different training available to our people. We have gone out and recruited some psychiatrists and psychologists who can help us with specialized capacity assessments. Those things are done. We are strengthening the office. We are building a business case so we can move forward through the next round of business planning to seek funds to provide the financial resources we need for that unit. I feel that, now that this work is done, we are in a good place to build that business case to seek support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I did give the Minister credit for speeding up the assessment process, but we are talking now about another year-long delay before this 150-person caseload is going to be addressed by more staff. That is entirely unacceptable. This office needs to be re-staffed now. I would like to see this staffing adjustment made in a supplementary appropriation during this sitting. Can the Minister make that commitment?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member is aware that we have processes that we utilize in this Assembly, including business planning, and that we have to have solid business cases if we are going to pursue or ask the Department of Finance and the FMB for additional resources. Currently, until we build that particular case, we are utilizing existing resources from the Department of Health and Social Services. We have identified staff to go and help the office meet their demand and provide work they are doing. All of this is helping us build a business case. We will be submitting the business case during the business planning process. Hopefully, we will see an expansion in that office.

MS. GREEN: It is my understanding that the additional staff relieve the Public Guardian when she is unavailable because of training or annual leave. It is not my understanding that there is any more than one social worker working in that office at any given time. Can the Minister please confirm that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are providing additional resources by way of human resources to assist that staff person when they are away on training and other things so that we don't fall behind further. The number of active files has decreased over the years. We are making improvements. The assessments are done by different individuals, psychiatrists and psychologists who we have

contracted with. That has really helped us bring down the number. Those relationships will continue.

We will continue to bring our case file down. We will continue to provide the services. We are building the business case. We are going to put forward a submission once we have all the evidence we need to justify that, recognizing that all business cases have to compete against everything else in the Government of the Northwest Territories, we need to make sure we do the work right so we have that solid case.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the most vulnerable people in our society. They have intellectual disabilities. They have dementia. They have FAS and its effects. They need to have a relationship with the Public Guardian so that she can make effective decisions on their behalf. There are 77 public guardianship orders in place now. That means there is no family backup. There is nobody else to assist these people in making important decisions about their day-to-day life, and their health in particular. I can't understand why the Minister is not out in front of this and providing the additional staff immediately. My question is: will he reconsider? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member did bring this to my attention, and I directed the department to do the work. They did the work. We are rewriting the policies and procedures manuals, fixing the unit itself so that it can get best value for money and so that the staff are adequately resourced to provide the services that they want. There are 79 public guardianships. There are 85 private guardianships. There is a caseload of new applications.

We are working on these, trying to reduce those numbers to provide the support we need to the residents. I am confident that we are building the case we need to seek additional resources. In the meantime, we will fund within and provide the support centre needed to make sure that work is getting done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 180-18(3):
CANNABIS LEGISLATION PUBLIC
CONSULTATIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice. Would the Minister of Justice please advise this House what process was used to determine which

communities the GNWT visited on consulting on the proposed cannabis legislation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Legalization of cannabis was, of course, announced by the federal government approximately one year ago, so we had a very limited time to meet the target date of July 2018. Staff visited nine communities; Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Inuvik, Tsiigehtchic, Norman Wells, Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, and Behchoko. We simply didn't have the opportunity or time to visit all 33 communities.

In addition to that, there was an online survey that was open to all residents. As I mentioned, public hearings were held in seven regional centres, including Inuvik, and two smaller communities, including Tsiigehtchic, which has a liquor prohibition regime in place, and Fort Liard. The meetings were well publicized. In addition to the meetings, of course, there was the online survey so that the opinions of residents could be obtained. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: The Minister already answered my next question, so I'll go to my third: does the GNWT have any guidelines to assist the departments to undertake consultations?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, of course, this government is committed to establish open government policy. In these circumstances, again, with the limited timelines that we had, we decided to visit a cross-section of the communities. With respect to Fort McPherson specifically I know that letters were sent to Indigenous and committee governments, including the Hamlet of Fort McPherson, the Tet'it Gwich'in council band, and the NWT Association of Communities. In addition to that, there was a teleconference in which the people of Fort McPherson participated. Also, there was the NWTAC meeting a couple of weeks ago where officials and Cabinet Ministers attended. We are working currently to establish and develop public engagement guidelines so that we will have a policy in dealing with matters such as this.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 181-18(3):
MIDWIFERY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like the Minister of Health and Social Services to give us the current state of affairs on development and implementation of midwifery services on a regional and territorial basis. Given

that the latest on midwifery does not present a solid path or timeline towards a Northwest Territories midwifery program, what concrete steps are being taken by the Minister to implement midwifery across the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Department of Health and Social Services are still supportive of midwifery services. It is a mandate item of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The report was completed with 16 recommendations. We agree with all 16 recommendations. We are now moving forward with the program design. We're moving forward on the recommendations that were made. We're looking to develop a territorial midwifery program that meets the needs of residents throughout the Northwest Territories. This will include building and strengthening the existing two community-based midwifery programs, but also working with other providers such as community health nurses and others to roll out midwifery.

We're hoping to be ready to roll out midwifery services in the last year of this Assembly. It will go through the normal business processes and be discussed with committee as we begin that official roll-out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for his response. He sort of answered my next question. I believe he said that he was starting to put together the proposal for a territorial midwifery program. Is that something that he can share with the standing committee, and when would he be in a position to do that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We actually have hired a midwifery consultant and we are working with the different midwives in the Northwest Territories to help strengthen the existing services, but our territorial consultants are also working with us to update our procedures and our guidelines to make sure that they're current and they make sense. Those are building upon the recommendations.

I'm happy to have a meeting with committee if committee so desires to walk through where we are and where we're going and where we hope to be by the end of this Assembly.

MR. O'REILLY: Once again, I would like to thank the Minister for that commitment. I look forward to sitting in on that briefing. A number of training standards certification issues have been identified in past reports on midwifery. Can the Minister tell me what steps are being taken now and with what partners to ensure training and administrative

oversight needs are in place to launch the programming once it is funded?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I've already indicated, there was a report done. There were 16 recommendations. We've supported all 16 recommendations and we're moving forward.

The expanded program will allow for a continuity of maternity care and enable greater clinical support for residents of the Northwest Territories. One of the things that's being done right now is the NWT Midwifery Framework. It has been revised and we're entering the final stages of that approval. That includes the work that we're doing on guidelines to make sure that the guidelines are current and that they stay current. Many of these things will evolve over time as new science and new technology comes forward, but we're working on those guidelines now.

We have brought in the consultant, as I said, who is doing a significant amount of work on future design. As I said, I'm happy to meet with committee. I would suggest maybe after session would probably be best, to give us a little bit more time to get through the next couple of weeks. I'm happy to meet with committee to walk through where we're going, where we are, and where we hope to be in the life of this Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Again, I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm sure that he will think about or would probably be able to give that briefing to committee in public, as I know there are a lot of interested folks across the Northwest Territories that would be curious to hear him make that presentation.

The Minister has spoken in the past about how we do have a bit of a complicated health system here with the NWT Health and Social Services Agency. There's the Tlicho Community Services Agency, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. How has the Minister starting to work with these other agencies that are responsible for delivery of programs across the Northwest Territories in the hope of designing and implementing a program on midwifery? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Ultimately we see them being a part of the single system here. We do recognize that there are some unique realities in our healthcare system with two separate boards. We hope to bring Hay River into the public service at some point. Until that happens, there is a midwife representative from the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority on the territorial midwifery expansion working group. They are participating in

a design and participating in the work that is needed to be done before we could actually roll out a midwifery program.

We've also been engaging with the TCSA on the midwifery program expansion. We're planning to do more of that in the coming weeks and in the coming months. It's a little different, obviously, because of the structure that did exist with the TCSA, but they've been very open to working with us on being a part of a single system in the Northwest Territories. We expect they'll have some issues they want to address. We'll certainly work with them to address the issues that they raise. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 182-18(3):
RED ALERT IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A follow-up to my questions on red alert that was made by our Premier last November. My first question: the people of my region agree that Northerners should have the ability to make their own decisions, but federal policies and decisions like the Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Moratorium affect the kinds of decisions that we are able to make. Can the Premier tell me how his efforts to lobby the federal government and raise awareness on Northwest Territories priorities through the red alert will help support economic development in the Northwest Territories, and more specifically, the Sahtu region? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the red alert was about standing up for northern priorities and making the point that Northerners need to be making their decisions about what happens in the North. Also, it points out that, if the Government of Canada shuts down an economic sector in the Northwest Territories, for example, there should be an accompanying economic strategy.

As you recall, when the fishing industry was shut down in Newfoundland, there was a \$9 billion compensation package that was announced at the same time as the moratorium. People throughout the Northwest Territories want to be sure that their children and grandchildren can look forward to a strong future with good jobs. Canada still has the power to make a lot of decisions that will affect the economy and the future of the North. We need to make sure they understand northern priorities when they make those decisions, particularly around their desire to have a strong economy.

The Northwest Territories' interests and priorities are not well-known or understood within the federal government or within southern Canada, which can lead to decisions that lead economic development and program and service delivery that has often been designed pursuant to settle self-government and land claims agreements.

The red alert is about bringing awareness and starting a conversation with the federal government, and making our interests and priorities heard and understood. Northerners need a plan for the long-term social and economic development of the Northwest Territories, and Canada needs to be a part of that, including making concrete commitments to strategically invest in areas that would create the greatest benefits for Northerners including new and existing sectors of the economy.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Premier for the reply. I understand the conditional challenges facing our territory, which leads me to my second question. The Sahtu, Dene, and Metis land claim confirms the rights of Indigenous people in my region to participate in decision-making about the land and resources and the benefit from the economic development. Can the Premier tell me how red alert helps support the rights of Sahtu, Dene, and Metis?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Partnerships with Indigenous governments is part of how we do business in the Northwest Territories. The land claim and self-governed agreements that have been negotiated in the North are an important way to achieve the kind of reconciliation that Ottawa is making a priority right now.

The Sahtu land claim confirmed and clarified some very important rights for Dene and Metis people of the regions, including management of renewable resources within the settlement area, land use planning within the settlement area, environmental impact assessment and review within the Mackenzie Valley, and regulation of land and water use within the settlement area.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to the implementation of the land claim agreement and wants to ensure that Sahtu, Dene, and Metis continue to be able to exercise their rights. We are also committed to ensure Northwest Territories Indigenous people's share in the benefits of development in the Northwest Territories is reflected in an agreement our government signed with its Indigenous governments. We have provided for resource revenue sharing, and we will work with the Sahtu people to develop and contribute to the Arctic policy framework that will help guide federal investment and develop their vision for the Arctic up until 2030.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Premier for that reply. On the issue of resiliency, my third question: we know that the federal government is working on an Arctic policy framework to guide its decisions in the North. Can the Premier tell me how the GNWT is going to make sure that NWT priorities and economic interests are reflected in the Arctic policy framework?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Arctic policy framework is still under development, and the structure of the framework is still being negotiated and confirmed, but the federal government has committed to a chapter for each territory to set out their priorities. It is also expected there will be a chapter on Indigenous priorities.

The government of the Northwest Territories will have the lead for developing the Northwest Territories chapter, and has been engaging Indigenous governments and other stakeholders to ensure Northwest Territories use and priorities from federal policies and plans. Also, Mr. Speaker, the three territories have developed a Pan-Territorial Vision on Sustainable Development to help inform territorial interests, including the need for economic opportunities for people in the North to build self-reliance; live in healthy, vibrant, prosperous communities; and build capacities to reach their full potential.

I want to see this vision clearly reflected in Canada's framework, and we will continue to do our best to support and be involved in this process.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Premier for that reply. Being a supporter of devolution, the devolution agreement included a commitment to negotiate management of offshore oil and gas between Canada, the GNWT, and the IRC. Can the Premier tell me what progress has been made with Canada on keeping this? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Our government has been engaging with the Government of Canada to try to make some progress on a specific commitment in the devolution agreement to begin negotiations of a co-management of the Beaufort Sea. As the Member knows, we have just passed the one-year anniversary of Canada implementing a moratorium on offshore exploration in the Beaufort Sea. Specifically, they have said they are definitely off-limits to new offshore oil and gas licences, to be tested every five years by a science-based review.

Also, as well, federal officials have been approaching and asking oil and gas companies with licences in the Beaufort Sea what it would take to

give up their leases and licences. Obviously, there's a different intention there. Canada negotiated specific commitments to negotiate co-management of offshore oil and gas resources with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Inuvialuit Regional Council, and those negotiations are not taking place in spite of several requests. The Government of the Northwest Territories' position is that it has a right to be involved in management of offshore oil and gas resources, and this was recognized in the devolution agreement, and the unilateral imposition of a moratorium was contradictory to that.

Along with IRC, we continue to communicate to Canada our interest in getting started on negotiations and fulfillment of this commitment of the devolution agreement. Northerners need a plan for the long-term social and economic development of the Northwest Territories, and Canada needs to be a part of that. We are waiting for the federal government to give us a response as to whether we will proceed with negotiation of co-management. There is provisions for dispute resolution in a devolution agreement, and we are awaiting some feedback from the federal government before we look at our various options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 183-18(3):
HEART DISEASE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in my statement I talked about the situation with heart disease in the Northwest Territories, and Canada as well. Trying to address that, this government has a wide and varied approach. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Chronic disease, including heart disease, contributes to sudden deaths in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Health and Social Services has identified tackling chronic disease as one of their major policy and program goals. How will the department take on heart disease in 2018-2019?

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to chronic diseases, which obviously includes heart disease, we're trying to take a prevention approach, which means we are really focusing on trying to encourage healthy lifestyles for residents of the Northwest Territories, but also put in place mechanisms to help educate people on how to prevent some of these things from occurring. We also need to make sure that we're enhancing

screening. We are providing quality screening so that individuals can get screened early so that, if treatment is required, we can provide it.

There are a number of things that are happening currently. We have healthy living fairs that are travelling throughout the Northwest Territories providing information to residents on a number of chronic conditions and the types of things we need to do. There has been a lot of work done on identifying healthy foods. We would work with the NWT Sports and Recreation Council to promote healthy exercise, exercise on a regular basis. There are a lot of things happening, but recognizing that science is continually evolving, we're learning new things. We're also working on a chronic disease and prevention management framework, building upon past work but moving forward with a new framework that's really going to be focused. It's going to be a patient-centred approach, and this will build upon some of the existing things we are doing at communities, the good partnerships that we have out there to encourage more healthy living and wellness. That's on top of the existing things that we're doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply. The Minister has to be commended, and indeed in his department, in terms of undertaking education initiatives to ensure that people do live a healthy lifestyle. One of the challenges, of course, is language. My question is, once again, did the department recently work with communities in the Sahtu region to develop a Sahtu glossary for cancer terminology with entries in multiple dialects? This is some incredibly valuable work, and I congratulate all those who made it possible. With heart disease matching cancer for health impacts in the NWT, can the department work toward a similar glossary in other Indigenous languages? For example, Deh Cho Slavey?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Obviously, I'd love to take credit for that work, but it was really work that was led by the communities. It was incredibly valuable. I think the people of the Sahtu really need a pat on the back for the incredible work they've done to create this glossary and get it out to residents of the region. The department did play a role; we did provide some support in the form of some human resources and some other supports. It was a great tool. The department is absolutely open to working with other regions, other language groups, to create similar documents, recognizing that, really, it needs to be community-led, and we're there to, certainly, partner and help as best we can. We think it's a great idea. We would love to see more.

MR. NADLI: The Minister stated that steps were being taken, apart from education initiatives, in terms of prevention. I'm a member of the Standing

Committee on Social Development, and that committee has pushed for the department to take targeted action towards smoking prevention and cessation programs in our small communities. How has the department taken action on anti-smoking work in our small communities?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Over the years, there have been many different approaches to encourage people not to smoke here in the Northwest Territories.

One of the things that has been done is we've obviously been working with communities. We feel that communities are really one of the appropriate places to be leading some of this work, and many of the communities have included this type of initiative under their community wellness plans, but the Member is right and committee is right. We need to continue push as a department as well. The department, to that end, has recently launched the Let's Clear the Air campaign, which focuses on the importance of lung health. This campaign has launched in January of this year, and promotional materials have been shared across the entire Northwest Territories.

Last May we brought youth from across the Northwest Territories together as part of our commitment to healthy living and wellness. This gathering was a great opportunity to hear from youth and share information about healthy living. Workshops on lung health and smoking cessation were an incredibly important part of this event.

Our Healthy Living fairs, that the Member I'm sure is aware of, that travel around the Northwest Territories also provide an opportunity for residents in our small communities to learn directly about lung health and smoking cessation, through presentation and interactive learning opportunities. So if the Member hasn't had an opportunity, when one of these fairs comes to his community or region, I encourage you to go. I encourage everybody from your region to go and look at some of the interactive displays and other information that is available to show how important it is not to smoke for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, recently I did find myself in the community hall in Fort Providence and it was packed, and it wasn't because of the bingo; it was the health fair that was happening. So I just wanted to follow up with the Minister in terms of what are the plans in terms of maybe building upon the success of the health fairs that are happening throughout the NWT communities? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm glad the Member had an opportunity to attend one of the healthy living fairs; and I hope the Member had an opportunity to stroll through the giant colon and see the impacts of colon health and cancer.

For the rest of the Northwest Territories, it's certainly an interesting adventure. The health living fairs are an incredibly important tool. I think it's great that they're getting out to residents of the Northwest Territories, and I'm thrilled, absolutely thrilled, to hear that the event was packed. I think as MLAs, as Ministers, we all need to encourage our residents to go to these fairs and learn about prevention techniques and other things that can be done. We need to take care of ourselves. We all have some personal responsibility to live healthy, and the more people who can be educated, the better. So yes, these fairs are going to continue, they're important, and I encourage you to encourage your residents to attend and take a stroll through the giant colon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 184-18(3):
ROADS TO RESOURCES – ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the last couple of days I've been talking about the road to the Slave Geological Province with regard to my Member's statements. This is obviously a very significant project that could provide many important benefits to the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it's a major piece of our mandate, but it still remains a little bit unclear as to what our vision and commitment for this critical piece of infrastructure really is. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure. Last year the Minister advised the Assembly that the government was conducting a P3 business case assessment of this critical piece of infrastructure. I wonder if the Minister can provide the House with an update with regard to this assessment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The P3 business case, we continue to work on it and it should be done shortly, if it isn't done already. I'd have to check on that. We have submitted our comprehensive proposal to the National Trades Corridor Fund with the federal government; we did that last November. We're hopefully going to hear about this funding in the coming months from federal government on what the uptake on that is going to be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his update. I'm hopeful that we're going to see a positive reply here from the federal government. So I guess the next question, then, would be: if the funding and the P3 is approved, can the Minister inform us what the actual next steps would be?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: That's going to depend on the level of funding. This is a significant project that's been submitted, like I said, with the National Trades Corridor Fund, which is application-based with all of Canada. That's where it's sitting presently. There's \$2 billion for the whole country. Depending on the level of funding we're getting, it could be done in various stages. We'd have to conduct some environmental studies and some engineering studies before we can move to an environmental phase. Depending, of course, on the amount of funding we get, we're going to have to involve consultation in engaging people Indigenous groups and people in the Northwest Territories.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. The Minister touched on the idea that we would have to undertake an environmental assessment. We know that recently a major concern is the potential impact that this corridor might have on the Bathurst caribou. We've seen roadways built in other areas that, you know, have had some effect on wildlife: our Highway 3 going south, we see bison along the road all the time; the Porcupine caribou have been crossing the Dempster for many years, and they are a thriving herd. We know the Bathurst is a fairly sensitive herd. They are, or are near being considered, an at-risk species. I just wonder: can the Minister advise what the Department of Infrastructure is doing or who they are working with to understand the impacts this road might have on the Bathurst herd?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I said, this is early days of this project, but we are very mindful of the caribou, moving this whole project forward. Infrastructure has been working very closely with the Department of ENR to identify gaps, particularly around knowledge and opportunities around the caribou. We realize that, as this project advances, this type of work with ENR and others to explore the migration route options and to reduce the impacts of caribou on our proposed route would have to take place, and we will continue to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 185-18(3):
PERIMETER FENCE REPAIR AT NORTH SLAVE
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice for an update on the perimeter fence at NSCC. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the incident of August 2016, once we recognized that there were some improvements that needed to be conducted at the facility, early attempts were not as successful, as the bids came in at way above what we were expecting. However, we are still working on this, and hopefully this situation will be resolved in the near future. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: I'm going to quote from Hansard here from September 27. I quote the Minister saying, "I understand this project is now under construction and that it will be completed by mid-October. It is on course to be completed, as I say, by October, so the project, which I know has been long awaited by residents in the area, should be completed within the next couple of weeks."

Residents are still waiting, Mr. Speaker. What kind of timelines can the Minister give us? These are unacceptable delays.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: There were really two projects here. I understand the work on the fence. There's the outer fence that work has been done on, and I'll have to check on that. The improvements that were considered necessary after the escape that took place in 2016 have not yet been completed. I'm hoping to bring good news about that shortly.

MR. TESTART: I won't read from Hansard more, but if you want to look at it, I say I criticize the Minister for hoping a lot and not promising firm results back then. I'll do the same now. Why are we only hoping for results on this fence? What is the hold-up? When can we get it done?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Again, I'm not certain whether the Member opposite is talking about the exterior fence or changes that are needed on top of the building. We are working on both of these projects. I understand that one had been completed. I'll have to get back on the Member on that.

The other one, I expect, will be completely shortly. I think we've gone out for proposals on that, but I will certainly keep the Member informed.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister has completed the work on the fence, it will be good of him to be able to tell me that today on the floor of the House. I understand he can't, and that's a concern for me. He knows I'm concerned about this issue. The security work that's been going on, the building that he mentioned, that

money has been appropriated for that. It still hasn't been spent. We still can't find a contractor. Why? What is the hold-up? Why can't we spend this money? Why can't we get this work done? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As mentioned previously, the problem was that, although money was allocated for the project, the bids came in at very, very high amounts and we know we couldn't proceed with those very large bids. I will advise the Member opposite or the House as to the status on both of these projects. I am, again, hoping that the improvements to the building, the interior part, will be completed shortly. As I said, we went out for bids, I believe a couple of times, and the bids came in at much too high. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 186-18(3):
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION DURING
PREGNANCY

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided.] Marsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right. A true diagnosis of FASD does require the mother to acknowledge that she has been drinking. Sometime, that is not forthcoming, but we will work with pregnant mothers to educate them on the harms and the risks of drinking while intoxicated. We're certainly going to be expanding this conversation to include the risks of smoking cannabis while pregnant, because both alcohol and cannabis do have detrimental impact on the developing brain.

Our nurses and our doctors who are providing prenatal care are aware of the information. They have information from national sources but also local sources to help educate these mothers to encourage them not to drink. It's obviously, Mr. Speaker, easier said than done. We do have situations where we may have pregnant mothers who are chronically addicted to alcohol, which is why we've expedited the referral process to get these mothers down to treatment so that we can help them get off alcohol.

Between education in the clinics and the supports we're providing, we're trying to make sure that mothers are educated and mothers are not drinking or smoking cannabis while pregnant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: [English translation not provided.]

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Similar to my last response, when it comes to educating mothers or expectant mothers, even mothers from small communities, we do rely on our health practitioners, community health nurses, or doctors to help share that information with them and make them aware.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the western and northern provinces and territories, we sit on a national FASD network. We work with the Canadian FASD Network, which does a significant amount of research, and they've put together a lot of really solid materials on the harms of drinking while pregnant.

This information is available to our staff and to our residents. We don't have a campaign per se. We focus on mothers when they are pregnant. I will ensure that that information is getting out to our practitioners so that they can, in turn, make sure that pregnant mothers have that information.

I have recently attended a number of clinical appointments, and I have seen that information available in our clinics. I will verify that we do make that information as available in some of our smaller and more remote communities.

MR. BEAULIEU: [English translation not provided.]

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We have the Aboriginal Health and Community Wellness Division within the Department of Health and Social Services. I'm happy to say that they have been working very closely with Education, Culture and Employment on new health curriculum here in the Northwest Territories that focuses on some of the realities and challenges that our people are facing. It does focus on prevention, and it's my understanding, but I will certainly confirm, that there is information in there on pregnancy and the risks of alcohol on a child of a pregnant mother.

Certainly, we need to go further and make sure that there's more information in that on the impacts of cannabis on the developing brain, because, as I said, a pregnant mother smoking cannabis or drinking will both have detrimental impacts on the child and their developing brain.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided.] Marsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member is right. I mean, we all need to work together to help people make productive choices and understand the impacts of their actions, and drinking alcohol while pregnant is certainly a problem. There is money

being spent on that which should be spent on healthy choices for the mother while she is pregnant, healthy eating, healthy living.

I'm certainly prepared to sit down with the Member and get a better, clear understanding of exactly what he's asking and figure out how as an Assembly we can work to help people understand the impacts, including the costs, the impacts, of consuming alcohol. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 187-18(3):
PUBLIC HOUSING POLICIES REGARDING
DRUG TRAFFICKING AND BOOTLEGGING

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the recent NWT Association of Communities meeting with Hay River, the Minister of Housing was questioned by one of Hay River's representatives about the issue of drug dealers and bootleggers living in housing units. Her response actually prompted an editorial which appeared in today's Hub newspaper. The editorial echoed the opinions of others who brought this to my attention.

People have concerns about this. One of the concerns is about fairness. People don't like coming home from their second job, which they need so they can afford to pay their mortgage or their rent, and seeing another brand new Ski-Doo parked in front of a housing unit when they know that the person who owns that Ski-Doo and lives in that house declares no income and pays next to nothing for rent despite having a steady income from the sales of drugs.

The other obvious concern is about community safety. People don't like the government providing safe spaces for illicit activities which harm the community. I have been told by some that they see this as the government is complicit. For my first question, I just want some clarification: what is the Housing Corporation's policy regarding bootlegging and drug dealing in housing units by tenants? By trafficking, I mean all aspects of trafficking, storage, packaging, et cetera, not just the physical exchange of money for drugs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our current policy on bootlegging or selling drugs, trafficking, is that we do follow the Residential Tenancies Act, which says that no one shall commit an illegal act or permit another person to do so. That is in our lease that people sign, that they are not allowed to do that. If that someone is reported to the local housing organization that they

suspect their neighbour is selling drugs or bootlegging and is causing a disturbance, the local housing organization will go over and ask the person who the complaint is against to make sure they don't disturb their neighbours. That is what we do.

If the person is convicted, then we can file a remove tenancy order to the rental officer to look for eviction. That is our current policy, although I must state that we are in the middle of revising all policies. That is one that I am looking at seriously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: It is good to hear they are looking at it seriously. Just to be clear: does the Minister consider it a problem that the residents of the NWT and the Housing Corporation pay to house active drug dealers and bootleggers?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Absolutely. I consider it a problem that we have people who are maybe selling drugs or maybe bootlegging in our housing units. We have children in those units. We have family members. It is a concern. However, I am bound by the law, and as so, we have to respect the law. The law does specify what exactly we can do when we look at evictions. Although I would love to be able to go and kick out drug dealers, suspected, or every bootlegger, I have to abide the law, which says that I have to have proof.

MR. SIMPSON: I understand that. I should say people who are assumed to be drug dealers, housing those people, I know that there is a policy when they are convicted. The Minister admitted it is a problem. Because it is a problem, does the Housing Corporation, as a landlord and a publicly funded entity, have a responsibility to ensure that it is not a providing a safe space for these illicit activities to occur?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We do look at it. We do take responsibility. We recognize that we need to make our housing units as safe as possible for all residents of the Northwest Territories. We can't act on speculation, though. We need to recognize that people have human rights. We get a lot of people who complain about their neighbours. We can't just jump on every complaint. We need proof. I do hear the community, and I do hear that it is an issue. I am encouraging people to actually step forward and actually bring it to our attention, but also call the RCMP.

We are bound by the law. Like I said, one of the factors that we had within the law, within the Residential Tenancy Act, says that we just can't walk into someone's unit if we hear that they are selling drugs or bootlegging. We need to give them 24 hours' notice, and that notice has to be in writing and it has to specify the purpose of our entry. My

suspicion, I may be wrong, if I give a bootlegger or drug dealer 24 hours' written notice that I am coming in to see if they are bootlegging or selling drugs, there will be no drugs or no alcohol there in the 24 hours. We take responsibility, but we also need to abide by the law.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there are legal constraints the corporation is bound by. I know this isn't an easy issue, and I know there are issues related to children in these houses, too. If there is a mother and father looking after children and they are dealing drugs, what do you do? Do you just kick them all out? The children are victims in that situation, as well. I know this isn't an easy issue, and I know the Minister has said they are looking at all the policies. Can she give us some insight into what they are looking at as solutions to this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: When I talked to the first question and was answering about what our policies are, we do have a policy that says that if someone is convicted of a criminal offence, the local housing organization can -- and specify "can," not "shall" -- can terminate that one person and ask for the other family members to be able to stay. "Can" is not good enough for me in our policy renewal.

We are looking at it within a gender-based analysis, which means: how does that affect people? When I look at the gender-based analysis within the Residential Tenancies Act, currently, it only states that we can ask one party to leave if there is an emergency protection order in place, a peace bond, or a protection order. Often, those things aren't in place for people who are in those kinds of situations.

I will share a story. I had a phone call, actually, from a woman in a small community who had concerns that an elder, one of her relatives, their grandchild was living with the elder. The grandchild was selling drugs. The person phoned me and they wanted me to kick out the grandchild, but they didn't want the grandmother kicked out. They didn't want their elder kicked out. I didn't want the elder kicked. I can understand, being a grandparent and the things that sometimes we might put up with with our children. I am not saying it is okay. It is not okay. Sometimes we make bad choices to protect our children because the consequences to them would be dear.

We are looking at it within a gender-based analysis. We are looking at: can we change our current policy so that, if someone is convicted, it will not be

a "can" but it will be a "may," that if the other person is not convicted, that person and their children will be allowed to reside in the unit. Only those convicted will be evicted. That is one thing I am doing.

I really encourage people: please step up. I can't do this alone. Please report. If you see drug dealers or bootleggers, call the RCMP. They do have the means to be able to investigate. We want them off the streets. We want them out of your communities, but I need your help in doing this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 101-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM
MARKETING PLAN 2018/19

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Northwest Territories Tourism Marketing Plan 2018/19." Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 102-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 73-
18(3): ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION
MEASURES

TABLED DOCUMENT 103-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
114-18(3): MEDICAL TRAVEL COVERAGE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 73-18(3): Alcohol Harm Reduction Measures"; and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 114-18(3): Medical Travel Coverage." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 6:

CANNABIS LEGALIZATION AND REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTATION ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 6 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Western Canada Lottery Act; Minister's Statement 19-18 (3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; Minister's Statement 32-18 (3), Update on the Northwest Territories Disability Framework and Action Plan; and Tabled Document 63-18-(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 7-18 (3), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House with Member Hay River North in the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates, 2018-2019, with the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the document after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, the Department

of Health and Social Services, which begins on page 163. The departmental summary can be found on page 167. We see it's a \$461 million department. I will open up the floor to the Minister of Health of Social Services for opening comments. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to be here to present the 2018-2019 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. The total proposed budget for the department is \$461,563,000. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of about \$38.3 million, which is an increase of 9 per cent over the 2017-2018 Main Estimates.

Highlights of the proposed estimates before you include:

- Forced growth of \$9.2 million;
- Sunsets and other adjustments of \$25.5 million, including \$12.6 million to address existing base deficiencies in six high-pressure program areas that have been experiencing significant growth; and
- Funding for initiatives totalling about \$3.995 million.

The department's proposed spending in 2018-2019 continues to support the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

Some specific funding activities in support of these priorities include:

- \$2.863 million to operationalize the new Norman Wells Health Centre and Long-term Care Facility;
- \$762,000 for the Yellowknife Sobering Centre;
- \$653,000 to enhance rehabilitation services for children;
- \$848,000 to enhance services for FASD and autism;
- \$1.234 million to establish school and community child and youth care counsellors in the Dehcho and the Tlcho; and
- \$498,000 to establish three positions to respond to the additional requirements for front-line inspections, advice and support to agriculture-related operators, food establishments and the associated policy, and regulatory work to support the multi-department efforts to implement the GNWT Agriculture Strategy.

Mr. Chair, that concludes my opening remarks, and I am looking forward to answering any questions the Members may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I understand you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort those witnesses into the House. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with me today is Jeannie Mathison on my right, who is the director of Finance, and Mr. Bruce Cooper, for his first time at this table, is our new deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Welcome to the witnesses. Committee, we previously agreed to forgo opening comments. Does committee again agree to forgo opening comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. As is usual, we will defer the departmental summary until after consideration of the activity and detail. The first activity can be found on page 171, administrative and support services. Does committee have comments or questions about this? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, when we spoke about the business plan for this department during the business plan meetings in November, there was some discussion about quality assurance and the potential of making a division of quality assurance within the department. Could the Minister please update us on the progress towards this action? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we don't have a quality assurance division in the department, and I suppose I will need the Member to remind me. I remember talking about quality assurance in the Territorial Health and Social Services Authority who is there at the frontline level to take input from residents who have concerns so that they can explore those and make improvements. I am certainly open to have the Member remind me if that is otherwise, but it has always been clear in my mind that we had been talking about the Territorial Healthy Authority.

Now, with that in mind, we do have positions in the Territorial Authority. We are working to have a centralized sort of support to that, i.e. a director or something along those lines who can provide some oversight at a territorial level, but we also need to

make sure that we continue to have those supports at a regional level within the Territorial Authority to make sure that those are available to residents when they do have concerns.

The department itself as we continue to strengthen the single authority model will be more of a ministry as opposed to a program delivery, so there is going to be some role as far as writing policies, procedures, regulations, but not so much as far as monitoring the day-to-day quality. That would be the Territorial Authority.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, and I just ask the Minister and witnesses to indicate when you are finished talking so that our tech team knows when to change the microphones. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, according to the notes that I took at the time, there is a need for greater clarity of roles between the department and the authority, so this would seem to be on point to the discussion we are having now. How does quality assurance in the department relate to quality assurance at the front line? Who is driving the bus there? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the department, we have a number of different functions, including our policy division. We've got nursing consultants. We've got the chief public health officer. We have a number of responsibilities that are responsible for developing policy related to particular activities, such as nursing or midwifery and those types of things. When operationalized, those are operationalized through the Territorial Health and Social Services Authority and our two other partner boards. The quality assurance that I have been referencing is quality assurance at the authority level, which is responsible for taking any complaints or concerns from a resident and investigating those concerns and making recommendations on the operations to ensure that these incidents, as they occur, do not occur again.

We do have to have, and we do have a close relationship between the authority and the department. When the department is working on policy, territorial-wide policy, they absolutely engage frontline providers and staff within the authority who can provide information and help on the design because, bottom line, they are front-line providers. As far as quality assurance, I mean, there are many different ways of looking at that. We do collect data so that we can make evidence-based decisions. Much of that data come into the department for analysis so that we can all, in this

room, in this building, as well as in the department, work to make evidence-based decisions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I just ask when you're done talking, just to mention it. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wonder, then, for example, how audits work in this process. Is there going to be a regime of regular audits based on the quality assurance policies? How broad are these policies going to be? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Recognizing that there are so many different program areas within the Department of Health and Social Services, with respect to new programs or amendments to programs in the future, program designs will often occur in the department where standards will be set that must be evaluated and monitored over time as part of the evaluation framework which we hope and intend to put into place with respect to programs we are putting forward. The authorities will be the authority, and our two partner authorities will still be required to collect the data and make sure that the data is being compiled on a regular basis and funnelled up so that it can reported on in this House and in other venues.

As far as individual audit goes, for instance, the Child and Family Services, as an example, the individual audits will be done by the authority with support from the -- sorry, it is the other way around. It will be done by the department with support from the authority and the appropriate regions because they are the front-line individuals with the data. It has to be collected in partnership.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there was also some discussion during the business planning about a new formal mechanism to deal with complaints. Can the Minister update us on that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again, my memory of that particular conversation is around what we wanted to do in the individual authorities so that individuals have an opportunity to provide or register their concerns in the Territorial Authorities, so it can be reviewed by our quality assurance staff and so that recommendations can be made for improvements.

Now, having said that, there are also other venues for our residents to make complaints. For instance, if a resident has a concern about a physician, there is a formal mechanism for residents to make complaints about physicians. If a resident wants to make a complaint about a particular practitioner and their performance, there are mechanisms by which, through licensing bodies or others, an individual can make a complaint about an individual professional. If it comes to system concerns or process systems or process concerns in a health centre or a hospital, that is where we would really like them to engage our quality assurance people.

