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The Honourable Frederick Blake Jr, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Deh Cho)

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(Monfwi)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, May 28, 2020****Members Present**

Hon. Frederick Blake, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Hon. Paulie Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Hon. Katrina Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Hon. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Hon. Diane Thom, Hon. Shane Thompson, Hon. Caroline Wawzonek

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Frederick Blake Jr): Thank you. Please be seated. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-19(2):
TOURISM IN NWT POST-COVID**

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Businesses across the Northwest Territories have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but perhaps none more so than our tourism sector. The tourism sector was one of the first hit by the pandemic and will likely be amongst the last to recover from its effects. Northwest Territories tourism is reliant on national and international travel. However, for the time being, our borders must remain closed to protect the health of our residents and our small and remote communities. We recognize that this is happening at a cost to business owners and entrepreneurs in the Northwest Territories. For those whose livelihoods are built around attracting and welcoming visitors to our territory, the impacts have been significant.

As we mark National Tourism Week this year, we continue to work with the Government of Canada to identify a measure of relief for the Northwest Territory tourism industry that is reflective of the impact that is being felt and the significance of the tourism sector to our economy. The advocacy of our territory's tourism association on behalf of our tourism industry has been instrumental in helping us increase the overall awareness in Ottawa of the need for specific and regionally appropriate support programs.

The federal government is listening. As a result of our work, CanNor's Northern Business Relief Fund was introduced and significantly expanded relief options for Northwest Territories and Indigenous businesses. We were also able to secure additional support for the North's airline industry, which a

large portion of our tourism sector relies on. We know that some of our tourism operators have accessed relief from this fund, but we still have work to do. In the coming weeks, Premier Cochrane will be bringing the challenges faced by our tourism sector to the attention of the Prime Minister, asking for more funding under the Northern Business Relief Fund to address the specific needs of our operators and tourism businesses.

Meanwhile, as Northwest Territories businesses begin to resume operations across the territory, and we take steps to recover our economy, we have re-introduced our Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development program, also known as SEED for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. It represents \$4 million dollars of investment into businesses in our communities.

Similarly, we will inject almost \$4.4 million into parks infrastructure, tourism product development, and community infrastructure projects this summer; supporting local suppliers, contractors, and employees as we improve our tourism products for the future. We will be waiving tourism insurance requirements and licensing fees for the 2020-21 season as another means of short term relief.

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of COVID-19 the landscape of tourism in the Northwest Territories has changed. We are already considering how our next tourism strategy can be adapted and its funding approach redefined to support the economic recovery of our tourism sector. To this end, we are once again engaging with our tourism sector specifically to understand the level to which their businesses and operations have been changed.

As we do so, we can take some comfort in what hasn't, and will not, change. With its wild natural beauty, rich cultures, midnight sun, and Aurora Borealis, our North remains as attractive as ever before.

Northerners will always be warm and welcoming; our industry vibrant and resilient; and our tourism product spectacular. It will take time, and it will take work, but we will recover. Our borders will open and our North will once again take its place as one of the world's most spectacular tourism destinations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TOURISM

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was happy to hear the Minister just now speak of SEED funding, and I'd like to take that a step further with her today.

Mr. Speaker, our NWT businesses need aggressive, innovative stimulus programs and an influx of cash so they can start the long journey of regenerating our northern economy. I was pleased to hear that ITI has topped up its SEED program by \$140,000, to \$4 million, to support new, innovative proposals that reflect the realities of the post-COVID-19 economy.

The program guidelines provide that funding should support forward-looking business proposals aimed at supporting employment, creating new business opportunities, or positioning businesses to recover and grow. Applicants should also demonstrate innovative approaches, ideas or solutions to the current economic operating environment. This top-up is welcome, Mr. Speaker, and I congratulate the Minister for finding the funding from within. However, I am concerned that the program, which was not designed to support existing businesses, will do little to help longstanding NWT businesses in this COVID-19 world.

SEED stands for Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, and the new program was specifically designed to give new businesses the opportunity to take root. As it stands today, the policy guiding the SEED program contains a market disruption clause which gives ITI the authority to deny funding to anyone offering services similar to another business. Unless this is remedied, Mr. Speaker, most of our long-time established northern businesses will not qualify for SEED program funding. Most marketplace evolutions take place gradually, allowing entrepreneurs the time to determine how to make their businesses into living organizations that grow with the world around them so they do not risk losing out.

Mr. Speaker, COVID did not offer a gradual evolution to business owners. One day, the North was operating business as usual, and then, the next day, businesses were forced to close their doors. In this context, market disruption should be the least of our concerns.

