



MAY 15 2020

LESA SEMMLER
MLA, INUVIK TWIN LAKES

Oral Question 110-19(2): Addressing Drug Use in Northwest Territories Communities

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 27, 2020 regarding Addressing Drug Use in Northwest Territories Communities.

To your point about collaboration with other departments, I commit to working with the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to address the use of hard drugs by youth in our communities. In fact, both departments have representatives on the Territorial Committee on Problematic Substance Use. This committee is a whole of government approach to the issue of drug and other substance use, with a mandate to develop a comprehensive response to the problematic substance use in the Northwest Territories (NWT), including the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and illicit drugs. Representatives also include 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 RCMP, 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.

Further, the Department of Health and Social Services (Department) leads the soon-to-be-launched My Voice, My Choice Campaign for Youth Wellness, which includes a focus on substance use, and we commit to inviting the Department of Justice to be part of the steering committee. The polysubstance workshop tour, "The Dope Experience," engages youth not only on the use of cannabis, but on all kinds of substance use. The Department's website has a calendar outlining the project's travel schedule that can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/services/dope-experience>.

Regarding your question about youth accessing addictions treatment, there can be different points of contacts for children, youth or their families to access addictions

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services. Children, youth or their families can seek support through their local community health care providers, social workers and community counselling service workers. Addictions support and programming within the community, such as Child and Youth Care Counsellors, is the first option to support children and youth and their families with their individual counselling or therapeutic treatment needs.

Children, youth and their families can also access addictions treatment services with the assistance of a Community Social Services Worker. Services can be explored and entered into on a voluntarily basis through a Voluntary Services Agreement. There are two (2) residential care and treatment facilities in the NWT. One is located in Yellowknife for children between the age of 8 and 12 years called the Territorial Treatment Centre. The other, called Trailcross, is located in Fort Smith and is for youth between 12 and 19 years of age who may need support in their social, emotional and behavioural needs.

The Child and Family Services Program can access contracted out of territory Specialized Services when complex therapeutic needs cannot be met within the territory. These specialized resources are available for individual children and youth, as well as for an entire family. In order to access these contracted services with the support of Child and Family Services, the youth and their family would go through an assessment and application process with their local Community Social Services Worker. There are varying wait times associated with accessing contracted therapeutic services outside of the Territory depending on the child, youth or families' needs, including careful plans for repatriation. None of the contracted therapeutic facilities outside of the NWT are locked facilities and participation in these programs must be completely voluntary on part of the child, youth, or their family with their consent.

If required, medical detox is available at the Stanton Territorial Hospital, the Inuvik Hospital, and the Hay River Health Centre. To access these services individuals can present to their local health centre or directly to the hospital.

Thank you.



Diane Thom
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
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