In some of our authorities previously, those quality assurances were also patient representatives, and we are trying to separate those two a little bit, so that a patient representative is there to provide guidance and support through the system, and we have quality assurance who can take complaints and investigate and find improvements, so we're trying to separate those a little bit and have them as sort of two different things, recognizing that they obviously have to work hand in hand from time to time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will just finish this section with a comment, and the comment is that I recognize that there is a difference between the department and the authority, and that the two are defining their roles and their relationship to one another. When it comes to this business plan, we only have the opportunity to talk to and have accountability with the department, so there is a missing link here with accountability with the authority. There needs to be some consideration given about how we as Regular Members provide oversight of the authority as the largest entity funded by the department. I just leave that as a comment. I don't know that there is a plan now, but in the future, we are going to need either to have the department answer on behalf of the authority, or have the authority here themselves. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That already exists according to the legislation for the authorities. The Ministry of Health and Social Services is responsible and accountable for provision of services through the Territorial Health Authority, and they do that through a board which the Minister appoints. I certainly take recommendations from others on the membership. Ultimately, this budget before you does have a significant amount of money that is flowing to the authority, so I would suggest that, if you have

questions that are specific to the authority throughout the document, there are areas that are clearly flowing money to the authority, I think this is the appropriate venue to have the discussion about some of those things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Further questions or comments from committee? I will give committee a moment. I see none. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Looking at page 173, and I see that there is a reduction in staff of two people in this activity area. Can someone tell me what is going on? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I apologize. When the Member referenced the page, I started turning the page and I did not hear the question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly, would you please repeat the question for the Minister.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I'm looking at page 173, and it shows a two-person reduction from 2017-2018. It seems to be located in the Beaufort Delta. Can someone tell me what those two people do and why the reduction is being made? Thanks Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, what's in there is a reduction of two positions in the Health and Social Services Administration Office in Inuvik. However, post-printing of this document, the decision has been made to reduce only one of those vacant positions in Inuvik. The second position now identified is a vacant position in Yellowknife in the information system support. So the insured service coordinator and administrative assistant were the ones in Inuvik; and now it's just one of those.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that answer. So one of the two positions in Inuvik is not going to be eliminated, but there is an additional position in Yellowknife that's going to be eliminated. So the total is still 98? Thanks Mr. Chair. Sorry, again, I am just worried that we're not dealing with the same main estimate page that the Minister seems to be dealing with, so that's going to cause a problem. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I said, originally, it was two positions in the Beaufort Delta; one was an insured services coordinator, and the other was an administration assistant. Since printing this document, we have changed our minds, and I apologize to the Members for the late notice on that. The bottom line is, the insured service coordinator position remains full. We anticipated that the demand was going to decrease there a little bit because we had a significant number of positions, but they're fully busy up there. We had to reevaluate. When it comes to the information assistant position in Yellowknife that we've eliminated instead, it's been vacant for an extended period of time. There were two positions, identical positions; one is filled, and in an assessment, it was determined the workload could be carried by the one position. Eliminating it is not going to change results and it's not going to change or increase workload on the individuals. We feel comfortable that it can be done with one. Then the administrative assistant in Inuvik, it's been vacant for an extended period of time, and we're comfortable that the work can be done in that region, in that office, without that administrative position. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So the page, maybe, that the Minister is looking at for 2018-2019 shows 83 in headquarters and 15 in the Beaufort Delta; is that correct? Thanks, Mr. Chair. For 2018-2019? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, Mr. Chair. In future printings, it will reflect the numbers the Member has identified.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So just before we get too much more into the departmental budget, are there any other changes to the main estimates that we should know about? I'll leave it at that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Nothing further, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: This issue arose when we were looking at the Education, Culture and Employment main estimates, so I just want to encourage any Ministers: if there are changes to what we see in the printed document, they should advise us in advance. This is not a big deal, perhaps, for this page, but I want to try to avoid having this confusion on the floor where the Minister and his staff are looking at one document and we're looking at something different. So just a heads-up that, if there are changes to what they're looking at compared to what we have, we need to know. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'll certainly share that information with the Minister of Finance. As a note, we are looking at exactly the same document. We just have the information that there has been a slight change, and that has been brought to your attention. I take the Member's point and we'll endeavour to make sure that happens. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay, I appreciate the help with that. Where in the department is the agricultural strategy funding located? Thanks, Mr. Chair. Is this the right section? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I shall note that we are reviewing the summary on 171 to 173. I'm sure if you looked beyond that you may find what you're looking for. Have you got another question to this summary activity?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I'm trying to determine where in the departmental budget the -- well the agricultural strategy implementation is in this section, at least \$50,000 of it, from schedule 3 of the business plan, but I think the Minister talked about there being \$498,000 for the agricultural strategy. So can he tell me what the \$50,000 in this activity is for and where the rest of the money is found? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the bulk of the money for the agricultural strategy and the positions that are being created is on page 178. There is \$50,000 that appears in this section, but it's mostly for some of the contract work we're doing up front to get the work done to make this go live. So it's for subcontracting services that we have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes. So the Minister said that the \$50,000 in this activity is for contract services. Can the Minister tell us what that money is going to be used for? Thanks Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the \$50,000 for a jurisdictional review of public health legislation and regulations and identification and development of the NWT regulatory changes under the Public Health Act that are harmonized with federal and GNWT legislation related to public health and agriculture. It's a contract of \$50,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have no further sections on this section. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see this section here, the directorate has responsibility for the overall establishment and strategic direction and coordination of reform initiatives, and finance has responsibility over the administration of agreements. So I'm assuming this is where I would discuss the progress being made in bringing the Hay River Health Authority into the Territory Health Authority. If that is correct, would the Minister please update the House on where that initiative is? The last time I brought this issue up, he said that he was directing his staff to look at the numbers and start creating a plan to make this happen. So could we get an update? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this is the section that will be doing a lot of the policy work, research on that, but it isn't just the Department of Health and Social Services. We'll be working closely with the Department of Finance. We will also have to develop a relationship with the UNW, because they are the bargaining agent of both bodies.

Our first process, really, is to try to figure out what the cost is going to be, which is working with Finance and the Hay River pension provider to find out some of that financial detail. It's moving, but it's moving very slowly, Mr. Chair. We have 18 months in this mandate to make some progress. We hope and intend to make some progress on that, but until

such a time as we can get sort of the numbers really clarified, then we're kind of it's hard to move forward. We are doing that analysis and that work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the departmental initiative, and that's why I'm bringing it up here, so all the Ministers can hear the importance of this issue. Does the Minister have a timeline when we can expect some progress, whether it be the cost or the beginning negotiations or anything like that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, like I said, the first thing we have to do is figure out the pension cost of bringing the Hay River into the public service. I agree with the Member. This is something that's incredibly important. It's something that needs to be done. We're hoping to have that analysis done in time for the next round of budget discussions at the FMB level, and so before the next business planning I'll work with the Member. I'll keep the Member informed. I know that he's very interested in this area and, as soon as I know something, he'll know something. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that human resources has a \$6 million budget in here and so in the meantime, before Hay River is brought into the territorial authority, the responsibility of human resources includes forecasting human resource needs, design, delivery, and evaluation of programs to support recruitment retention specifically related to health and social service professionals. These are all very important things and it doesn't seem like Hay River is getting access to the \$6 million or what's coming of it that we're approving in this budget. That's one of the issues is that we don't seem to have access to everything the rest of the territory does.

I know that, when recruiting is done, Hay River Health and Social Service Authority, they send their own crew down to go and recruit. It's much more difficult to recruit when you are the Hay River Health Authority as opposed to when you are the territorial health authority. That would be my impression, anyway. It's difficult to get people to Hay River because of this outstanding issue with Hay River being out of the public service. I know people tell me all the time in Hay River and Yellowknife, either I have friends in Yellowknife who

work in the health and social services authority who would love to move to Hay River, but they can't do it because of these issues.

I'd just like to bring attention to this, because it's not just the Health Minister who needs to know this. All of Cabinet needs to know this, because it's a big expenditure. I just want to impart on them the importance of moving forward with this. Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Member's point, with respect to the human resource unit, he is both right and wrong in his view. He's right, not all the services being offered by that unit are available to Hay River because of the fact that they're outside the public service, but they are gaining some benefits. We're looking at right now doing a transition from the human resource unit that's in the department, recognizing that it's really a front-line provider that is providing support to the authority. We're transitioning them into the authority. Once they become part of the authority, they'll certainly benefit all front-line providers, including Hay River, as far as some of the work they do.

Hay River already benefits by the work that division has done in the area of physician recruitment, because physician recruitment is already done on a territorial level. There have been benefits, but the Member is correct. They haven't been able to get full benefit of that unit because Hay River is outside the public service.

I've heard exactly the same things as Members here. I know many health providers in this territory. I know many health providers in Yellowknife. I've had health providers who currently live in Yellowknife who maybe once upon a time, not maybe, who once upon a time lived in Hay River, so they'd love to go back to Hay River, but they're not prepared to go back there as long as it's a different pension and they're outside the public service.

I'm with you. We have a mandate item that says we need to get this done. I'm trying to get it done. It's going to be a significant amount of work. We are going to make some tough decisions, because it will likely come with a significant cost. We need to continue to work on this. I'm working to find a way to make this happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Anything further, Mr. Simpson?

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hope that Yellowknifers' desire to flee to Hay River isn't holding up this process of bringing up the Hay River

Authority into the territorial authority. That would be a shame. Nothing further. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Any further questions? Mr. Thompson, then Mr. Testart.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to follow up on Mr. Simpson's questions. How much will it cost to bring in the Hay River Authority into our system? Can you please tell us that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, anything I say at this point will likely prove to not be true, so I'm not going to go out on a limb and say what it will. I can tell you what the ranges have been. In 2015, there was a significant amount of work done on this. At that time, I think it was around \$500 million to bring it into the public service. At that time, the government of the day chose not to. Since we have begun moving to a single authority early, mid-way through the last Assembly, we did some initial work. It looked like it could be around \$20 million.

I couldn't tell you what that number is today. There have been a lot of new employees and employees who have left. There have been employees who have retired. All of these things affect that bottom line. We've committed to go out and do that research again so we can get a solid number to take to the Members and to the FMBS to have that discussion. I think it's safe to say it's not going to be five. It'll probably be closer to 20. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that. I guess my big concern is we start at five. We're around 20 now. If we continue to do it, it's just going to keep on going and going and going. I understand the department needs to do research on it, but at some point, I mean we just got to bite the bullet and do it.

I really think that this needs to be done sooner than later. I honestly believe that needs to be done during this 18th Assembly because, again, if we wait until the 19th Assembly, then we're going to see more increased costs. I guess my concern or my hope is that this will be done by the end of this 18th Assembly. Can the Minister advise if this potentially could be done by the 18th Assembly, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is exactly what we're doing. We're doing the work so we can have a finite or concrete number that we can bring to the Assembly to have a discussion on to see if there's a desire of this Assembly to move on this initiative. We can't really have that discussion until we get the price. We will have that information during the life of this government so that we can have that informative discussion.

I will also note that, I mean, currently we're topping up the Hay River pension by about \$1 million a year. We've been doing that for a very long time. I understand there's work being done to try and improve that, so that there aren't as many asks, but historically we've been coming to the table for about \$1 million a year. We've certainly been doing that since 2005.

I take all your points. I agree with you. We're committed to getting it done. It's in the mandate and it's our plan to have information so we can have an informed decision in the life of this government. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I swear the Minister is in my head and was getting prepared for my other questions. Basically, since 2005 to 2017, we've put in about \$12 million into this fund presently. This is on top of what we actually have to do to bring this authority into the government. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure I understand the question. We need to determine the amount of money we're going to need to bring the authority, which means working with their pension, but also working with the union is the number of things that have to happen. It's not just pension costs. There are going to be some other costs. We need to know what those are before we can have an informed discussion in this room or in this Assembly.

On top of that, historically we've been spending about \$1 million a year. Until such a time as it is properly resolved, I anticipate that those costs will continue. We believe there will be less in the future. There has been some work done in Hay River around their pension, but until we see those numbers drop, I think it's safe to say they will continue, but hopefully at a lesser amount. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. It was confusing. He cleared it up very perfectly, so I thank him very much. Those will be my questions for this section. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under contract services, it looks like there's a 300 per cent increase from the revised 2017-2018 estimates to these documents before us. It looks like the majority of that money, which is a substantial increase to contract services, is going to facility maintenance and support. Can the Minister speak to that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is the service payment for the new hospital, the new Stanton Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Just to be clear, this department's budget is handling the service costs for the hospital? It is not coming from other departments? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is correct, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the Standing Committee on Government Operations' most recent review of the information of the Privacy Commissioner, it became clear to us that the health system isn't able to support the privacy requirements of the Health Information Act. How does this budget plan to address the deficiencies in the technology that is holding back our legal obligations under the Health Information Act? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I was a Regular Member when the Privacy Commissioner came to the Assembly and encouraged us strongly to put in a Health Information Act. We have put in that Health Information Act. I believe it was in 2014 or 2015. We have done a significant amount of work. We

have significant obligations to report. We have hired designated and dedicated people to this file.

A significant amount of work still needs to be done. We have a lot of training to do. There has been some suggestion that we need to simplify the act. That may require a rewrite. It also could be done through maybe some plain-language documents. We have the right people to do this work. We are doing this work. We will continue to do this work.

I think the Health Information Act has been a good thing. There have been a number of incidents that have been highlighted as a result of the Health Information Act being in place that may not have been seen in previous Assemblies where we didn't have the Health Information Act. The privacy commissioner has some solid points. There is more work to be done. We have the resources in here to do it within existing resources. We will get that work done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I grant that we may have the right people in place and we may have the right legislation in place. We don't have the right technology in place. The current technology the health authorities use is not equipped to handle the legislative requirements of the Health Information Act. Is there being addressed by the department in a substantial way? Are we replacing this technology? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the Member's opinion, but he is actually incorrect. The resources we have and the systems that we have can do many of the things that the Privacy Commissioner has done. We just have to basically get it incorporated into the system. Some of these will take a bit of time, and we are committed to getting that done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I was operating under the impression of the most recent report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Her opinion is that the technology is not equipped to handle that. What is the timeline for this work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are working on the plan to address

the issues that were raised by the privacy commissioner but also other issues that have been raised in this area. We are hoping to make noticeable progress in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. I know this is an area that is of import to the Standing Committee on Social Development. I am happy to provide them with a briefing at their request. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't enjoy the privilege of serving on that committee, but I am happy to attend if any briefing is arranged. I think the point when the public hears there are problems with the Health Information Act and the Information and Privacy Commissioner publishes reports on it, there is a concern that this needs to get done. If any information could be offered today rather than waiting until a briefing can be offered to the standing committee, it would be very much appreciated.

I will change my question and just ask: one of the things that was recommended was that privacy coordinators be hired for each health authority. Obviously, moving to a single authority has changed that. How many dedicated staff positions do we have to support the health authority on privacy concerns? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, recognizing that we do take the concerns raised by the Privacy Commissioner very seriously, we continue to move forward on those recommendations. The report was based on a previous fiscal year. Some things have changed since then and before she made her report. We do take her concerns very seriously.

In the past four months, we have hired a new chief health privacy officer, and they have been engaged in discussions across the government and in clinical settings. Coming out of these meetings and discussions, suggestion on how to improve some of the processes and services have clearly been identified by front-line practitioners, clinicians, and others. We are moving forward with those.

In the authorities, every staff member will be trained. Right now, a large number of people have been trained. Our commitment is to get every person trained because every person has a responsibility under the Health Information Act. Every person has a responsibility. We will get that training done. We will get that training rolled out.

At a regional level, the CEOs have the primary accountability for the information in their regional

offices. They have a relationship with our chief information officer. There are some shared responsibilities at a regional level. There are some clear responsibilities. At the end of the day, every person has a responsibility under the Health Information Act. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. The Minister mentioned the potential need to simplify the legislation. Is that something the department is looking into? Will it be part of their legislative agenda for this fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, through the deputy, I have asked the deputy to have our chief health information officer reach out to the Information and Privacy Commissioner to get some ideas from her on what areas we might be able to amend or tweak in order to provide some of that clarity. I am not 100 per cent convinced that it requires legislative change. We might be able to do the same things through a plain-language-type document or other means. We are exploring those right now to see what is the most expeditious and simple for our residents to make sure that they have an understanding of the act.

It may result in some legislative changes. It may not. We are going to reach out to the privacy commissioner to get their sense. We are going to try to come up with a plan to help make it clear to our residents as best we can. I am not going to commit to legislative change at this point because the work hasn't been done to determine whether that is the best avenue at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is the last component of this work. It is good that staff are being trained. I think the training becomes complicated when the legislation is complicated. If the Minister is getting the training done, I expect we will see a decrease in complaints under the act and breaches under the act. What resources are being dedicated towards public education on patient rights under the legislation? I know the Minister just spoke to that work ongoing, but what dedicated resources are in this budget to support that work because it is an important component that is missing from the current information regime in our health system. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't mean to be a doom-and-gloom kind of guy, but as we get more of our people trained and fully up to speed on the Health Information Act, a couple of different things could happen. One of the things that could happen is our staff might be more aware of some of the things or breaches that have been occurring in the past. If they are identified, I hope they are reported to the Privacy Commissioner. There is a chance that as people become more educated, they might be aware that breaches have been occurring. They are reported. We fix them. It is conceivable that could happen, given that we had eight authorities doing things in their own ways for a long time. I think we need to be aware that this work might result in what could be perceived as bad news but may ultimately be good news.

We are working through the health information officers' office to get information that is available, to go to the public to help them understand their rights. We have forms and all of those types of things that are available when a patient goes in to see a practitioner. It helps them understand. We hear from people that it needs to be a little bit clearer. We are working to do that. We have a budget in this area, and that is what those budgets are for, is to do this work, and we will get that work done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Time is up, Mr. Testart. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to follow up on my colleague's questions by giving a couple of specific examples of where there seem to be technological deficiencies in the current electronic medical record system. One is about patients opting out. Apparently, there is no way for them to opt out of electronic medical records. Is that no longer the case? Can they now opt out if they don't want their records collected digitally? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, individuals who access the healthcare system cannot opt out of utilizing the record systems that we have in place. Our priority, and following up on the recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner about concerns raised by others including individuals of this House, is the ability for a resident to block the ability of their information to be shared with others. We didn't think we initially could do that, but we

believe now that we can, so we're working on finding a mechanism whereby a resident, should they choose to, could require us to block their ability for their information to be shared with others; but no, residents won't necessarily be able to say, "No, I don't want any records. I don't want any electronic health records." Our system is going to be an electronic records system. We are moving forward. It will improve quality of care for residents, and there won't be a paper option once we are fully rolled out, but we are looking to find a way to block. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I understand that one of the remedies to offer people who don't want to be part of the electronic medical records is, in fact, to offer them masking where information is concealed. I'm not exactly sure what the right word is, but it's protected, I guess, from certain users in the system; and that the current system is called a legacy system, so it is not that easy to find this fix of masking information on it. Can the Minister elaborate on that point, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am pretty sure we are talking about the same thing, using a different word. We are talking about the resident being able to block their record from being seen by certain individuals within this healthcare system, including certain specific information.

The initial system, as designed, didn't really have that available, but we have been working with the developers to see how we can incorporate that in, and we believe there is a mechanism. We are not 100 per cent sure. I may come back and say I was wrong, but at this point we believe that it is something we can do. If we find otherwise, I will certainly let committee know, and we will be looking for alternative solutions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister give us an idea of when this potential fix is going to be piloted, and when we might hear a resolution to this issue? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the timing is interesting. We haven't completed a work plan on this yet, but I am scheduled to have a briefing in the next couple of

weeks once we have a bit better idea of the magnitude. I will certainly keep Members informed as we move forward as appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just finally on this point: could the Minister commit to proactively informing the committee once he has had the briefing about the status of this issue so that we are also in the loop?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am pretty sure that is what I just said. I am going to keep committee in the loop. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Nothing further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further questions from committee? Seeing none, we will call this summary on page 171, Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, operations expenditure summary, \$87,835,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. We shall move on to Health and Social Services, ambulatory care services, operations expenditure, on pages 174 to 177. Committee wants to refer to the page they are directed to. Any questions on this activity? Ms. Green, go ahead, please.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I see the payment to out-of-territories hospitals has increased by \$9,000,000, or will increase by \$9,000,000 in the next fiscal year. Can the Minister confirm that this is a proactive step on the part of the department to line up actual spending with the budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Nothing further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chair, I guess the first question is: is this where the chemo section is we should be talking about? We should be talking about the chemo. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, this isn't the correct area. The correct area, I think it falls kind of in two different areas, and that's community health and nursing services, I think is the appropriate title. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Is this the area for mental health where we are talking about those new positions, because on page 177, it talks about -- oh, never mind. It answers my question. I have no questions in this area, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Page 177 is the next activity. Nothing further? Anything further from committee? I see nothing from committee. I will call ambulatory care services, operations expenditure summary, \$75,161,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Moving on, community health programs, on pages 177 through to page 181. Comments or questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, during the business plan review, we talked quite a bit about the need to have an adult day program in Yellowknife, and I see that there is now a request for proposals out. Can the Minister please tell us what kind of a day program he is asking potential bidders to bid on? That is to say, does it include people with both cognitive disabilities as well as frailty? How many people will be served? How long a contract is this, and so on? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the RFP is just recently out; I shared it with the Member. We're trying to provide a day program for those, basically, in most need in the Yellowknife area. It's certainly not a broad-ranging program or a program for all residents of the Yellowknife area. It will be for certain individuals and, honestly, I can't remember what we put out as a term on that. So I will have to get back with that information. I'm blanking completely. So I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I recognize that the Minister said that they were going to provide for those with the greatest needs. Could he tell us what that means? How are they defining the greatest needs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there was a bit of a summary and a report done on a review of the day program that was offered at Avens, which is no longer available. We're trying to build upon that report to meet the needs of different individuals here in Yellowknife. We don't see it necessarily the same as some of the day programs in some of the other communities, which are mostly drop-in and anybody can come. We are trying to provide a support to residents of Yellowknife who have family members who are high-needs, or their family is working and they need to make sure that they're not alone for a certain amount of time, and it may change on a day-to-day basis. We have to be flexible on anything we do on this particular one. Frankly, I want to be a little cautious about saying what it's going to look like, because we haven't received any RFPs at this point. So I know it sounds vague and I apologize, but I want to be cautious about overstating it until we actual see some of the RFPs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess it would be helpful to know whether this program is going to serve both of these cohorts; the people with the cognitive issues, the people with the frailty issues. Is this program for both of them? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe the RFP says, "frail elders." So I think that's where the priority is being placed, but I accept the need for flexibility and we'll see what kind of proposals we get. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I realize that the previous program attempted to serve both populations. We have seniors in both populations. So a program that serves only one group of needs and not the other group of needs is necessarily going to be incomplete. I caution the

Minister that, if he chooses to serve one group and not another group, there will be lots of questions from myself and others about why one group has been left out. I don't know if he wants to respond to that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Member's point, and I accept what she's saying. When the assessment was done, it was felt that the highest need was for frailty, and we wanted to make sure that we nailed the highest need. I take the Member's point and we'll certainly continue to have those discussions with the deputy and the department to make sure that they're considering that. Like I said, we haven't seen any proposals yet, and if we find that we have missed something in the future, we're certainly willing to explore it again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just want to turn now to some questions about the proposed new caregiver program. I know a colleague of mine asked some questions about this the other the day, but I just want to clarify a few things. First, the Minister mentioned that there was vision screening and hearing testing available; and I just wanted to know where and when these services are being offered. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair; and I hate to do this, but I'm not sure I understand. What specific area or what specific section are you making reference to, again? Just for clarity.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm talking about the caregiver program. Is this not in this section? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The paid caregiver program? Okay. So, Mr. Chair, the paid caregivers is one of the action items within the action plan that is put together for the Youth Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. We do have some federal money that, obviously, doesn't appear in this budget, that we've been able to obtain from the federal government to do some design and some piloting on those paid caregivers. Now, it could be one of a number of things: one of them would be

family support; one of them could be different people in the community. We are using those federal dollars to develop some different pilots, so that we can go out and test them over the coming years, so that we can make informed decisions on how to invest future money in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, during the business planning process, the committee was informed the options to consider and recommendations for program development will be determined by April 30, 2018. Is that still the schedule? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're still tracking towards that date; that's our hope and our expectation. I accept that weirder things have happened. If we have any difficulties or any challenges that we are not going to hit our targets, I will certainly let committee know.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I understand that some of the bilateral money has actually been included in here, so it is shown right on this page. I apologize for the misunderstanding.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I just remind you to let us know when you're done talking so the sound technicians can switch the mics. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. I'm looking forward to more detail on that. Now, I have a couple of questions on homecare services. We have been told that there is a homecare study that's been undertaken. Could the Minister please update us on the progress of that study? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the RFP for that work has just been released. The intention is for a review to be done of the scope and needs across this territory, in comparison to what we currently have, so that we can have some informed discussions about where future, if any, resources need to be employed to meet homecare needs in the Northwest Territories. So the RFP has just been released. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd be interested to know when this work is supposed to be complete so that we know whether to expect the results to be incorporated in the next business plan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the work we anticipate is going to take a bit of time. It's going to be done by a private contractor. We really have to dig in right at the base community level. At this point, it's not expected that work will be done in time for business planning, but it will be available for future decision-making in the Assembly. I will say that we do appreciate that, in the last budget round, we did have some additional money put into this area and we were able to hire and create some homecare and home support positions throughout the Northwest Territories in the areas where there was a clear and obvious need. We accept that this work needs to be done, but it won't be done in time for business planning. We're anticipating the work will be done closer to the end of the upcoming fiscal year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I know there are going to be people who are disappointed to hear that. The needs for homecare are needs I hear often from my constituents. I have a lot of elderly people in my constituency, and what they ask me is: how have homecare services improved and how will they improve? So what does the Minister suggest I say in response to those questions? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we did have a \$2.5 million dollar investment in the last Assembly, which is base funding and has resulted in the creation of a 11.5 -- I think it's 11.5; it might just be 11 -- 11.5 or 11 home support positions across the Northwest Territories.

