



MAR 05 2020

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Oral Question 88-19(2): Alcohol Strategy

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 26, 2020 regarding the Alcohol Strategy.

The mandate of the Territorial Committee (Committee) on Problematic Substance Use is to develop a comprehensive response to the ongoing issues related to problematic substance use in the Northwest Territories (NWT). One of the deliverables for NWT will be in the form of a whole-of-government Alcohol Strategy.

The Committee will strive to have representatives from key government departments and organizations in order to have government-wide perspectives and collaborative solutions to this significant issue, including the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department of Finance, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, the Tlicho Community Services Agency, the Office of the Chief Coroner, the Royal Canadian Mountain Police, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, and the NWT Association of Communities. In addition to these departments and organizations, the committee also hopes to include members with lived experience.

It was identified by the Committee that the development of an alcohol strategy would require community input through active engagement to determine the scope of the work. It was also noted that little is known on promising practices related to the implementation of an effective alcohol strategy as well as other evidence-based alcohol harm reduction policies in other jurisdictions that face the same challenges as the NWT.

Therefore, a preliminary research and discussion paper toward the development of a NWT alcohol strategy was recently tendered. The results of that discussion paper will be presented in a full day workshop to be held on March 12, 2020 at the Chief Drygeese Centre. The purpose of that workshop is to set the direction for a whole of a government approach towards the development of a NWT alcohol strategy. This will be led by the Department of Health and Social Services.

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The next steps after this workshop are to use the findings of the discussion paper as well as the facilitated feedback to inform community engagement on this important public health issue. This dialogue would occur in the next fiscal year and will allow a preliminary draft alcohol strategy to be developed.

Thank you.



Diane Thom
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs