



MR. R.J. SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER NORTH

SEP 13 2018

Oral Question 352-18(3): Mental Health Care

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on June 1, 2018 regarding Mental Health Care.

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) has five full time resident counsellors, and they continually strive to improve the counselling services they currently have. There is an approximate wait time of eight weeks to receive mental health counselling services; however, residents who are in immediate crisis or at immediate risk are not subject to wait times and there is currently no wait for addictions counselling. In addition, the Community Counselling Program has an intervention plan in place to ensure urgent clients receive the care they need. This includes triaging all clients on referral and prioritizing urgent and crisis clients, as well as offering two scheduled emergency appointments per day, five days per week for clients who need these emergency services.

The Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan proposes four Child and Youth Care Counsellors and one Clinical Supervisor for the region starting 2021-22, pending funding approvals. These positions will allow for a holistic, integrated and therapeutic approach to better meet the mental health and wellness needs of children and youth.

While HRHSSA employees are not part of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) public service, they are part of an integrated health and social services system, providing quality services for residents. We continue to focus on identifying ways to strengthen overall system integration by improving care for our people, clarifying timelines and responding to regional and territorial needs through Regional Wellness Councils and their representation on the Leadership Council. As one part of this work, we continue to consider bringing the employees of the HRHSSA into the public service as a priority. However further movement to bring the Authority onboard has not occurred as the estimated cost cannot be accommodated in the current fiscal environment.

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I will continue to provide the House with updates on the progress of bringing HRHSSA into the GNWT Public Service Plan.

Thank you.



Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs