

**THE HONOURABLE GLEN ABERNETHY
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

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World No Tobacco Day, May 31, 2019

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day which is tomorrow, on May 31, 2019. This day provides us with an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts the Government of the Northwest Territories is taking to promote the prevention of tobacco use and its cessation.

This year's theme is Tobacco and Lung Health. Having a healthy set of lungs is vital for living a healthy and active lifestyle. Our lungs play a major role in our body's overall health. Exposure to tobacco, both in its primary and second-hand form, can result in multiple chronic disorders, such as respiratory disease, and lung cancer.

Mr. Speaker, the smoking rate in the Northwest Territories continues to be higher than the national average. In 2018, the Northwest Territories smoking rate was 33%, while the national average was 16% in 2017. In the NWT, lung cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in men and women and is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women.

Nation-wide efforts to prevent tobacco related cancer are in full-swing. The recently published ComPARE study, supported by the Canadian Cancer Society, is the most comprehensive, up-to-date study on the prevention of cancer and the first of its kind

in Canada. This groundbreaking study predicts the current and future burden of cancer in Canada that will ultimately impact future cancer prevention decision making.

The ComPARE study based on 2015 data, found that smoking tobacco is the leading cause of cancer in Canada with 32,700 new cancer cases per year due to smoking tobacco. If the trend continues, there will be a projected increase to 46,900 in 2042.

The facts and figures don't lie Mr. Speaker. Taking action to curb tobacco smoking is one of the greatest things that we can do as individuals, as communities and as a government to promote healthy active living in the NWT.

The Department of Health and Social Services' Strategic Plan 2017-2020, Caring for Our People, has made its goal to support tobacco cessation through promotion and prevention efforts, to reduce disparities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to reflect on the recent progress we have made towards our goal of creating a smoke-free society.

In February of this year, the Government proposed both Bill 41: Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act and Bill 40: Smoking Control Reduction Act.

We continue to provide the NWT Quitline, a 24 hour/seven-days-a-week confidential toll-free number providing NWT residents with support for quitting smoking. The Quitline is a useful tool for those ready to quit smoking, but who need guidance and support to achieve their goal.

We have developed additional resources to support NWT residents in their quit journeys. An example would be our Quitting Podcasts, where we hear NWT Quitline Quit Coaches discuss the important steps in creating a quit plan, as well as common triggers and barriers that prevent individuals from quitting.

We also developed a series called Look Who's Quit Stories where local community champions answer questions regarding the challenges and triumphs that they face or have faced as part of their quit journey.

Additionally we provide Tobacco Quit Kits across the territory for those who are looking to make every day a no tobacco day. These kits include information on prescription medications, On the Land Programming, counseling, acupuncture, and Nicotine Replacement Therapy offered through the Department's Health Services Administration.

Mr. Speaker, we know that promoting the prevention of tobacco use and supporting our residents who want to quit is one of the greatest things that we can do to support the health and wellness of our people. On this year's World No Tobacco Day

I want to encourage everyone to take a moment and consider how tobacco use affects their health and the health of their loved ones, and to take advantage of our supports to help us achieve our goal of a healthy NWT.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.