



**Government of the Northwest Territories Response to  
Motion 27-18(2): "A New Day" Men's Healing Program**

**Motion**

*THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Justice take immediate action to extend the service contract and funding for delivery of the "A New Day" Men's Healing Program by one year, to December 31, 2017, thereby granting sufficient time for the completion of a program evaluation as well as any subsequent required program transitions;*

*AND FURTHER, the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Justice inform the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning of its plan to implement the recommendations of this motion before the end of the 2016 calendar year;*

*AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.*

**GNWT Response**

The Department of Justice has entered into a six-month contract with the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre to facilitate two more groups based on the current "A New Day" curriculum. Funding for this program remains part of the GNWT budget, and a revised program based on the curriculum will be launched in the summer of 2017. The six-month contract with the Tree of Peace will give the Department time to make the needed changes and fully implement the ongoing program.

Information on the extension of the program and a copy of the evaluation report was provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly on November 14, 2016 and the evaluation report was posted on the Department of Justice website.

"A New Day" is a healing program for men over the age of 18 who have a history of violence in their intimate relationships. Through this program participants have an opportunity to share their stories. Instead of focusing on where they have failed, they are encouraged to find their successes and consider how these experiences might help them find ways to change their behavior. The program is comprised of a series of group sessions, with each building on the one before. The program facilitator guides the men through these sessions; helping them to learn from the program and each other.

The original contract with the Tree of Peace was for \$577,000 and required facilitation of six groups over a 24-month period to test the program model. During the pilot, a total of 31 men joined the six groups and 15 of them completed all sessions. An additional four men completed all sessions without ever joining a group.

“A New Day” healing program requires men to make a significant commitment to change their behaviour. During the pilot, not all men were able to do that. Over 90% of the men who attended information sessions or general counseling with the Tree of Peace were not ready to enter the group sessions, and half of the men who joined a group dropped out. This is unfortunate as the pilot clearly demonstrated that men who participated in groups had better outcomes than those who did not.

Lessons learned from the pilot demonstrate a need for a more flexible approach to delivering the program, with closer connections to community services such as counseling and victim services. The revised program will build on these and other lessons learned from the pilot, seeking ways to engage men in the program and make the commitment to make changes and stop using violence in their relationships.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) remains committed to strengthening initiatives and partnerships to prevent and reduce family violence. “A New Day” is a critical part of our strategy and the Department of Justice will continue to deliver ongoing programming for men who use violence in their intimate relationships.

The GNWT and the Department of Justice also support other initiatives focused on reducing violence in our communities, including programming for the Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court, making emergency orders available under the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* as well as programming for offenders. The Department’s Family Violence Analyst works with community organizations and the RCMP to ensure everyone is aware of the safety tools available to families experiencing violence, and addresses programming, policy and legislative needs related to responding to family violence. The Department also continues to participate in the Coalition Against Family Violence; recognizing that working and learning from our community partners is integral to making any real change.

The Minister of Justice and officials will provide details on the revisions to “A New Day” program as soon as they are available. Until these are in place, “A New Day” will continue to be offered by the Tree of Peace. In the longer term we must all continue to do everything we can to respond to the crisis of family violence in our territory and to keep people safe.