



MAY 15 2020

CAITLIN CLEVELAND  
MLA, KAM LAKE

**Oral Question 150-19(2): Oral Health Care**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on March 4, 2020 regarding Oral Health Care.

A jurisdictional scan of Dental Hygiene Regulations was completed in January 2018 by the Canadian Dental Hygienist Association. This scan included provinces, territories and international jurisdictions, and showed that the legislative framework around the scope of practice of dental hygienists in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is in line with that of dental hygienists across jurisdictions in Canada, notably in respect to the ability to practice with minimal supervision of a dentist.

Currently, the NWT *Dental Auxiliaries Act* requires dental hygienists to practice under indirect dentist supervision. This is not deemed to be a barrier to a dental hygienist opening their own practice. It is important to note such instances of indirect oversight for other professions running a private practice in the NWT already exist, such as in the field of psychology. The Department of Health and Social Services (Department) has not therefore previously felt it necessary to propose amendments to the *Dental Auxiliaries Act* to address this need.

If dental hygienists have additional concerns on this matter, I encourage them to reach out to the Department. The Department is happy to have discussions with any dental hygienists wishing to open up private practice to the benefit of NWT residents.

Thank you.

Diane Thom  
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator  
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs