



DEC 05 2016

MR. SHANE THOMPSON  
MLA, NAHENDEH

**Oral Question 439-18(2): Medical Travel Policy and Non-Medical Escorts**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on November 2, 2016 regarding Medical Travel Policy and non-medical escorts.

To help assist medical travel clients and make their journey a more comfortable experience, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), established in August 2016, is currently working with the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) on a Medical Travel Modernization project. The first deliverable is a pocket-sized guide titled *NWT Medical Travel: A Step-by-Step Guide*. This guide will assist all Northwest Territories (NWT) residents in navigating the system in their medical travel journey, including those with employer insurance, third party insurance or no insurance. The guide will include information for medical travel clients on where they can go and spend some time in between appointments and flights. The *NWT Medical Travel: A Step-by-Step Guide* will be released in both French and English in early 2017.

In addition, as I mentioned in the House, individuals who need a place to go once they reach their destination can let the Medical Travel coordinators know ahead of time and they will try to find a solution. We make our best efforts to minimize wait times and help make the client's experience as comfortable and as safe as possible.

With regard to your question about patients in Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte accessing care in Fort Nelson, British Columbia I can provide the following information. Currently there are a number of separate agreements with the Alberta government regarding patient referrals into the Alberta health care system. With the establishment of the NTHSSA, existing agreements between the various old health authorities and Alberta need to be updated.

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Once the agreements with Alberta Health are completed, the Department of Health and Social Services will investigate the implications of referring some patients in the Dehcho region to Fort Nelson, BC. This would require negotiations with the British Columbia Department of Health and would require system changes in terms of medical travel and the management of patient information, a very sensitive area. The Department anticipates finalizing the agreements with Alberta by the fall of 2017.

Thank you.



Glen Abernethy  
Minister of Health and Social Services

c. Mr. Tim Mercer  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive