

THE HONOURABLE DIANE THOM
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Repatriating Northwest Territories Residents with Disabilities

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Kam Lake on March 11, 2020 regarding Repatriating Northwest Territories Residents with Disabilities.

As of December 31, 2019, there were 109 clients receiving Out of Territory Specialized Residential Services. The 2020/2021 total budget for these services is \$26,570,000.

The Supported living review will help us understand what supports and services will be required to bring our residents back to the Northwest Territories, but it is clear they will be wide-ranging.

Northerners who are receiving Out of Territory Specialized Residential Services have many complex challenges, including developmental and physical disabilities, concurrent diagnoses of mental health and addictions, psychiatric illnesses, and acquired brain injuries.

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These individuals have also often experienced trauma and abuse, and some have complex behaviors that can put their safety and that of others at risk. They may require high levels of specialized support and supervision in order to have healthy outcomes.

Additionally, these individuals need services and supports from multiple government departments and community organizations related to housing, health and social services, justice, income, employment and social inclusion. It is important to understand that, even with collaboration between services and investments by this government to improve Supported Living Services, we may not be able to support all these needs in the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority already has plans for individual repatriation where they can, but often the service options that these individuals require do not exist. The Supported Living Review is targeted for completion by the end of March 2021. We expect planning for Northwest Territories support services and repatriation based on the accepted recommendations from the Review will begin in 2021/2022.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.