



April 20, 2022

JACKIE JACOBSON  
MLA, NUNAKPUT

**Oral Question 905-19(2): COVID-19 Community Mental Health Resources**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 22, 2022, regarding COVID-19 Community Mental Health Resources.

It is widely recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has created many hardships and mental wellness challenges. The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, Beaufort-Delta Region (NTHSSA-BDR) recognizes that there have been significant challenges with staffing to fill mental health positions in every Nunakput community. Some of the challenges have been worsened by lack of community housing, and reliance on southern workers.

Moving forward, and in consultation with community stakeholders, the NTHSSA-BDR is committed to conducting a review of positions and job descriptions to ensure the best fit between professional training and community needs. In the short term, we are pleased to provide a staffing update on Community Counselling Program (CCP) positions and programming for your communities:

- Tuktoyaktuk – Community Wellness Worker present in community.
  - Child Youth and Community Counsellor travels into the community to provide in school services
- Ulukhaktok – Child, Youth and Family Counsellor hired, began work in the community March 28, 2022.
- Sachs Harbour – Community Wellness Worker hired, began work in the community March 14, 2022.
- Paulatuk – Child, Youth and Family Counsellor has been on the land supporting a healing camp and returned to the community March 23, 2022.

With the end of the Public Health Emergency and COVID-19 gathering restrictions are lifted, CCP staff are ready to resume programming for wellness and healing. CCP staff will work with their communities to organize healing activities, wellness promotion, and sharing circles as you have requested.

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You also asked about a travelling team of mental health workers to lead healing activities. The NTHSSA follows a standard process when additional mental health resources are needed, whether it is related to staffing vacancies or crisis response. This process includes cross-regional coverage and coordination of travelling teams to deliver services that may also include contracted services, when necessary. The process is initiated by NTHSSA staff through an assessment of gap in service when local resources are not able to effectively meet the needs of the community. Contracted services can be accessed and organized quickly but are costly and only considered after exhausting all other internal resources where there is a clear demonstrated need for the service. Contracted services can provide short term response but are limited in their ability to provide ongoing support or service.

CCP staff in the BDR will work with each Nunakput community to understand what the community identifies as needs including what role or support outside mental health workers might play.

I understand the importance to residents of community events such as spring carnivals, sports tournaments, and outdoor activities. We encourage people to enjoy their social supports, which we know can be greatly aid mental wellness and addiction recovery and reconnection. We understand that in-person interaction feels different than phone supports, but please share with your communities that all NWT residents can call for peer or professional help both during and outside regular office hours, if they are feeling concerned. The free 24/7 supports are listed at <https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/mental-health-resources-and-supports> .

Thank you.



Julie Green  
Minister of Health and Social Services

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs