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MS. JULIE GREEN
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

Oral Question 467-18(2): Development of New Disabilities Action Plan

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on November 4th, 2016 regarding the new Disabilities Action Plan.

The *NWT Disability Program Review and Renewal Initiative* will inform options and decisions, based on the best and most current data and information provided by the Social Envelope Departments regarding optimal allocation of scarce resources and future program investments. The Department of Health and Social Services is working to complete this review and produce a five-year strategy and action plan by the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year.

The Disability Program Review and Renewal Project (Review) will identify gaps in disability programs and services and opportunities for improvement. The Review is focused on three pillars: ensuring that services are person-centred and family-driven; improving accessibility of services; and, increasing awareness and education. The specific goals of the Review are as follows:

- to prepare an accessible inventory of supports the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has in place today;
- to ensure we are maximizing existing resources and that they are well marketed and coordinated;
- to identify any significant gaps, and/or barriers and opportunities to improve; and,
- to establish priorities for aligning new initiatives as resources become available.

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Through the Review the Department is engaging other GNWT Departments and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) who provide disability-related services on behalf of the GNWT. The Review team has been focused on the preliminary analysis phase of the project; and is on schedule in completing the collection of data on disabilities in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and reviewing existing programs and services offered by the GNWT and NGOs. Future work includes stakeholder engagement and a jurisdictional review.

The Project team met November 8 and 9, 2016 with GNWT Departments and NGOs to review the disability data, and program and service information that has been collected to date and to begin to identify areas where there may be gaps. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss and confirm the Review Project's next steps and schedule.

It is our intention to complete the Review by March 31, 2017 and a draft five-year strategy for Persons with Disabilities with identified strategic priorities and key directions. The draft action plan will outline the specific objectives, activities, milestones and outcomes, including an evaluation and reporting plan.

Before any costing can be done on the action plan, we want to ensure we have a workable plan that benefits people with tangible actions and measurable outcomes. To that end, we will be engaging a broader range of key stakeholders and Aboriginal Governments in the process of validating the draft strategic directions, and priorities and helping with setting priorities for the activities in the action plan. This will help with decisions for allocating scarce resources and future program investments. Going forward, I will work with the committee and keep them updated both with the Review and status of the Report.

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