We do have a continuing care action plan that includes a number of activities that we are undertaking to support aging in place and help our residents stay in their homes for as long as possible. It isn't just home support workers, but it is pilots like the community caregivers, family care pilots that were working. There are a number of items within the action plan that don't necessarily need new money, but require us to do things different or better.

I would encourage the Member to encourage her constituents to look at the Continuing Care Action

Plan, to make sure that their voices continue to be heard, and work with us as we roll out the different initiatives. Not everyone is about homecare workers. There are other things that are in that report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Your time has expired. Next, I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to rely on the Minister's previous experience in looking at, I'm referring to page 179 on the allowance there of \$1.1 million for the On the Land Healing Fund. Has there been in previous years looking at the Department of Justice for reintegration of clients? Looking at this department, On the Land Healing Fund, there are some similarities for clients there. Has there ever been a cost-shared pilot On the Land Program by both departments for these similarity clients, if you want to refer to them as that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, these dollars were identified and put in place as a result of the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan that identified the need for options. The majority of this money flows directly to Aboriginal governments who run different On the Land Healing Programs designed by them for them. We always indicate that we're happy to provide some human resources or expertise if they require it.

In addition to that, Mr. Chair, there is the NWT On the Land Collaborative that exists in the Northwest Territories. That's where departments like Health and Social Services, Justice, but also third-party funders are coming together to support different On the Land initiatives available in the Northwest Territories. In short, the answer is yes. There are tools and mechanisms and avenues for us to do that collaborative work. Really, I think we need to really pat the organizers of the On the Land Collaborative and the partners on the back for the work they're doing in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I take it there has been a past pilot project between Aboriginal governments, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I don't know how specifically Justice has engaged. I know we participated in some that included ENR and third-party funders, philanthropist groups. I know that Justice does have some budget for On the Land programming that they run through the corrections division, or I don't know if they fully do. Justice has, if I remember correctly, been to some of those meetings of the On the Land Collaborative, but I do not know what specifically they've done. Our relationship has been more with ENR and our philanthropist groups. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to see if there's some common ground and understanding from previous experience, if we can maximize both departments and both funding initiatives here towards that, if there would be an openness and a willingness by this department. Taking a lead on a pilot, we have some discussions on concerned individuals or individuals interested in providing that service in Tulita and Fort Good Hope. I welcome the information and I'll share that with my constituents to see if they want to develop a proposal to access this funding source. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we've really seen the benefits of pooling some of our resources as part of the On the Land Collaborative and getting larger, more comprehensive programs out there. I know Justice has been involved in different programs in the past. I'll absolutely endeavour to make sure that that information is shared both with the Minister and the deputy of Justice. Should they see an opportunity to come in and benefit from that collaboration, I'm sure they'll certainly explore it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick yes or no answer from the Minister first: child and youth mental health is in this section here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Could the Minister please advise what section that could be found in?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: 183.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. The Minister advises that that is found in the community social programs section. Do you have further comments to this activity, Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, I do. Thank you. The next question: FASD and autism, is this in this section here? If it isn't, can the Minister advise us where it is? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, Mr. Chair, it's on page 187, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. That would be in the diagnostic and therapeutic services. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm hoping this is right. The home support workers, is it this section that we need to be in here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, Mr. Chair. No, I'm just kidding. Yes, this is the section, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Right on. I hit the ball. In regards to the home support workers, can the Minister advise us the status of the new positions that were implemented last year and if those positions, especially in my riding, were for home care support workers? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm pretty sure the Member asked this question in oral questions and the other day I said it was seven positions filled, four not filled. I think two of the ones that aren't filled yet are in the Deh Cho, but recruitment is taking place.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did propose the question to you, but not on the floor. You're working on the two that are not filled, are they actually being filled in casual positions right now or is it just vacant right now? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I said before, there are 11 new positions. Seven of them have been filled. We've got four that are currently being recruited for. I can't say why we were unsuccessful in previous recruitments, but they are currently out for recruitment.

Two of them that are out for recruitment are Nahanni Butte and K'aagee in the Member's riding. We've also got one that we're trying to fill in Lutselk'e. We've got one that we're still trying to fill in Inuvik. The rest of them have been filled. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Does Wrigley have their homecare position filled right now? A full-time position or indeterminate half-time position? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not certain of the mechanism by which the authority chose to fill it, whether they chose to fill it on the term or an indeterminate. I do know it's a half-time position and it is currently filled. I will endeavour to get more information for the Minister on whether they've been hired as terms or indeterminate. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that. We've given these positions to the authorities and they make a decision if it's on a casual basis or indeterminate position. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding for these positions is base, so it's part of a core funding. The positions have been created, but yes, authorities, as all employers in the GNWT do, have some freedom to choose whether they want to attempt to fill the positions on term or indeterminate. They will do an assessment of the region community, try to get a sense of who might be available, and go out that mechanism. These are full-time indeterminate positions. They are not going anywhere. How to staff them, the authority does have some freedom of choice based on what they know about the region and whether they think

they can be successful in staffing. I do know that, with the two positions in Nahendeh and Kakisa, the authority is reaching out to the community to see if the community can help identify somebody who might be appropriate. With these positions, it is absolutely critical that we find local people to do the work. I think, for the home support workers, it would be great to recruit local trained, if necessary. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the answer. I guess the biggest concern I have is I know in Wrigley, as the community has told me, it has been based on a casual basis, and they are really concerned with trying to understand why it is not being indeterminate half-time positions, so I guess that is a question I ask the authority. Or do I ask you, as the Minister, to find that information out? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I will get that information for the Member on the five half-time positions that were created in the Nahendeh riding and get back to the Member.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I appreciate that, and I thank you very much. Kakisa, though, is in the Deh Cho, and I think the member from Deh Cho might get mad at me if I try to take that community away. My next question, and I do not know if this is the area, here is the cessation planning regarding smoking and that. I heard the Minister talk about a new program that they are implementing right now, so is this the area that we talk about this program right here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes. Thank you. Yes, the Member is correct. This is the right area; it is under population health. Just going back to the other question, yes, I have met the Member from Deh Cho. He is a pretty reasonable person. I am sure he won't mind me sharing a little bit of information with you, but I will also share some information with him. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, this is the area where population health is located.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that clarification. In regard to

this area here, in my reply to the budget, I talked about the Butthead campaign, the process. I can actually say that it worked really well, from what I've seen. Has the department looked at using this, or are we using the new system or the new program that we have that the Minister talked about today? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have moved forward with a number of programs. The program that I mentioned earlier today in questions from the Member from the Deh Cho, one that was just released recently. During business planning, I did make a commitment to have the department look at the older program Don't Be a Butthead to see what opportunities exist. It retired a number of years ago. At that time, we heard that many of the students were not connecting with it the same as they did when it initially came out. It might have been a timing thing. It might have been it just grew a little tired. We do not know, so I asked the department to do some investigation into whether there was any opportunity to explore revitalizing it. We are going to get that done, but it has not been done. We will be going out and reaching out to some of our stakeholders to see if there is an interest in revitalizing in anyway.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from Mr. Thompson. Next I have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think this section of the budget is where the Minister indicated there were going to be three people hired to help with implementation of the agricultural strategy. Can the Minister tell us what those individuals are going to do generally? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are a couple of things happening. The first thing that we are doing is we are looking forward to putting regulations in. We are almost done getting those regulations ready to go for the sale and distribution of low-risk foods, so that is things like vegetables and other things that can be grown, potatoes, this, that, and the other. If those items are going to be sold by local producers, we need to make sure that the food is inspected, the food is safe, and that it is meeting certain criteria. Those would be outlining the regulations.

To operationalize that, we need a few people to make that happen, which includes an

epidemiologist in Yellowknife, an environmental health officer in Hay River, and I am forgetting the title, but an environmental protection officer, I think, in Yellowknife, so three positions that will be doing that work. They will be helping our producers make sure that the food is meeting standards so that it can be sold in stores. They are also anticipatory as well, because in 2018-2019 we are looking at moving forward with regulations on any other work that needs to be done on higher-risk foods, which includes meat and other things that may be harvested, so it can be sold in stores as well. A couple of different things are happening; round 1, low-risk vegetables, fruits, if you can figure out how to grow them in the North, and things like that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I can teach the Minister a few things about growing carrots, if he is ever interested. Well, we have fruits, too. I have raspberries at the side of the house, but we can have a separate conversation about that. Okay. That all sounds all right. There is, I think, a 5 per cent reduction of locums used in the business plan here, and that is supposed to save \$900,000. Can someone just explain to me what this is about and how we can anticipate that somehow these locums, their work is going to be reduced by 5 per cent? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I am pretty good at growing carrots and potatoes. I have a hard time with fruit, even raspberries; the wild ones do not work so well, so we will take any advice the Member may have.

The \$900,000 is as a result of work that we have already done. We have brought all of the medical professionals under a single authority, and we have been able to get some economies of scale as far as recruitment. We have actually, I think, done better than we have in the past under recruitment. We have more stability in Hay River and Inuvik than we have had in many, many years, and as a result we have seen a decrease in locum use, but we are always going to need locums, Mr. Chair. I mean, there are times when our staff go on holidays or have to go out for training, or sometimes, unfortunately, they do retire or leave and we have to back-fill in a short period. We are still struggling in some areas. There is no question. We are having a hard time finding permanency in places like the Deh Cho, the Sahtu, Fort Smith, but we are hoping to continue as a single medical system. We are hoping to see some benefits there, but we have

already recognized savings and do see them in this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank, Mr. Chair. How is that going to be tracked and reported on? Is that something that we are going to see in the business plan next year? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is as a base adjustment to the budget, so you won't see these dollars showing up in future years. The role of the recruitment of physicians is also going to be part of the territorial health authority, so you probably won't see it specifically. We are comfortable right now with the changes we have made and the improvements we have seen that we will be able to control our spending in this area a little bit better than we have in the past, and we do not feel we need this \$900,000 at this point. Should things radically change, we will certainly be prepared to have a discussion at this point, but we are trying really hard to be a little more creative here. We have approached U of A about some residency options here in the Northwest Territories as well as some outreach work that the medical students at U of A could do to get into small communities which is consistent with some of the recommendations in the TRC report. We are trying to create exposure and awareness of the North to potential practitioners. We are hoping that will result in more stability, even more stability than we are seeing over the last couple of years. It is a work in progress. I think it will always ebb and flow, but I think we are in a good place now with a single medical system. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is helpful to know. This is the predicted savings. I guess I am just trying to figure out next year, a year from now, business plans in the fall. I will ask then: how did the prediction work out? Is that something the department intends to sort of report on somehow in the business plan for next year, where we are at and how we are doing with the anticipated reduced use of locums? I am just wondering where that is going to be reported and tracked, or do I just have to ask at the next business plan? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that the role of hiring and tracking physicians is going to be a part of the territorial authority, they will be the ones that will be compiling that information. I will certainly, through the deputy, have a conversation with the CEO to make sure that is the type of data we are monitoring and so we can see how we are doing.

I will caution the Member: don't expect to see radical changes in year one or two. We have already recognized some improvements. In order to get real trending data on this, give us a few years to get some trending data. We can give you year to year, but I am not sure that is really going to tell you what you want to know. Trending data will give us better results over time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I believe in transformation, as well, but I have a line item in a budget now that says you are going to reduce the expenditures by \$900,000. If FNB doesn't come after you, I will ask the same question next year. Fair enough.

I want to move on to tobacco cessation. I know this is the general area to talk about it. One of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use is to increase the cost of the product. What kind of conversations has the Minister had with his colleague the Minister of Finance in terms of increasing tobacco cost, tobacco taxes to help reduce consumption and then the need for cessation and health promotion programs and so on? I know we have had one small increase in the time that I have been here as an MLA. Is that part of an overall program or plan for reducing tobacco use, and is this something that the Minister of Health is discussing with the Minister of Finance? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in my opinion and I think the opinion of many people, what we do is a multi-pronged approach on tobacco cessation. It is not just a matter of raising taxes. Raising taxes might help, but raising taxes in conjunction with some of the exercises and programs we are putting in place to increase dialogue and encourage youth to stay off will probably give us better results. It is more expensive, and people understand. We hope to see better results.

I have many times suggested to the Minister of Finance that we need to be number one in tobacco taxes in Canada. I will continue to do that. As other jurisdictions jump in front of us, I will once again

encourage the Minister to help us become number one in tobacco taxes. I know last year, we were number two. I don't know where we sit today. I will have a conversation with the Minister of Finance immediately after this and strongly encourage him to make us number one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is helpful. I look forward to hearing more information about it from both Ministers. I know there has been some discussion about how we can get the message out better about the impacts of tobacco, particularly to young people and people in small communities where the rates are higher. What is the department looking at in terms of tailoring its communications efforts and overall programming to try to reduce tobacco use amongst youth and in small communities? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Time has expired, but I will allow the Minister to respond.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are a number of things that obviously need to be done here. I have had a conversation with a large number of leaders in communities across the Northwest Territories and had the conversation about how we get the message out in your community, recognizing that the vehicle in one community might not be the same as the vehicle in the other community. I have had some good feedback. In other areas, I haven't heard too much.

We are trying to reach out. I have directed the authority, through the deputy minister and the CEO, to reach out to the communities to figure out how to communicate information that is important to them in a way that will resonate in their communities, recognizing it may be a different mechanism by community. That is not just about smoking cessation. That is about messaging about when are health providers going to be in your community, who is coming in, when are they coming in, what programs or resources are new to help make sure that our people are informed. That will certainly include work on smoking cessation.

At the same time, the communities have community wellness plans. Many of them have talked about the types of things they want to address. Some communities have chosen smoking cessation as one of the things they wish to address. Frankly, in my opinion, communities are probably some of the best people to identify how information could work. We will give them all the technical data they want. Some have customized it appropriately.

The other thing we are trying to do is: we are working with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to renew the school health curriculum. I talked about that earlier today. I think it is very exciting. We have our Aboriginal Health and Community Wellness division. I think it is honestly the first time that Health and Social Services has actually been actively engaged in curriculum development, so it is very exciting.

In that, they are talking about current and relevant resources that could be available to schools to help encourage children to not take up smoking as a habit. Like I said, I asked the department to do some exploration around "Butthead" and see if maybe there is an opportunity to revitalize or reintroduce it, "Don't Be a Butthead," if it is something the public tells us they want. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am on page 178. On the first line, community clinics and health centres, I see there is a reduction in that. What kind of service is being reduced in this line item? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the primary reduction in that area is the \$900,000 that we expect through the efficiencies of a single physician system in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the second item, there is community mental health and addictions. I know recently, the MMIW in Rankin Inlet. One of the recommendations from the MMIW to the Government of Nunavut was to have more mental health workers in the communities. I believe the week after that, the Government of Nunavut had started a campaign of putting locals from each community as a mental health support worker. I wonder if the GNWT will look at some type of a model like this. There is such a lack of mental health work in the smaller communities. I am just wondering if there are other plans to look at a model similar to this for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Member is talking about the community mental health and addictions, there has actually

been an increase from 2016-2017 into 2017-2018 and again into 2018-2019 for this area. What I think I am hearing from the Member, I think we are working to make improvements in that area through the next section of this budget where we are including the community youth counsellor positions throughout the Northwest Territories. I apologize. We have to make decisions, and we are focusing on Tlicho and Deh Cho as a starting point. We will be rolling through the Territories over the next couple of years. That will also be taking place up in your riding. We are hitting Tlicho and Deh Cho on round one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is good to hear. There is also an increase on homecare and support services. I know I made a Member's statement on this last week about the lack of home support workers in small communities and the importance of those positions for the communities. I am just wondering if there are any other plans with the new agreement with the Government of Canada and the GNWT to reinstate positions like that or create positions similar to that across the Territories' small communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as mentioned earlier, we have increased a number of home support and homecare positions by 11, last budget cycle. There's \$740,000, I believe, in this budget from the federal government that we're using to do the pilots and the design of the pilots for community and family caregivers, and we're also doing the review of homecare. As I said to Member Green from Yellowknife Centre, we don't anticipate getting that work done in time for the next planning cycle, but we do plan on getting it in the life of this government, so that the next government can make informed decisions on where to roll out more homecare positions; but we did create 11 homecare positions last fiscal year, and those positions that have been created, most of them are filled. A couple of them, we haven't been able to fill yet, but we're still trying. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: No, I'd just like to thank the Minister for his responses. I don't have anything else. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is the section where there's community counsellors to deal with mental health and wellness. I've said many times in this House that, not just the Northwest Territories, but Canada, doesn't treat this area of health with the respect it deserves. I think that, if you put resources into this, you reduce costs elsewhere; in income assistance, in sick days, in addictions, in youth pregnancies, and in all of these other areas. The way it stands right now, it's difficult if someone has mental health issues to go and get an appointment just to see a counsellor. It can sometimes take weeks to get in to see someone; and then maybe, you'll get a once-a-month, once-every-two-weeks, sort of, appointment schedule. I've seen it first-hand. It almost seems like, when you call up to get an appointment, they almost want you to say that you're suicidal. That's sort of the metric that they use to determine if they're going to help you or not. I think that we are greatly underfunding this, not just by, you know, a few percentage points, but to a fraction of what it should be. So if someone is having mental health issues in the community, they don't want to say they're suicidal yet, but, I mean, it is detrimental to their daily life. How many appointments per month does the Minister think is adequate to treat someone like that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I do hear the Member and I do know that, in some communities, we have longer wait times than in other communities. We're certainly trying to find ways to deal with that, whether it's through processes or other means. We are moving forward with the creation of more youth mental health counsellors for kids, to get children when they're young, so that hopefully we'll have been able to address problems before they reach adulthood, which we hope will give us exactly what the Member is talking about, about people being able to function normally.

There are also other parties out there. The GNWT is not alone in providing this service. The federal government has funded a significant number of contracts in the Northwest Territories to help people who are dealing with residential school or the trauma of residential school and others. I think they have 57 people on contract to travel to different communities around the Northwest Territories and provide support.

As far as how many visits or appointments an individual has, I'm not a clinician by any stretch of the imagination and I know that a clinician will work with a client and assess what they think an appropriate schedule is as far as the number of visits, the number of meetings that they need to

have. I would suggest that there is no one model that fits all. Some individuals might be good once a month, whereas other individuals might need something daily, depending on their crisis. We did put forward a new Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan in the last government and we are very close to going fully live with our Mental Health Act, which gives us some resources and tools we can use for a small group of high-risk individuals in the Northwest Territories.

So I hear the Member. We are coming out with a new mental health action plan for adults. We just did one for youth. We're also coming out with an addictions action plan for adults. So work has been done in this area, and we're always trying to find ways to improve flow and contact. As a note, if someone identifies as an emergency, and I guess this is the point the Member was talking about, you know, somebody feeling like they have to identify as suicidal even when they may or may not be, but if somebody is in an emergency situation, we can get them into the system immediately, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, and I know what the Minister is saying. He can get someone in when they're in an emergency, but if we could stop 99 per cent of people from reaching that, I think that would be admirable. My next question is: Hay River has a constant shortfall when it comes to counsellors. It seems, they're always hiring, they're always training, there is never enough to go around. What active steps are they taking to remedy that? This is not the first time I've mentioned this. I've brought this up multiple times in the House. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, just to the Member's comments from the last question, there's a large number of things we're also trying to do as far as supporting some prevention work around suicide, and I think that's where we're going with some of the money that we got from the federal government to do some of that work, so that we can help some of our residents earlier on, before they get, maybe, in a very dangerous situation. When it comes to recruitment and retention of qualified mental health and addictions counsellors, it's hard, Mr. Chair. I mean, we've got a national challenge in this area. We do go out through our HR unit there to do recruitment drives to try to encourage people. They've reached out to universities. We know we are going to have a challenge to fill the positions that we're creating for the youth mental health counsellors, and our staff

have already started reaching out to universities to try to get some of these individuals to look to the North. We're helping people understand our compensation packages. We have some of the best compensation packages around, and we're actively trying to create awareness and recruit. We do know it is a challenging area. We're committed to continue that work, and we will get these positions filled. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, and this sort of ties into what I was talking about earlier, and that the human resources division of Health is out there doing all this stuff to recruit these mental health counsellors and Hay River not being part of the authority, although they do have access to some of that, is sort of left on the outs. We need to fill the positions we have now, never mind the dozens of new positions that are being created. So that's my concern, is: what's going on to fix Hay River's situation right now? Are there any active steps being taken? I know there are shortfalls everywhere, but that's the section we're on and that's the question I'm asking. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, although Hay River is still technically out of the authority, they're a separate body. We've been trying really hard to cooperate and work as a single system, and they've been very cooperative with us. I do know that they go out and they do their own recruitment. I'll ask the deputy to have a conversation with the CEO on how we might be able to join forces on some of these recruitment fairs that will help Hay River, obviously, control their costs, while allowing us to get some economies of scale. I think they'll need to be there as well because they're better positioned to speak about the collective agreements and the terms and conditions of employment than somebody who's not in that board. I will certainly see what opportunities there are to share some of our time and resources to get them down there, as well. We want to fill all these positions in the Northwest Territories, not just Hay River. I hear you, I hear you loud and clear, and I'll have the department work with the authority to see what opportunities there are to work together a little bit better here, to partner. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate that response. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have another bit of a shopping list here of things to ask about. I'll start with the grant to the YWCA for the Rock Hill Apartments. It's been at \$443,000 for quite a number of years. It's now \$74,000 in this main estimate. Can the Minister tell us why this has changed? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we had this discussion in the last budget, if I remember correctly. The lease on that is coming due. The Department of Infrastructure is doing some physical assessments on those buildings, trying to determine what, if any, life is left in that building, so that we can make an informed decision on next steps. If it is determined that there is still life in that building and the Y can stay in that building, we will certainly be coming back with a supp to make the appropriate adjustment in this line. I do remind the Member that this is a grant in kind, so it is not cash. Should that building be fit to continue, we will do an adjustment. If it is determined that it is not fit to continue, we have a different problem, and we will have some tough decisions in front of us as an Assembly, but we will find a way to make sure that we are moving forward. We really need to wait for that assessment to come back, Mr. Chair, so that we can have that informed discussion. I understand that it is coming shortly. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What does \$74,000 represent, then, in this context? I'm not clear about that. I realize it is a grant in kind. I am familiar with the arrangement with the "Y" but I'm not sure what the 74 represents. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Technical conversation, but it is considered forgone rent for the period of time from April 1st to the end of May in anticipation of the report coming back from Infrastructure, and then working on a way forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am going to move on now to the Anti-Poverty Fund. In this current fiscal year, the Minister had a study of the process of applying for the Anti-Poverty Fund money, and he committed to sharing the results of

that review at the Anti-Poverty Round Table at the end of November. I don't recall seeing that social development. My question is: can the Minister share the results of the Anti-Poverty Fund process review with the standing committee? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I apologize. That document was discussed at that meeting. It was a public meeting. There is no reason the committee cannot have it. It is clear you do not have it. I thought it was taken care of, but clearly, it was not, so I will make that happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I love answers like that, so I am rushing onwards with the next thing in my list. Thank you to the Minister for that. The Minister in answering my colleague for Nunakput's question the other day on caregivers indicated that homecare or people who work in association with homecare were providing vision and hearing tests in the communities of the NWT. Could the Minister tell me when and where these tests are taking place? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am going to have to review Hansard. I don't recall actually discussing these types of positions providing audio or vision. Did the Member say vision testing? I'm not sure where that came from. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's not something that our home support workers or our resident care aides or our CHRs do at this point. CHRs do provide education. They do go out and meet residents and provide health education, health promotion, but they are not qualified to do hearing tests or visual tests. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will pursue this separately so that the Minister has the opportunity to see the relevant section of Hansard.

My next question has to do with the forthcoming mental health action plan. Is there money in this budget that is specifically designated for the implementation of this action plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the action plan isn't completed, so we didn't bring it through the business planning process. We do have money in the budget for existing services, and should the action plan direct us to make modifications or improvements, and work to get best value for money, we are prepared to move how the money is spent which I think is the appropriate thing to do of all things. We need to review and make sure we are getting back value for money. If we are not, we need to modify it. At this point, there is no new money in this initiative for that action plan, which has not yet been released, but we are hoping to come forward with that action plan and then move forward through business planning if additional resources are required. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister confirm, then, that this mental health action plan will be ready in time for the business planning cycle that begins in the fall? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is my hope and expectation, yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the country food strategy, is that a health and social services initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not 100 per cent sure what the Member means. We are working through our public health office to create awareness of country foods. We have really cool materials like colouring books for kids, and some other resources that are available to promote healthy country foods, but I'm not sure what the Member is referring to, exactly what she is referring to, so I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this was an initiative announced in the budget address by the Finance Minister, that a country food strategy would be created. It didn't sound like a public education campaign as much as it was about accessing country foods. It doesn't say in the budget address which department this is attached to, so it's not Health.

Moving on to my next question, I would like to commend the Minister for finding a permanent home for the sobering centre, and I look forward to the day that that opens. I would like to pursue a point I made in my reply to the budget address, and that is the possibility of creating a Managed Alcohol Program in that new space. This would be a program where people who are chronic alcoholics are served a measure of alcohol as a way to help them control their addictions without resorting to negative behaviour of all kinds which may be criminal. It may be involving the hospital and so on. Can the Minister tell me what would need to happen for him to make a case for a Managed Alcohol Program in that space? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I already made a commitment to move forward with exploring a Managed Alcohol Program in the sobering centre, but I indicated that we wouldn't even explore that until the sobering centre had been open a year, which would give us an opportunity to sort of get our feet wet, figure out how things are working, maximize or make sure that we are as efficient as possible before we start exploring that. Now, I do know that we did open our first sobering centre in July, but we haven't really gotten into our sobering centre per se. It will still be a number of months before we get into that building. My commitment still stands. I have directed the department, a year after the sobering centre opens, to begin exploring the possibility of incorporating a Managed Alcohol Program into that facility. I stand by that commitment, but I'm not prepared to pull the plug on that one year until we have been in that new building for a year. It will be towards the end of this Assembly, assuming we get it in the next couple of months. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Green, your time has expired. Are there any further questions from committee? Seeing none, going once. I will call the page. Community health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$177,198,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Next we have community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$28,765,000. Any questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Child and youth mental health workers here. This is the section. Can the Minister provide us with an update on what's happening with

these positions for the Deh Cho and the Tlicho please? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernathy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we did have, I think, a fairly detailed public presentation on this area with the standing committee. Basically we're in the same position we were then. We need to get this budget approved, at this point we will begin to establish positions, get the job descriptions written, get them evaluated, and then pursue staffing. We are reaching out to schools right now to try to find people. If the schools have people who are qualified who are doing similar work now, we are certainly absolutely open to equivalencies. Hopefully we will get some of the existing people to come over and work with us, and we're intending to have them in place prior to the next school year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernathy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister's answer. I understand, through this whole process, we haven't done the job descriptions. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernathy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We have a project team to pull together all of the relevant details and information to draft some job descriptions, but until such a time as the budgets are approved, we're not going to go ahead and draft job descriptions. Most of the information has been compiled; we still have to follow our process, job descriptions, submit them for job evaluation, get position numbers, go out for recruitment, but we're really targeting being up and running for the school year, so September 2018. I think we've got more than enough time to do that.

In the meantime, we still have been reaching out to schools and other groups to try to find -- you know, it's certainly created a level of interest in these positions so that, when we do recruit, hopefully we will have people with an interest out there already. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernathy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern is the job evaluation process. I've seen, in other departments, the process take up to a year, and that is a huge concern for me, especially with the need for these positions. In my riding especially, some of the challenges that we've been facing. So I guess my question is: does the Minister feel

comfortable that these job evaluation processes are going to go smoothly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernathy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we share the Member's concerns. We feel that these positions are similar to positions that already exist, the adult mental health and addictions, so much of the criteria, the knowledge, skills, and ability to do the jobs is similar. So we are hoping that, given that there are some reasonable comparators, that the evaluations proceed quickly.

Having said that, ultimately at the end of the day they have a tool that they use to evaluate and the evaluators will assess accordingly, but I do share the Member's concerns. We are doing everything we can in the department to keep that process on track and on time so we're ready for September. I do hear the Member and I share his concerns, but I'm not overly worried yet. We will keep monitoring it closely.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernathy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister commit to keep me informed, as well, on updates on what's happening? Especially with the Deh Cho positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernathy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, but I will commit to keeping the chair of the committee informed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernathy. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: That was a good little humour, and I thank you very much. So what I'll do is I'll get the chair to give it to me; we'll work on that. In my final closing comment here, I have to applaud the department. I've said this before in my reply to the budget address, and I have to applaud the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for taking this unique way of doing things. I mean, I was a little skeptical or concerned with it. I had long conversations with the Minister and people back home on this, and I, again, thank the department. I thank them very much. It is muchly needed, and I'm just hoping that we can fill these positions and meet and help our residents as we move forward. So, again, I'd like to thank the Minister and the department for doing this and taking this initiative, and the Minister of ECE and their staff, too. At that point in time, thank you; that will be my last question in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, and we're looking forward to rolling this out. I mean, we know there are going to be a few challenges along the way, but we heard from the kids. We heard from the kids, and they indicated this is an important tool and resource they need. I'm happy to see the support we have from committee, and I'm happy to continue to push this forward over the next four years, this year starting in the Deh Cho. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, when the standing committee reviewed the business plan, we made a recommendation that the department look at developing a safe house pilot project so that communities that don't have family violence shelters, which is most of the communities in the NWT, would have a place that women and children, primarily women and children, could flee in the event that they needed to for their safety. I'm wondering if the Minister has given any consideration to developing this idea along with the NWT Housing Corporation? We thought that it could be dual-purpose; it could provide shelter for family violence and emergency homelessness. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've have some conversations between the Minister and me about whether or not there are houses available, and other things, but we haven't really fleshed anything out, and we don't really know what's available. I'm prepared to have more conversations with the Minister as well as committee, but when it comes to this particular area, my first priority is to get a formula developed for the shelters to make sure that we are getting the money that we need to the shelters and getting that stabilized first. That doesn't mean that I don't hear the Member. It doesn't mean that I don't think there's value in what the Member is saying. I'm just setting some priorities, but I am prepared to have more conversations with the Minister to explore the concept, to see what is possible. I think it's important to have more conversations with committee on this one, and get some more creative solutions around this, because there is certainly some need out there. If we could use it for multiple purposes, that might be the best way to go.

So nothing significant, other than a few additional discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what I hear is that this is a discussion point. I guess what I want to say is I appreciate that your priority is the formula, but I want to say that my priority is the safety of the women who live in the 11 communities that don't have police and they don't have shelters. Like, they are really in a stuck place when it comes to protecting themselves from a violent partner. So I really encourage him to keep talking with the Housing Minister and with the standing committee about a pilot program to see whether there is some possibility here for us to provide safety to women in communities where they don't have it, either through the police or through a family violence shelter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I hear the Member. I guess, to be clear, the formula we are working on together with the existing shelters isn't just a monetary thing. It is a service-level discussion, as well. Recognizing that right now, where shelters don't exist, there is money to bring people in. We need to make sure that those mechanisms exist. That doesn't mean we shouldn't explore what the Member is talking about.

We need to make sure we have these service levels understood so that we are getting as much for the money that we have. Then I think we will be in a better position once we have some service levels determined to reach out and figure out how we can pilot some of these things, because it still needs to be based on something. It still needs to be based on a structure. Ideas are great, but they have to be fleshed out. I hear the Member. I am just a little nervous about running out and doing a pilot until we have a service-level agreement in place that we can build upon, if that makes sense. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister for his responses. Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Any further questions, committee? Mr. Simpson

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had to step out, so I apologize if this has been asked. The Minister and Ms. Green had an exchange about a funding formula. There has been discussion of this since I was elected. There has been talk of the guidelines. Guidelines have been in draft form for over two decades, I believe. I was wondering when

we can expect this funding formula to be completed. We will start with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I haven't been around for 20 years. I have been around for a little while. I guess I have been around for longer than 20 years, but I haven't been around in this building for 20 years. I made a commitment to the different family violence organizations early in the life of this Assembly that, a year after we went live with the territorial authority, we would be in a better position to sit down and have a discussion, work together to develop a formula. That work has actually be initiated after August of last year, when we met our one-year deadline. I think we have come a long way.

As I said to the Member, it is not just a money thing. It is also about a service-level determination, what kind of service levels are going to be required. We are having some discussions back and forth with the providers on service levels which will help them form what the formula will look like. My expectation and intention is to have that formula ready and available for our business planning process so, together, we can make informed decisions on how to resource family violence shelters appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. I assume that is the 2019-2020 business plan. It is good to hear that, going forward, we will be ready for that. What has the level of engagement with the family violence shelters been? I have heard anecdotally that there is a phone call here and there basically asking about numbers. There has been nothing really substantive. Can the Minister briefly provide some details on the level of consultation that has occurred, not in general but with the individual shelters? I don't need details on each one, but as opposed to just talking to a representative of all the shelters. How much information have they gotten from all the shelters? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am not sitting at that table, so I can't tell you the nitty-gritty of every conversation that has been had. There is a network group that has been established. Staff from the department have been reaching out to that network group and all the individuals who are associated with that network. It is more than just asking for little pieces of

information. We have been trying to get a sense from them about what level of staffing they require to provide the core services that they are mandated to provide. We are having discussion about those numbers.

Some of the networks have different numbers than other networks. We are trying to understand what that means so that we can actually have an informed formula. We have been reaching out to individuals. We have been reaching out to groups. We have been reaching out to them as we are trying to get some clarity on the data that has been provided. We are going to keep working together until we develop the formula that I think will hopefully work for our shelters, for our families who are struggling, families who are in crisis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Going back to the draft guidelines, what is the work on these guidelines? Will that also be completed for business planning 2019-2020? Where are we with those? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I can't say specifically. I know that we have been working on the guidelines with our partners for a long time. I will get the department to give me a heads-up and I will share that information with committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. It has been an epic process. I always found it a little odd. I would consider this an essential service. I don't know about anyone else, but I find it odd that it is sort of contracted out. Have there been discussions about bringing this into the authority because it is so essential? It is definitely needed, yet it is passed off to third parties. Have there been discussions of bringing this into the territorial authority? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I haven't had anybody discuss that with me. It is not a discussion we have had. There are a number of essential services that are delivered by third parties. Avens is a prime example. There is a lot of value in engaging communities and people who live in the smaller communities who aren't necessarily associated with government, which

sometimes makes people nervous. Independents can be valuable. At this time, no, there has been no plan to bring them into the public service. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. I agree there is value in accessing third parties, especially when it comes to issues like this where the rigid approach of government often doesn't work. My concern is more the wages that are paid currently don't match government wages. I know, at least in Hay River, there are issues with that, with getting qualified personnel. I am not advocating the government take this over; I was just wondering if those discussions had been had at all. Nothing further on this right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. That was a comment. Any further questions, committee? Seeing none, I will call the page. Community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$28,765,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Thank you, committee. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the chairman rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. A motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried.

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Hay River North.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, and would like to report progress, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I have a seconder? Member for Nunakput. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): Orders of the day for Thursday, March 1, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 10-18(3), Extended Adjournment of the House to March 6, 2018
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 6, Cannabis Legalization and Regulations Implementation Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, Western Canada Lottery Act
 - Committee Report 4-18(3), Standing Committee on Social Development Report on Adult Residential Addictions Treatment Facilities Tour 2017
 - Committee Report 5-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations

- Report on Bill 1: Western Canada Lottery Act
- Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
 - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
 - Minister's Statement 32-18(3), Update on the Northwest Territories Disability Framework and Action Plan
 - Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: That wasn't so bad. Masi, Madam Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 1, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