Mr. Speaker, GNWT programs must be fluid, capable of change in a new world that shifts daily in response to COVID-19. SEED is a great opportunity to use existing GNWT dollars to regenerate our economy, but it needs further tweaks to ensure that as many northern businesses as possible can access the program.

I look forward to a productive discussion with the ITI Minister on how we can work together to evolve SEED to best support the regeneration of NWT businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Members' statements. Member for Monfwi.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERPRETATION SERVICES IN HOSPITALS

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When we look at the hospital, there's a lot of people in the hospital. We wonder sometime how they are being taken care of. When you're hospitalized with an illness, there's the discomfort of the treatment and worry about the recovery, and the heightened fear of the COVID-19. When you're a unilingual Dene elder in an English-speaking medical world, it's more stressful for the patient. During the daytime, the Stanton Hospital provides interpreters, but once their shift is over, the interpreters are not available. What happens after 5:00 p.m., when there are no interpreters? What happens to the elder, and how are they to communicate? Who is interpreting for them after hours? Sometimes in the evening, the patients are asked to take medication, and they are not able to communicate anything to the nurses. This is a very important issue. A lot of elders had brought this concern to me. They said that, once they are in the hospital, the interpreters are not available after hours, and they say that they are not able to talk to the nurses, at all. I think it's important that an interpreter should be available after 5:00 p.m. because we have a lot of elders who speak their language, and they are unilingual. I will ask the Minister of Health and Social Services on how Stanton Hospital operates with the interpreters after hours. Masi. [Translation ends]

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Members' statement. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL PROHIBITION

MR. BONNETROUGE: [English translation not provided] ... prohibition order in place. I'll use the short form as "TPO" for that. This is the prohibition of all alcohol within the area of the community. There is a means to stop the flow of alcohol into the community as the consumption of excess alcohol leads to many social problems.

Mr. Speaker, it is known that the continued use of alcohol for prolonged periods of time eventually puts a strain on the healthcare system and has a significant impact on the resources of the RCMP, not to mention significant impact on the lives of friends and families.

In my community, the RCMP were doing double duty. They are not only tending to their regular duties, but include chasing down party-goers who were in contravention of the Chief Public Health Officer's orders banning all gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic. The RCMP were dealing with a host of alcohol-related incidents, including physical assaults and sexual assaults, all from the excess consumption of alcohol stemming from the free-flow of funds from the COVID-19 initiatives.

My community of Fort Providence, a population of around 750 people, requested the TPO, but according to the NWT Liquor Act, if there is a liquor establishment within the community, then there would be no issuance of a TPO; the community would have to go to the community-wide plebiscite route. This takes up a lot of resources to pull off, and it does take some time, the same formalities as an election, and we know how long that would take, and all of that during the time of a pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CORRECTIONS REHABILITATION

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, during my response to the Commissioner's opening address the other day, I outlined the need for the Fort Smith corrections complex to resume the rehabilitation focus that was once offered there. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, the majority of the facility's inmates are Indigenous people and are products of the multigenerational impacts of residential schools and colonialization. Given this history, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC, provided calls to action outlining the need for rehabilitation to be a key part of the correctional programming for all levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, to carry this idea further, I also mentioned in my speech that, since part of the rehabilitation process includes an educational component, I think that the town of Fort Smith has a very unique opportunity to offer inmates the chance to attend Aurora College to help themselves improve the quality of their lives. This would give inmates a chance at a fresher start and possibly to return to their home communities with new skills and certifications.

This idea would be a win-win for everyone involved as it would benefit Aurora College, the corrections complex, as well as the inmates themselves, and since this program has already existed in the NWT, the logistical infrastructure to enact this program should not be too cumbersome to get under way. Therefore, the only barrier is a matter of the political will.

Mr. Speaker, the people in our corrections systems are important, too, and they deserve good care, treatment, and rehabilitation, just as anyone else. I will have questions for the Minister of Justice later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TOURISM BUSINESSES

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Downtown Yellowknife is home to many businesses that have been hard-hit by the lockdown resulting from the pandemic. The Chief Public Health Officer ordered some businesses to close, such as restaurants and bars, hair salons and barbers, dentists, and yoga studios, to name a few. Our once-thriving international tourism industry is on its knees. Other businesses have adjusted their operations to comply with the public health orders by allowing a limited number of people in and reducing hours to accommodate extra cleaning.

Mr. Speaker, the result of these changes has been dramatic. Some businesses had no revenue coming in at all and still don't. Tourism operators have no hope of seeing international visitors for at least a year and have started to close. Businesses that stayed open have seen their revenue fall by as much as 90 percent. Owners are worried about how to keep their staff, how to pay their rent, and what to do about inventory on order.

To put it bluntly, the GNWT has been less than helpful in this situation. The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment announced a business advisory council would bring the business sector together to chart a course through this unprecedented shutdown. More than two months later, we are still waiting for the Minister to launch the council. Meanwhile, in the Yukon, their council of businesspeople went to work within days of being announced. They created a unique \$10 million business support program three weeks later. Here, in the NWT, the Minister's efforts to support business with BDIC has resulted in a total of \$1.6 million being spent. That's in spite of the fact that BDIC has a surplus of over \$30 million. Other new initiatives for small business amount to fiddling while Rome is burning.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear that homegrown small business is the heart of our economy, but the GNWT has not treated the sector in a way that acknowledges the value it provides. Sure, BDIC is offering loans and interest deferrals, but many businesses are leery about going further into debt because they don't know how they will repay the money. Fortunately for northern small business, the federal government has taken up some slack by providing grants through the Northern Business Relief Fund, but that doesn't let GNWT off the hook. The GNWT has been missing in action when it comes to putting its money where its mouth is by supporting small business. I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF
THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND
INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS**

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to talk about the relationship between our government and Indigenous governments. At the beginning of the 19th Assembly, we had a very good roundtable discussion with representatives from all of the Indigenous governments and small communities, and we did that at the Tree of Peace here in Yellowknife just before the portfolios were handed out. That was actually the first meeting that we have ever done. That made me very happy. I thought that was a good direction to go as a group in the 19th Assembly.

During that meeting, we heard very clear from the community and Indigenous leaders that this government must listen better and act on what has been agreed on and what it has decided upon to move forward in any types of meetings. In addition, Mr. Speaker, we also sat down and broke bread as a group with Chief Yakeleya and the Dene Nation after the portfolio assignments were handed out. It was here. We started some dialogue on how we would go ahead moving forward in unison.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we're at a point now where we're starting to drop the ball a little bit in terms of meaningful consultation and productive engagements with our Indigenous governments. I just want to emphasize "meaningful consultation." I have a couple of particular examples, and what I am referring to is the liquor regulations during this COVID crisis, with the amount of alcohol that is being sold, and also the dial-a-bottle issue. This implementation of these two regulations, I felt, was very much unilateral in its nature.

Mr. Speaker, the decision to go ahead with the dial-a-bottle was strongly opposed by the vast majority of Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories. They voiced their concerns, yet those concerns seemed to fall on deaf ears. As a government, we must incorporate a constant feedback loop in which we hear and incorporate ideas from our Indigenous leaders. It is very important that we keep a strong connection and maintain open dialogue on both sides.

Marsi cho, and I will have questions for the Minister of Finance, who oversees the liquor regulations. Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONTINUANCE OF WORK FROM HOME AND
FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK**

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have seen significant change to the way we do work during this pandemic. We have seen parents juggling both childcare and their jobs, virtual care being delivered from back porches, and work emails delivered in the middle of the night. I, myself, have practically moved my office into my constituency assistant's living room.

If the work week doesn't change as a result of the last few months, we'll have learned nothing, Mr. Speaker. I am not just talking about within government, but globally. Two lessons I believe we should take away from the recent response to COVID-19 are:

1. All people have different needs, and there is no one ideal working environment.
2. People work better when they are rested and their mental health is prioritized.

Mr. Speaker, to realize these lessons, I believe that we should continue to allow GNWT employees to work from home, even after restrictions have been lifted. I am happy to see, in the recent plan for GNWT workers returning, that childcare considerations and accessibility concerns will be prioritized. I think we need to continue that and make it a lasting legacy of COVID-19. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to explore the idea of implementing a four-day work week for those workers who want it.

Many GNWT staff will be working from home for the foreseeable future. There is a possibility that, even when restrictions ease and GNWT employees can return to their offices, many will prefer to stay home. I see this as an opportunity to improve working

conditions for those who prefer to work from home. As days grow longer, I see no better time to implement a four-day work week. If we want to encourage domestic tourism, Mr. Speaker, why not give summer long weekends to all of our residents?

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this will take some time, but I believe we can start now temporarily and see what works and what doesn't work. I believe we should reach out to businesses in the private sector to see what barriers they see to implementing a shorter work week. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Human Resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER
CORPORATION RESPONSE TO COVID-19
PANDEMIC

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to rise in regard to the NWT Power Corporation's response to the pandemic. My riding of Nunakput, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, and Tuktoyaktuk, are the most coastal communities in our territory and have little or no industry, no economy. Our people in Nunakput were struggling to make ends meet before this pandemic hit, Mr. Speaker.

