

Combined Mental Wellness and Addictions Fund

Mr. Speaker, at a recent Council of Leaders meeting on Mental Health and Addictions, I heard from Indigenous governments about what is working well in their communities and some of the challenges. There are many successes, and it is truly inspiring to hear about the programs and initiatives going forward in communities across the NWT.

One of the challenges leaders identified was the administrative burden of applying for multiple funding pots for mental wellness and addictions recovery funding. In response to this feedback, I am pleased to advise that the Department will be combining the On the Land Healing Fund; the Addictions Recovery and Aftercare Fund; and the Addictions Recovery Peer Support Fund into one Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Fund.

This combined fund will continue to prioritize Indigenous governments and will help reduce the burden of compiling and completing multiple applications and reports. Bundling the funds will also provide Indigenous governments with greater autonomy over the kinds of mental wellness and addictions recovery projects they offer and how funding is allocated. This change will take effect on April 1, at the start of the new fiscal year.

In addition to the proposed combining of funds, the Department will be revising the application process in 2024-2025. Applications will be accepted prior to the start of the next fiscal year so Indigenous governments can receive early confirmation of funding which will support program planning, provide stability, and enable funds to be spent earlier.

Mr. Speaker, this as a positive step forward in our ongoing partnership with Indigenous governments and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them to meet the mental wellness and addictions needs of NWT residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.