



MAY 12 2020

CAITLIN CLEVELAND
MLA, KAM LAKE

Oral Question 141-19(2): Oral Health Report

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on March 3, 2020 regarding the Oral Health Report.

The Department of Health and Social Services (Department) has no plans to undertake the type of feasibility assessment you spoke of in the House. As I understand it, you are referencing a model where independent practitioners—in this, case dental hygienists—are setting up a stand-alone private business model. In that dental treatment is not an insured service under the *Canada Health Act*, our role in assessing a business model for private practitioners would be inappropriate. The Department cannot be seen as using public funds to subsidize the development of a private business model. Rather, we need to focus our spending of public funds on assessing how best to deliver core health services within the health and social services system.

Should you know of a particular dental hygienist interested in setting up such a business, I would suggest pointing them towards funds that might be available through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's SEED program, which provides funding specific for business intelligence and entrepreneur support. With this funding, a dental hygienist could carry out a feasibility study for how they may run a private dental hygienist business with indirect dentist supervision.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has a long history of working together with private businesses to ensure a broad scope of services and products are available to Northwest Territories residents. Private business is always welcome to provide services to all of our communities, especially small and remote communities.

Thank you.

Diane Thom
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
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