Now, things are going even harder. We are still in the early days, and we are still in the pandemic. We are emerging from our lockdown of this pandemic. We are faced with a potential second wave of COVID-19 this fall. At this point, we have no idea when we will put the crisis behind us. We have no idea when the global airline industry will recover. From the long-term impacts of our high cost of food in the communities, I don't know if we will be able to welcome tourists back into our territory. Even the businesses, our government has curtailed. It's the backbone of northern economy, Indigenous governments, organizations cancelling assemblies, music festivals for this up-coming summer, which brings into our communities little funds to make ends meet during the summer.

Mr. Speaker, this is the reality now, the reality that the GNWT has to do everything in its ability to support our people in the communities, all 33 communities. As I said in this House before, many times, the cost of power in the NWT, especially in the remote communities, in my riding are paying the highest rates across the territory. The biggest financial challenge is to people, single mothers, having to pay their bills, having to choose. I am happy with regard to COVID-19 hitting because

now people can live a little bit and get the little bit extra, what is needed.

NTPC removed this and suspended limiters. I was happy that the Minister did that. I thank him for that, and I wish this would be an ongoing thing when we come out of this pandemic. I want my constituents to know that I reached out to the Minister responsible for NTPC and instructed to make exceptions to late power bills, to ensure that there are no disconnections and late fees until we put this crisis behind us. We are still in that pandemic, Mr. Speaker. NTPC is run by a board of directors of bureaucrats. Now, we should let them know, tell them, "Let's keep doing what we are doing in regards with limiters, to keep on doing the right thing."

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, like I said, we are in extraordinary times. The GNWT cannot expect to continue running NTPC as a government business enterprise. In fact, the auditor general has determined that it's not an arm's-length operation. That is something else this government should be addressing. For now, however, Mr. Speaker, our small communities need assurance that they will not be facing long, cold winters indoors with no power, with these limiters on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ECONOMIC RECOVERY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On April 17, 2020, the federal government announced \$1.72 billion in financial assistance for the remediation of orphan and inactive oil and gas wells in Western Canada. This includes:

- Up to \$1 billion to the Government of Alberta;
- Up to \$400 million to the Government of Saskatchewan;
- Up to \$120 million to the Government of British Columbia; and \$200 million as fully repayable loans to the Alberta Orphan Wells Association to support its work to clean up sites across Alberta.

There are currently about 4,700 orphan wells in Alberta, 600 in Saskatchewan, 350 in B.C.; inactive oil and gas wells: 91,000 in Alberta, 36,000 in Saskatchewan, 12,000 in B.C. I think there are

some lessons there about how not to do oil and gas development, as well.

As part of this funding, the Government of Alberta has committed to implement strengthened regulation to significantly reduce the future prospect of new orphan wells. This will create a sustainably funded system that ensures taxpayers are not left bearing the costs of the environmental responsibilities of companies. The funding program will have oversight from a federal-provincial committee, and the federal government will ensure municipal and Indigenous engagement.

What does all this mean for us here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker? While all of this is good news for the energy sector, we need similar federal investment here in the Northwest Territories to drive economic recovery and remediation of long-standing contaminated sites. The Federal Contaminated Sites Inventory shows 1,647 sites in the Northwest Territories, with an estimated assessment and remediation cost of \$12.375 billion. The GNWT 2018-2019 public accounts show a total of 285 sites under our jurisdiction with a cost of remediation estimated at \$70.6 million. What I am calling for is federal assistance to accelerate work on all of these sites and for our Premier to make sure that this a priority in her discussions with federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts on economic recovery. It may even be possible to work with Yukon and Nunavut to push for a dedicated, accelerated Northern contaminated sites initiative.

Later today, I will have questions for the Premier on whether she is willing to take this on to secure federal investment for the remediation of contaminated sites as a part of our drive towards economic recovery. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BORDER SECURITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents of Hay River are wondering what is happening with the security on our border on Highway No. 1. Last evening, I received a call concerning a person who arrived in Hay River and was visiting job sites, attempting to sell mechanic tools. I was informed this individual was from Alberta and entered the NWT as an essential service. In Hay River, we have businesses that sell tools; we have a retailer that has his own truck filled with tools that is sitting at home because he is following our rules.

Mr. Speaker, a second complaint involved a person who once resided in Hay River, still owns property in Hay River, but has been living in the South for a number of years. The person, if not living in the NWT, I assume would not have the appropriate NWT identification, as it is a requirement to change driver's licence and healthcare if you are not a resident here.

In the first instance, as far as I know the person did not self-isolate and visited businesses around the community. In the second example, the person did self-isolate, which was confirmed through Facebook posts. Mr. Speaker, the MLA for the Deh Cho discussed border security issues yesterday. With all the complaints we hear concerning border security, we could continue these statements until a vaccine is found for COVID-19.

I want to be clear. I do not fault the personnel working the border. They are restricted by the information or lack of information they are working with. There will continue to be gaps and grey areas. Everyone has a story. Everyone has a reason to want to cross into the NWT. Some are valid. Some pull at the heart strings. Others are fabricated.

The people of the Hay River and the South Slave want answers on the level and quality of security this government is delivering at the border. We are telling our residents to believe in us, to be patient with us, and to conform. However, they see non-residents coming in and not following the orders established by the Chief Public Health Officer. I know they are becoming discouraged and for good reason. It is time to give them some real answers. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Members' statements. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Monfwi.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today, I have to say, "Thank you," that we have two Tlicho interpreters, Harriet Paul and Maro Sundberg. We know it's very important to get our message across, for your information. Thank you [translation ends].

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize our interpreters for Chipweyan. I would like to thank Tom Unka and Arthur Beck. They are coming up from Deninu Kue. Marsi cho for your service. [English translation not available]. Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 244-19(2): FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to see the GNWT slowly bringing some of our workers back to the office, those who are needed. I have seen flexibility and had a number of constituents help navigate their issues such as childcare. I hope to continue to see that flexibility from the Department of Human Resources. My question is: will the department be developing a work-from-home policy that extends beyond the measures imposed by COVID-19? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister of Human Resources.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of brevity, Mr. Speaker, I will simply say the work is already under way, and we will certainly continue. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: I am happy to hear that. Would this policy similarly allow more flexibility in hours, such that if a worker wants to work later, on weekends or evenings. Perhaps we could get the Department of Motor Vehicles open on weekends if our workers were a little more flexible. Will the plan include that, Mr. Speaker?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The Government of the Northwest Territories actually provides quite a variety of flexible options as it is. The challenge sometimes becomes that it is spread out over different departments, so that it comes down to individual departments, divisions, and supervisors. There already are flexible work weeks ago, flexible shifts and hours, to a large extent. The Government of the Northwest Territories certainly makes those efforts, and we are going to continue to make those efforts.

I would just say that, in light of what's happening right now and the experiences with COVID-19, the experience of having more people working from home is certainly going to inform those efforts at human resources, but also, I suspect within individual divisions, departments, and supervisors, as they see what exactly the possibilities of working from home can involve.

MR. JOHNSON: One of my concerns during this pandemic is that there are certainly many departments who are working on overdrive and all

of those workers are working overtime. Many have been redeployed to other departments, and then I hear concerns that certain departments have essentially been put on hold, and some workers are wondering what to do. I think a solution to this is further redeployment, and also, I think one way to boost domestic tourism would be a four-day work week for some workers. I think we could start that this summer. Is that something the Minister of Human Resources is willing to consider?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: It certainly is nice outside, so I can imagine a lot of people would enjoy a four-day work week right about now, or anything less than the work week many of us have. Some of that work has actually been done in the past; it has been looked into, and I certainly would commit to looking into it myself and seeing what's available. It may well be that some sort of flexibility can be found, but all I can say for now is that I've also been alive to the news reports that are coming around right now in the pandemic and looking for some more flexible options. At the very least, I'll certainly commit to saying that I'm going to look into it and see what we have available to us.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to hear that, and I look forward to continuing those conversations. Similarly, our society is operated on a Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 5:00, schedule for many decades now, and it's difficult, at times, for the private sector to break away from that, as there are a few key industries and businesses who necessitate that model, and then everyone must follow suit. Can the department reach out to those stakeholders? I think, in this territory, which is so small, we could be a little bit more nimble and flexible and reach out to private industries and see what barriers they see to implementing a four-day work week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I think you're channeling my answer, which is that the outreach to our business community is going to involve far more than just my department, but I anticipate that, certainly as we're going forward in our response to COVID and our COVID relief efforts, I expect there will continue to be quite a bit of dialogue across different sectors. No doubt, if this is something that the industry of tourism finds, if they are getting interest from the community, then I'm sure that I'll work with my colleague to explore that further. Certainly, I am conscious that the public sector is a leading role and a leading employer, and what we do often can set a bar for what is happening in the community. It is important to engage the community before we make any substantial changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Monfwi.

QUESTION 245-19(2):
MEDICAL INTERPRETATION

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] When I made my earlier Member's statement regarding interpreters for the unilingual elders, I would like to ask the Health and Social Services Minister a question. [Translation ends]

...to help the medical staff community with Dene elders after the medical interpreters have gone home for the day after 5:00, especially after visiting hours at 8:00, when family members can no longer be there? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our medical interpretation, we have seven official languages in the Northwest Territories that are offered at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. In terms of what's available after 5:00, we've limited some of the patients' visitors to most of our health centres and most of our hospitals across the Northwest Territories.

What we do have are some virtual services. On interpreter services, Stanton interpreters are available via the telephone and virtual care with an iPad, which is 24/7. We also have provided interpreters with iPhones and iPads to allow for a variety of virtual care options, like FaceTime and WhatsApp. Stanton also has a contract with CanTalk to provide interpretation 24/7.

MR. LAFFERTY: I'm just trying to picture myself as a 91-year-old in the hospital, speaking to somebody in the Tlicho language, with an iPad in front of me or telephone beside me. I think it would be a very difficult, challenging task. They've never been exposed to that. They've been born and raised in the bush, and all of the sudden, it's an English environment in the hospital. I think we can do more, providing additional resources after hours. That's what I'm after. Could the Minister please describe the on-call system that the hospital initiated or instituted to make Dene interpreters available to assist these elders after hours?

HON. DIANE THOM: As I've mentioned, it's a very difficult time right now where we're trying to limit some of the patients' visitors to come in. I think where the Member is going with this is asking, you know, what's available? I understand that we do have elders who are in care and are patients, and it's very difficult for them to be able to look at an iPad or an iPhone. Some elders do, and some elders really engage with that, because they like to

see what's going on on Facebook and some of the activities that are happening on social media. However, I do understand that some of the elders, they don't have that. What we do have is we are looking at on-call for Tlicho.

MR. LAFFERTY: I need the Minister to elaborate more on this on-call system that she's referring to. Is it in place now, or is it coming? It's just a consideration that the hospital is introducing a night shift for medical interpreters at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. Medical interpretation is such a complex system to interpret, so it's very important that we have interpreters available for these patients, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE THOM: The interpretation services here in the Northwest Territories is very important. I mean, the majority of our patients who are in care, are in any of our health centres, are predominantly Indigenous, and it's important that we have the available services to them. What the Member is asking is to describe what the on-call looks like right now. Right now, we do have an on-call for Tlicho. Any time a patient requires any assistance, we go through the process to be able to call someone and have them available for interpretation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker. I think we can do more than just on-call. Again, I have to put myself in the position of an 86-year-old who was hospitalized a week ago, and that individual had a heart issue. The family left after 8:00 p.m., and there was no way of communicating with the nurse, and he was getting needles, and he was getting tablets, uncertain of what it was for.

Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering of the Minister is open to the idea of creating more of an interpretation system, even improving that in Stanton Hospital. Masi.

HON. DIANE THOM: I apologize for the situation that's happened over at the Stanton Hospital with the Member's constituent and patient. I am open to looking at options with the Member to be able to see what can we do to improve our interpretation systems in the healthcare system. I will commit to looking at some ways to improve. Right now, with the COVID situation, it's very difficult for us to do anything other than virtual. That is something that we can look at. Thank you, Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 246-19(2):
ALCOHOL PROHIBITION

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned in my Member's statement the problems related to excess alcohol consumption and the avenue afforded the community leaders for TPO. The leaders of my community genuinely wanted such an order during this state of emergency as this was the quickest way to stop all alcohol from entering the community, quelling all of the problems associated with alcohol. My question: why is it that a coronavirus public health emergency, a state of emergency, is not enough to override any current legislation or acts in order to issue a TPO should one be requested? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The situation of alcohol consumption and alcohol abuse certainly isn't new, as a result of the pandemic. It has, sadly, roots that extend long before the pandemic, and sadly will likely continue after, but the pandemic has certainly given us an opportunity to have quite a number of conversations about alcohol abuse and its causes and the troubles that abuse then causes, as well.

Unfortunately, the Emergency Measures Act doesn't give any special powers over any other piece of legislation. I shouldn't say, "unfortunately." It simply is the fact. It doesn't give special powers to overwrite the Liquor Act. Mr. Speaker, in this particular case, I don't have a tool available in the context of the pandemic to rewrite the Liquor Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi cho to the Minister of Finance for that answer. In the community of Fort Providence, the liquor establishments were working with the leadership and agreed to shut down the bars. Could this not be deemed as consultation and agreement with the liquor establishments and perhaps written into the act in a time of crisis in order to issue a TPO?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I'm certainly pleased to hear that there has been coordination and communication between the private establishments and the local government. I know I have also been in contact with the local government, and the Liquor Act is written such that, where there's a licensed establishment, a temporary prohibition order is not an option, unfortunately. Certainly, if there can be that communication within the community, that is good news. Going forward, as I've sort of alluded to in my first answer, Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that there needs to be a much bigger conversation around the Liquor Act but perhaps also a much bigger conversation about alcohol abuse generally, which would be far and beyond the Liquor Act.

MR. BONNETROUGE: It seems like, when this pandemic started, we started off slow, but, eventually, we were working. We had patience on this side of the House for the actions of all involved with the CPHO and the emergency measures organizations. It has always been a problem that we just couldn't harness the very thought that this is a public health emergency and a declared state of emergency. We should have been afforded all avenues to change acts for emergency purposes. Perhaps we really have to look at that as part of the lessons learned.

It's been a while, this coronavirus pandemic. I believe there's an element missing from this process, this consulting with Regular MLAs. There are many heads on this side who would have ideas having to deal with this pandemic. We have a vast range of experiences on this side that could offer suggestions to make it happen. It is that side of the House that is going to want to make it happen because we keep harping on this, and, probably, it'll never end until they find a solution. I just want to ask: can the Minister commit to seeking advice or comments from Regular MLAs on an ongoing basis?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: If what is sought is simply a "yes," then I'm happy to simply give a "yes," Mr. Speaker. I gather that perhaps slightly more may be in order, which is to say that there are a lot of ways of communicating, and I want to ensure that I commit to certainly informing Members before there are changes, where I can. On this particular instance, we certainly did have some correspondence on this particular issue, on liquor regulation amendments. I had a lot of conflicting comments about liquor regulation amendments, some people seeking complete prohibition, others saying, "Please don't do that." This was a very difficult issue, and I will certainly continue to, as best as I can, have those conversations with the Members, so I appreciate that request.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Thebacha.

QUESTION 247-19(2):

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS IN CORRECTIONS

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice tell us what Indigenous programming is currently being offered in the NWT corrections facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister of Justice.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The correctional service did develop what's called "Northern Sessions." It was developed

specifically in the Northwest Territories and was meant to bring northern Indigenous perspective into the correctional programming that's available. There are also other programs that are built upon from Correctional Services Canada and then adapted and delivered by local facility staff members.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, can the justice Minister tell us how many of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action have been implemented within the NWT corrections?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I want to start by acknowledging that that is going to be ongoing work and that it has to be ongoing work, and there are still quite a number of the calls to action that, quite frankly, are still outstanding. Number one that comes to mind with me is the over-representation of Indigenous people in the correctional system. That continues to be a challenge, and it's one that I've certainly spoken about many times, both in my past life as well as in this House.

There is progress happening, though, Mr. Speaker. For instance, in terms of that particular call to action, number 30, of eliminating over-representation, there is work underway. We are taking efforts to again change the way that people are brought into the system and change the way that they go out and are reintegrated, with the hope that that will impact those numbers. With respect to addressing the needs of offenders with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, another call to action, Mr. Speaker, that is one where there has been a lot of effort made within the correctional service here around better diagnosis and treatment options and simply more awareness. Again, Mr. Speaker, there are others with respect to providing culturally relevant services, and, as I mentioned, there has been some effort to design local programming to better reflect the local culture and not just a sense of some sort of "pan" culture which really has and, perhaps, continues to be a problem, that we need to be more adaptive to the unique need of individual cultures across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are also calls around ensuring that there is better training about cultural sensitivity. Again, with the development of the Northern Recruitment Program in the North, it is our intention and effort that we are responding to that call by providing that localized cultural training. I'm conscious of the time. I'll stop there. That is an important one and I'll commit to providing the Member with going through those calls and providing some more detailed responses, again being conscious of time, but that is certainly an overview of the work that is happening, and I am conscious that there is more work to be done.

