



JUN 25 2020

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MLA, YELLOWKNIFE NORTH

Oral Question 329-19(2): COVID-19 and Influenza Data

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on June 11, 2020 regarding the COVID-19 and Influenza Data.

First, to your question about data, the Department of Health and Social Services (Department) is working diligently to provide modelling scenarios and data to the public. We hope to have something that is accessible to all NWT residents released in the next few weeks.

The Department recognizes the need to balance public health measures with the continued provision of our regular healthcare services. Our public health efforts are focused on preventing a surge of positive COVID-19 cases. As you know, we want to “flatten the curve,” which means limiting the number of people who have COVID-19 at any one time. If we can manage to slow the spread, we can hopefully avoid a spike in cases.

However, if we do have a spike, it is possible that this could overwhelm our system and people could suffer from not being able to have their other healthcare needs met. In the event of a surge, a coordinated approach across the Northwest Territories (NWT) healthcare system is critical to manage our resources and achieve the best possible outcomes for patients, staff, and the residents of the territory. A staged response plan has been put in place:

1. MINOR Isolated cases, with initial hospital admissions at Stanton Territorial Hospital
2. MODERATE Community transmission is occurring, requiring active management of system resources
3. MAJOR Increasing critically ill patients being admitted for active care
4. CRITICAL Some or all of critical system resources exceed maximum capacity

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These four response stages for the NWT align with Alberta's pandemic response, which allows for effective communication with the NWT's closest tertiary care resource. The ability of our health system to respond to increases in demand is limited to the following categories of action: mobilize/maximize staff, mobilize patients, mobilize other resources, and triage care decisions. The structure and decision making tools established under the Incident Command Structure of the Authorities COVID-19 Response Team (ACRT), included in the Pandemic Response Plan, will be activated in scenarios related to COVID-19 that require any of the above actions. We expect to release the Pandemic Response Plan to the public in the next few weeks.

Along with the preparations being implemented across the NWT Health and Social services system, the behaviours and choices of NWT residents can influence the demand on the healthcare system. By following the orders of the Chief Public Health Officer we can all help to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on individuals, communities, and our health and social services system.

Thank you.



Diane Thom
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs