

# Tłįcho Community Services Agency Health & Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23





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# **Message from the Chairperson**





We are pleased to present you with the Tł<sub>1</sub>ch<sub>0</sub> Community Services Agency's Annual Report for 2022-2023.

You will read more about our success in strengthening our programs by leveraging our integrated services model to support education, health, and wellness in the region.

The TCSA's Board members are appointed by their respective community governments so that each community in the Tłįchǫ region is represented on the TCSA Board. By adhering to strong governance practices, the Board ensures the Agency has the

capacity and resources to meet both its short and long-term goals. The 2022-2023 annual report illustrates our work of putting community members first. It highlights our commitment to innovative integrated services and new partnerships that support individuals and families.

Masi,

Ted Blondin *Chairperson*,

Tłıcho Community Services Agency Board



# Message from the Chief Executive Officer





The hard work and dedication of staff across our organization resulted in the Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency's (TCSA) ability to provide quality programs and services to the Tłįchǫ region. We are committed to the health and safety of our employees and communities.

The TCSA remains dedicated to providing programs and services that enable all people to achieve personal well-being within healthy, educated families. We are committed to enhancing our programs and services through the strengths of our communities. Integrating Tłąchǫ language, culture, and way

of life in all areas, immersing Tłıcho identity through the agency. We are committed to enriching an integrated continuum of education, health, and social programs and services.

The TCSA recognizes the importance of working in unity, of ensuring our efforts are part of larger partnerships with other organizations, governments, and communities. By working together, we bolster one another's strengths and fill individual gaps, all for the benefit of the people we serve.

We remain committed to developing our current workforce just as we remain committed to improving the experiences of our patients, students, and families.

Masi,

Kevin Armstrong Chief Executive Officer, Thcho Community Services Agency

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#### **STRATEGIC OVERVIEW**

The Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) was established under the Tłįchǫ Agreement effective August 4, 2005, and it is a unique organization in the Northwest Territories in two significant ways. Firstly, it is a Government of the Northwest Territories Agency while incorporating the values and principles of the Tłįchǫ people. Secondly, the Agency is the only one in the Northwest Territories to deliver both Health and Social Services as well as Education programs under one entity as defined under the Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency Act. (A copy of this legislation is available in the GNWT website at <a href="http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/">http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/</a>.)

The TCSA's 2022-26 Strategic Plan is grounded in current research and best practice for health and social programs serving Indigenous communities, it is built upon the strengths and successes of our programs and services to date, and it reflects the new and continuing priorities of the Tłįchǫ Government and of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We look forward to continuing the intergovernmental and territory-wide partnerships that serve to strengthen the TCSA's program delivery in the service of those who live in the Tłįchǫ region. Our strategic priorities guiding our work include:

- Developing strong, capable, healthy Tłıcho individuals, families, and communities,
- Supporting the best health and wellness of people in the Tłıcho region,
- Improving the quality of services provided to vulnerable children, families, and communities, and
- Enhancing organizational sustainability by developing our people and enhancing our organizational processes.

Our staff members are at the heart of our programs and services: we remain committed to supporting their continued development and learning. Creating a workplace culture that is safe, inspiring, and collaborative remains a priority area and goal of the agency. Only by investing in our workforce can we provide truly excellent services for our communities.

The strategic priorities, operational objectives, and key actions of our 2022-23 Operating Plans for the agency provide the foundation to pursue excellence in the education, service, and care of clients, students, families, and communities. They are ambitious plans that provide the agency opportunities to grow and improve in our strategic priorities.

The Tłįchǫ language, culture, and way of life are integral to all that we do in the Tłįchǫ region. The Agency continues to be committed to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, embracing Chief Jimmy Bruneau's vision of being "Strong like Two People".

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#### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**



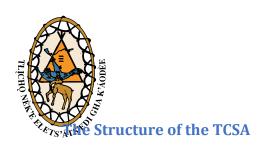
The TCSA at a Glance

As a result of the TCSA delivering both the Health and Social Services as well as the JK-12 Education program, it is accountable to the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The deliveries for both health and education programs operate under two different year ends: March 31 and June 30, respectively. The Agency prepares annual audited financial statements for the combined health and education programs as of March 31 for the Government of the Northwest Territories fiscal year end, as well as audited statements solely for the education program year ending June 30.

The TCSA, unlike other Education and Health & Social Services authorities in the NWT, has three dimensions, as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Three Dimensions of the TCSA







The Agency is governed by a Board made up of four members and a chairperson. The Tłįchǫ Community Governments (Behchokǫ, Gamètì, Wekweètì and Whatì) each appoint one member to represent their community on the Agency Board. The GNWT Minister of Indigenous Affairs appoints the chairperson after consultation with the Agency appointees and the Tłįchǫ Government. The term for Agency Board members is determined by the entity appointing them and may not exceed four years. Members may be reappointed for consecutive terms. The TCSA Board meets quarterly throughout the year: additional meetings are scheduled as/when the need arises.

The current TCSA Board members include:

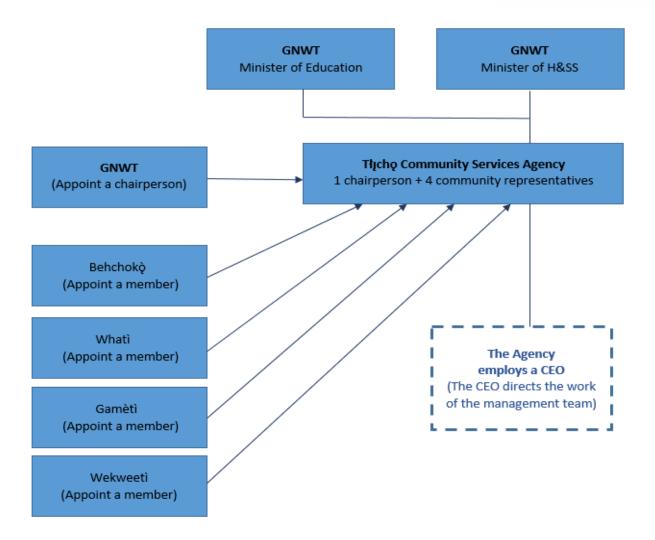
- Chairperson –Ted Blondin
- Behchokò Representative Rosa Mantla
- Whatì Representative Alex Nitsiza
- Gamètì Representative Irene Mantla
- Wekweètì Representative Marie Adele Football



Ted Blondin, Rosa Mantla, Irene Mantla, Marie Adele Football, and Alex Nitsiza





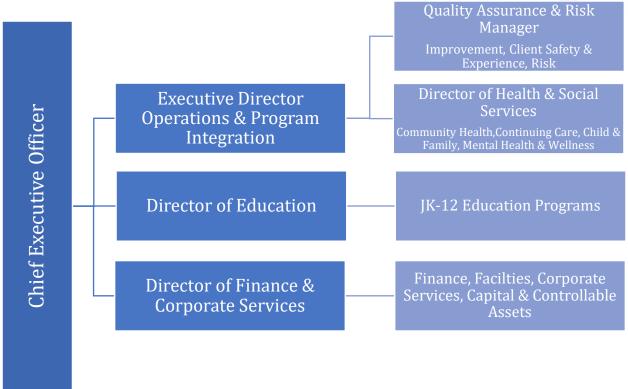


The TCSA is an intergovernmental services agency delivering programs in the areas of Education, and Health and Social Services. The Agency employs a Chief Executive Officer who is responsible to direct the work of a management team consisting of a Director of Education, a Director of Health and Social Services, and a Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

The CEO fulfills legislated roles under GNWT legislation including that of "Deputy Head" for the public service and "Superintendent" under the Education Act. The Early Childhood and First Nations Social Programs, initially transferred to the TCSA by the Tłįchǫ Government, were returned to the Tłįchǫ Government in 2012 as a step towards self-government.



Figure 3: Management and Program Function Structure of the TCSA



The core programs and services delivered by the Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency include the following:

- GNWT Child and Family Services: The TCSA provides child protective services, foster care and adoption services, out-of-territory placement services, and adult services including Elder support. The Agency assist families in need through Voluntary Service Agreements (VSAs) and family violence programming. Family support and child protection also includes child welfare, early intervention, investigations, apprehensions, and court work. Rotational monthly visits are provided to the communities of Whatì, Gametì and Wekweètì.
- GNWT Mental Health and Addictions Services: TCSA provides a community mental health and wellness program for both adults and youth through individual and family counsellors, and child and youth care counsellors (in schools). The Agency provides individual counselling sessions, group sessions, addiction services, and assess for treatment packages / placements to territorial and out-of-territory treatment facilities as needed. Community counselling is provided on a rotational basis to the communities of Gametì and Wekweètì.



age | 10 Do Nake Lani Nats'etso | Strong Like Two People





- *GNWT K-12 Education:* Schools from Junior Kindergarten to grade 10 in Wekweètì and Junior Kindergarten to grade 12 programming in Behchokò, Gamètì, and Whatì. Inclusive schooling services for school age children include assessment, intervention, and counseling support. There are also home boarding accommodation services for high school students from Wekweètì when they attend school in Behchokò, Gamètì, or Whatì.
- *GNWT Community Healthcare:* Primary health and public health care services are available in all communities and include well adult, well child, prenatal care, communicable disease, school health, chronic disease management, emergency / after-hour care, laboratory and diagnostics, and health promotion. Dental services are provided through contracted services providers, Ambulance and Emergency Services are provided in Behchokò.
- GNWT Continuing Care and Independent Living: TCSA is responsible for an 18-bed long term care facility (est. 2016), located in Behchokò, with one bed designated for respite and another for palliative care. The Agency provides residential care, recreational programming, and community & Elder day programming. The TCSA also has established home care programs in three communities (Behchokò, Whatì, and Gametì) through which home support, nursing, and palliative support to those requiring the service are provided.





The purpose of the Tłįchǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) is to improve the health, wellness, and education of the people in Tłįchǫ communities by providing a range of accessible, integrated programs and services. The Agency manages the delivery of education, health, wellness and social programs and services for the NWT communities of Behchokǫ (Rae-Edzo), Gamètì (Rae Lakes), Wekweètì (Snare Lake) and Whatì (Lac La Martre).

Our Agency is both new and old: established on August 4, 2005, the Agency is a creation of the *Thcho Agreement*. Section 7.10 of the Tłcho Agreement called for an *Intergovernmental Services Agreement* (ISA) between the Government of Canada, the Government of the NWT, and the Tłcho Government. The ISA creates the Agency and ensures that it continues to perform the educational, health and social programs and services of the organizations from which it emerged, including the former Dogrib Community Services Board (1997-2005), the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education (1989-1997) and the Rae-Edzo School Society (1967-1989).







#### TCSA Nàowoò Weghàà Eghàlageeda: "Do Nàke Lani Nàts'etso"

Yatı Negihrò Wet'a Nàowo Hòèli Įneè edlàti'o lemì xo gots'ǫ, Tłıchǫ done sìı, ts'eehwhì laanì edeoèt'ı xè, kòta eyıts'ǫ ndè k'e nezi nàgiıdè. Goet'ıı ginà t'à, nàowo k'egeezo, edaani asiı weghàlats'eda eyits'o nàowo wet'a? aà hanì hazho chekoa hoghàgogehto eyits'o gonàowo wet'à? aa t'à, goèt'ıı edegeehdà-ha dıì-le ajà. Dìı ileakw'eno gots'o, yahtı eyits'o ndèts'ò K'àowo giit'o ts'enda ajà t'à, gots'o hoeliı-le ilè, edaani goètiı, kòta, goyatı eyits'o gonàowo hazo wexè ho? o wegho hoèjiı lajà. Done ts'ılıı t'à ts'endà-ha dıì lagòjà. Eyit' àlıì...

Nàowo Weghàà Eghàłageeda Gahxį Tłįcho Nèk'e Ełets'ats'edi Gha K'àodèe ts'įlįį sìi, enįhtł'èkò, nàèdi k'èezoo ts'oòhk'e eyits'o do gha enįhtł'è hohłè nàowo kòta yàzhièla done gits'o k'àode-ha ts'įwo t'à, edaanì do ts'àhoèhdi įlè nezį weghàlaeda-ha sìi gots'ò hoèhlį t'à nezį weghàlats'eda-ha ts'edi. Eleot'įį gilįį t'à elexè nàgetso-ha gits'àts'edi-ha, didzęè edaanì chekoa genda gha asìi k'egeezoha eyits'o edannì asìi weghàlats'eda nàowo ginìedi-ha hoghàgits'eto-ha eyìì nàowo wet'à? aà weghàà lanì ts'èwhì edeot'įį xè nàgedè-ha, kòta nezį elexè nàgedè-ha eyits'o gonèk'e nezį nàgedè-ha.

## "Do Nake Lani Nats'etso...Strong like Two People"

Įdaà Nàowo Edànì Weghat'ı ha 1971, ekò Kw'ahtıdeè eneèkoa Bıno wetł'aà Edzo enihth'eko wegòò wizi wek'e weroo adle ha sii wets'odaàxàato. Ekò k'e nàowo nàke eyits'o yatı nàke elèt'eè chekoa hoghàgeeto gha wet'àarà gho xàyaıhtı ile. Idaà 1991 ts'o nahoòwo ekò enihth'eko gha k'àodèe wegòò elegeèhdii t'à dàani edilaà ghàlagedaa gho elexègogedoò ekò Behchoko gots'o rohdah naweet'ı Elizabeth Mackenzie, Kw'ahtıdeè Bıno ida gha xàyaıhtı gho hadı, idaà nèhoiwo nidè wets'o do "Do Nàke Làani Nagetso, ha."







#### The Mission of the TCSA: "Do Nake Lani Nats'etso ... Strong like Two People"

#### **Preamble**

For thousands of years, Tłąchǫ people have lived in harmony with their families, their communities and with the land. Our people took pride in passing on our knowledge, skills, and values to each generation and in the excellence of this tradition, our survival as a people was assured. In this century we became dependent on the church and the government and in this loss of control, we find that our families, the community, language, and culture are threatened. Our very survival as a people is at stake. Thus...

# Mission of the Agency

We, the members of the Tłąchǫ Community Services Agency are committed to the development of a continuum of care that will return control of education, health and social programs and services to the people of our communities, support them in the task of strengthening their families, promote the knowledge and skills they need to survive today and model the values they need to live in harmony with their families, our communities, and our land.

#### Vision of the Agency

"Dǫ Nàke Lani Nàts'etso...Strong like Two People"

In 1971 a frail Chief Jimmy Bruneau officially opened the new Edzo school that was to bear his name. On this occasion, he spoke of the importance of a model of bicultural and bilingual education where equal emphasis must be given to educating children in two cultures. Some years later in 1991 at a meeting to discuss the work of a new Board of Education, a respected Behchokồ elder, Elizabeth Mackenzie, commented on her understanding of the words of Chief Jimmy Bruneau. She described his vision as asking for his people to be "Strong Like Two People".





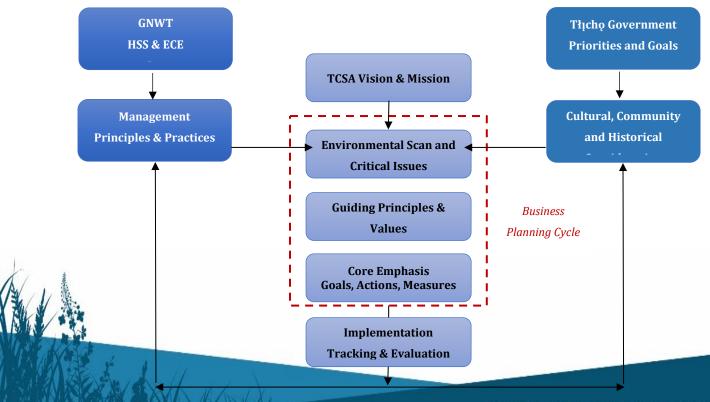


The Tłįcho Community Services Agency is amidst ongoing development at every level—the governance, administrative, and programming and service delivery levels. This is best understood as areas of transition that support the Agency's unique evolution:

- From a needs-based approach to a community development approach.
- From an individual service approach to an integrated services approach.
- From a model of professional dependence to a wellness model of health.
- From dependence upon transient staff to developing capacity locally and long-term staff.
- From a western medical model toward a respectful, culturally appropriate model of services.

In most respects the Agency is currently a GNWT agency, established under GNWT legislation and reporting primarily to the GNWT. Eventually, the Agency is to evolve into a "Tlicho Agency" with its own unique identity while remaining part of an integrated system of territorial programs and services. As part of that transformation, the Agency will continue to be immersed in developing territorial systems, policies, procedures, and structures while also developing lateral connections to Tłıcho Government systems.

Figure 4: TCSA Planning Framework





## **KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Health & Social Services**

#### **Expanding Family Preservation Program**

The Family Preservation Program was implemented in the Tlicho region in January 2021. Initially, we hired two Family Preservation Workers to support families with:

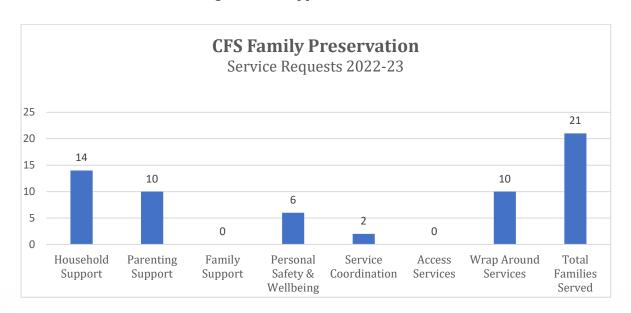
- Family functioning
- Family stabilization
- Prevent children who are involved with CFS from entering into permanent care
- Support family reunification.

In 2022, we expanded to four Family Preservation Workers and 1 Family Preservation Supervisor.

Some of the key program principles are:

- Family-centered
- Relationship-based programs
- Culturally safe, trauma informed
- Harm reduction and strengths-based approaches.









#### **Enhanced Home & Community Care**

The Government of the Northwest Territories initiated a Home and Community Care (HCC) review to determine the current program's capacity to meet the growing demand for services as our population ages. The final report provided 22 recommendations for the Home & Community Care program.

The Department has reviewed the recommendations and developed a response and a work plan to advance the implementation of these recommendations to ensure provision of consistent, effective client centered services and to assist with decisions related to program scope, allocation of resources and future investments in HCC.

As part of this review, the TCSA Home & Community Care team in collaboration with a local translator, conducted surveys with current clients to determine what services would be beneficial or warranted. In 2022, the Home & Community Care program implemented expanded hours of service in the Community of Behchoko to include evening shifts, with the potential to expand in the outlying communities.

#### **Colorectal Cancer Screening Program**

To increase the rates of colorectal cancer screening in the Tlicho Region, the TCSA has partnered with the NTHSSA to deliver FIT screening kits directly to eligible residents

through the mail. This initiative is now being offered in the Tlicho region, where we have some of the lowest screening rates in the Territory. Their team will then follow- up with those residents via phone, written letters and have Community Health Representatives follow-up in person, if needed.

In the NWT, the mortality rate from colorectal cancer is almost twice the Canadian average and our screening rates for colorectal cancer is 21.9%—well below the national goal of 60%. Screening is essential for reducing the morbidity and mortality



from this disease because if colorectal cancer is found in the early stages, 90% of individuals can be cured. Screening is done with a one-step, fecal immunochemical test or "FIT" that is accurate, easy, and can be done at home.

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#### **NWT Syphilis Outbreak**

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that can cause serious health problems without treatment. The syphilis outbreak in the NWT continues to evolve at an alarming rate. Many NWT remote communities are now seeing cases of syphilis where they have not previously been seen in the past. NWT 2022 syphilis case numbers exceeded the previous year. The outbreak showed significant growth from 2020 to 2022.

#### TCSA Syphilis Response

- Ensure confidentiality of STI services to encourage residents to come in to get tested or treated
- Encourage use of 811 services if unable to provide full STI counseling services
- Timely reporting of syphilis cases, staging, contact tracing and follow up
- Timely follow up of contacts including from other communities
- Work locally on sexual health promotion and condom distribution through CHRs or school nurses

#### Accreditation

In September 2019, the Tłıcho Community Services Agency successfully completed the Accreditation Canada Survey and achieved Accreditation with Commendation. This meant that the TCSA surpassed the fundamental requirements of the Accreditation program.

Accreditation is a four-year cycle of assessment and improvement, where healthcare organizations work to meet standards and raise the quality of their services. The program identifies and rewards competence and innovation, helping organizations to be more efficient.

In providing high quality care for clients, the TCSA continues to work in collaboration with

the Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to develop policy and best practice which continues to support our ongoing accreditation status in the following Standard areas:

Leadership
 Governance
 Child and Family Services



Sommunity Based Mental Health Services
Rural and Isolated Health Services

- 6. Infection, Prevention, and Control Standards
  - 7. Point of Care Testing
  - 8. Medication Management
  - 9. Long Term Care
  - 10. Home Care Services

During 2022-23, the TCSA continued to meet and maintain compliance with Accreditation Canada's standards, including preparation for the next onsite survey scheduled to take place in September 2023.

#### **Peer Support Program**

Peer Support Workers can offer a variety of services for mental health and wellness within the school and community setting that can assist with facilitating enhanced access to mental health supports for school-aged youth and their families. Peer support workers offer students the opportunity to connect with others who have similar life experiences and to learn from them directly.

According to the GNWT Child & Youth Care Counselling (CYCC) Annual Report, Tłıcho youth accessed CYCCs over 900 times for individual support, with over 400 hours a month of sessions. By far, the most common presenting concerns were anxiety, depression, and family conflict, followed by trauma, self-esteem, and stress management.

In 2022, TCSA implemented 7 Peer Support Worker positions to enable students to more effectively navigate the system (reach the 'right' level of care and service), find community so they don't feel alone, and to improve the likelihood of them reaching out for help.

Peer support encourages peer connections throughout the school and assists students in developing practical skills to enhance social, emotional well-being and



reduce stress. The Middle Years Instrument (MDI) given to grade 4 and grade 7 students is indicating a need to strengthen peer relationships especially as students move from upper elementary into junior high. Peer support workers will act as a coach or mentor to guide peers to other resources within the school or community and build a sense of community to create meaningful connections.

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In the spring of 2021, the Tłıcho Community Services Agency committed to working collaboratively with the Tłıcho Government to develop a long term, comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Strategy: The Tłıcho Healing Path.

**What is the Tłįcho Healing Path?** The Tlicho Healing Path is a multi-year, community-based approach to help people overcome addictions to alcohol, drugs, and gambling. It is a community-based strategy whereby Tłįcho people help one another to move from addictions to wellness.

The strategy will be developed in consultation with community members, including Elders and youth and will focus on the following:

- Effective youth education, programming, and services both in and out of school,
- Develop a continuum of care that assists clients with identifying the root problems of addictions, and supports them on a path to an addiction-free lifestyle,
- Establish relationships with other departments, organizations, and authorities in the communities to help with education and training, income and employment, health and legal issues, housing, and other needs of the people on a healing path to wellness,



- Create a campaign focusing on supporting year round, family-oriented, healthy living, and
- The strategy will be built on a foundation of Tłıcho language, culture, and way of life to restore health and wellness in our communities through on-the-land activities.





There is a national shortage of available health care providers, resulting in the reduction or closure of services in various jurisdictions across Canada, including the Northwest Territories.

The Tłıcho region is experiencing retention and recruitment challenges related to health care professionals, ultimately, impacting the delivery of quality programs and services. The majority of vacancies are seen in nursing, social work, and mental health.

The TCSA is working with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Finance, Human Resources and the

Northwest Territories Health & Social Services Authority to develop a strategy to address the staffing challenges and mitigate risk to the communities we serve.

A series of measures have been put in place to address recruitment and retention challenges that have been approved by the GNWT's Financial Management Board Secretariat.

These new measures – which are part of a phased approach to addressing concerns brought forward by staff through recent engagements such as surveys and other means of feedback – are primarily targeted at our recruitment processes and initiatives.



## **Expanding Skill Mixes to include Paramedics**

The Health and Social Services Authorities have established contracts to provide paramedic support to remote and isolated communities and acute care emergency room operations. During extreme staffing shortages over the past year, paramedics were able to successfully assist during emergency visits to health centres and with patient assessments and management.

# Friend and Family Travel Program

The holiday season is a time to be with family and friends, the Health & Social Services Authorities offered all casual, term, and indeterminate front-line nurse practitioners, registered nurses and physicians who were scheduled for a

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minimum of five days between December 20, 2022, to January 4, 2023, the opportunity for financial support to bring up to two family members or friends to their northern place of employment. The program covered the costs of the flights to a maximum of \$2,000 per employee.

#### **Labour Market Supplement**

The Government of the Northwest Territories and Union of Northern Workers issued a news release to announce another set of interventions to address challenges around recruitment and retention of health and social services professionals in the NWT-Labour Market Supplement (LMS).

This supplement does not apply to the entire workforce. This supplement is intended as an incentive to address the challenges we are experiencing in recruiting and retaining employees in specific positions, with the overall purpose of reducing the risk of service reductions for patients in critical areas. We hope that this supplement will lead to increased staffing in key areas which in-turn – and over time – aims to reduce pressure on individuals and teams that is caused by low staffing and contributes to a better work-life balance.







#### **Aurora College Student Practicum Pilot**

The Tlicho Community Services Agency in partnership with Aurora College are piloted a student practicum program. It was identified that the required preceptorship placement for Aurora Students, enrolled within Health programs, was challenging to secure secondary to staffing deficiencies and the impact of COVID-19.

TCSA accepted 8 student placements: 3 Bachelor's of Nursing students, 2 Licensed Practical Nursing students and 3 Personal Support Worker students. The students rotated between

Community Health, Public Health, Home Care, and Long-Term Care.

The college instructor was present onsite 3 days per week to facilitate and support their mentorship and development.

With this partnership, we hope to establish relationships that will lead to recruitment upon completion of the programming.







#### APPENDIX A: AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The TCSA will ensure our programs and services are sustainable and supported by strong financial management processes and controls. To that end, the following activities were foundational to our 2022-23 operations:

- Enhanced accountability through continuously improved financial policies, processes and internal controls procedures.
- Enhanced financial management through more frequent financial reporting and periodic variance review.
- Enhanced operational and workforce planning through strategic review and oversight.

The financial results of our 2022-23 Fiscal Year *Health & Social Services* operations are summarized as below:

	2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Actual
REVENUE	\$	\$
Contribution from GNWT	20,664,185	22,509,402
Revenues from Other Sources	735,000	826,625
	21,399,185	23,336,027
EXPENSES		
Administrative & Support Services	2,144,857	1,767,632
Ambulatory Care Services	1,394,426	1,125,753
Community Health Programs	6,345,384	7,690,620
Community Social Programs	7,086,027	7,448,985
Long Term & Continuing Care	5,515,487	5,897,949
Emergency Response (COVID-19)	-	448,558
	22,486,181	24,379,497
Annual Operating Surplus (Deficit)	(1,086,996)	(1,043,470)