MS. MARTSELOS: It is very important to have rehabilitation programming being led by properly qualified people, especially people who understand historic trauma and Indigenous healing, not just people trained in corrections or regular counselling. My question is: can the Minister list all the corrections programming that is being led or overseen by Indigenous personnel with proper qualifications?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Mr. Speaker, again, I'm going to commit to firstly put that into writing for the Member. I think there are quite a lot of programs that are happening, and I don't want to be seen as missing one or simply reading out a list and not getting to the root of what is being requested. I will just briefly say, Mr. Speaker, that there has been trauma-informed care being provided as training for correctional staff now for, I believe, two years. There are Indigenous liaison officers meant to be stationed at all of the facilities, although I acknowledge that sometimes those positions have not always been filled. I believe they are at present, although I will confirm. There is an effort at the facilities, often coordinated by the liaison officer, to bring elders into the facilities to provide spiritual guidance and cultural supports for offenders or inmates who may be there. I'll also note, as I think I've spoken about in this House more than once now, the South Mackenzie Correctional Facility in Hay River, although the work has been a bit delayed, there is still an effort to make that into a therapeutic community in line with Indigenous culture in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Indigenous healing work with elders and knowledge holders is an important component. My question is: can the Minister explain what collaboration is taking place in the NWT corrections regarding Indigenous elders in terms of healing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: At the risk of repeating it a bit, there is a liaison officer position at every institution. It is a major part of their role to provide exactly that: the liaison between the community and elders in particular, and to have elder visits coordinated and available for anyone at the facility. That includes not only, for instance, here in Yellowknife, elders who might be part of the local Indigenous community but also Inuit elders. We certainly have a number of individuals coming from across the territory from different Indigenous cultures. There is a conscious effort made to be inclusive as much as possible. I know that, when I went to the Fort Smith Women's Facility, too, they again have focused on having that space available to be able to bring the elders in from the

community. Fort Smith was one that has a long history of doing that and one that we are hoping that we will certainly want to put up as a shining star of what to do in the future, hopefully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 248-19(2)
REMOVAL OF POWER LIMITERS POST COVID-19

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today was in regard to the Minister responsible for the NWTPC. Since we are still in this pandemic of COVID-19, is the Minister prepared to instruct the board for making exemptions to late payments to the power bill and to ensure disconnections and late fees, once this pandemic is done, making sure that the date from, say, August to the end of April, our coldest months of the year, making sure people are not put on power limiters, and getting rid of the power limiter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Nunakput. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard the Member and other Members in this House here about limiters and the impact it has on our residents. As soon as the COVID-19 pandemic happened, we stopped limiters and we did not ask people to be charged or making them pay because of their needs. We're working with the people right now and trying to make sure that they are treated fairly and are looked after. As for what we're doing with limiters, as I've said previously in this House, we are looking at that issue. We are researching across Canada to see what it is and to make sure that we are being fair for all of our residents in the Northwest Territories.

MR. JACOBSON: I ask the Minister if he is prepared to stop using limiters across our territory and to discontinue use. It's really belittling to people. I know it's a tough situation. People in the communities are really affected by this, and it's pretty tough to cook for families; like I said, planning for the winter already. COVID-19 is still here. Pandemic is still here. Why are we charging them? Why is the ministry able to push aside the bills, the power bills for the communities, and then, come September sitting, I'll be making a motion in the House to get rid of all the power bills and charge it to COVID-19. That would be the best way to do it. Is the Minister willing to do that?

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Unfortunately, no. What we are trying to do is we are trying to understand how limiters have been operated across Canada. What we're trying to do is come up with a system that works for all residents. We are working with residents right now, with their power bills. If they need to, we try to give them avenues how they can get their power bills paid through ECE. We are also working with them to come up with a budgeting process that they pay a little bit more during the summertime so that their wintertime costs are not hitting them as big as it is. We're working with the clients. We're working with the system right now. I want to be able to make an informed decision because, if we don't, we're going to be having a whole bunch of people disconnected during the summertime, and we don't want to do that. We have made a commitment to take no limiters right now during the COVID-19. We're not charging interest on late power bills. We're working with the constituents. I've heard the Members from the other side, and we're trying to work the best we can with the system right now. I've made a commitment previously. We will work with the communities as we get this information.

MR. JACOBSON: Just in regard to the limiters and to the bills for the communities, is it possible to get it under COVID-19? I'm going to ask that for my Finance Minister, if we could write that off? I have a few other things I would like to bring forward to write off, too, for the people. It's the only right thing to do. The Minister is responsible for the bureaucrats that are these board of directors. He could instruct them. They work for him. Tell them. Work together in regard to making it better for the people and the costing of our power corporation. Again, from August to April, we can't have those for the weather up in the Delta and in my riding. It's the coldest months of the year. Make sure that we are working with them to get through once this COVID-19 is over. It looks like it's a long way off because of no vaccine.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Yes, I will work with the Finance Minister to see if we can reach out to the federal government. Right now, we can't make a promise to do that. What I've made a promise in this House is we will work with the other side and people to make sure we look at this issue and to come up with an informed decision. As for the board, they are independent. They have the right to come up with their collective response. We're working with them. I believe the board has heard the concerns and we are moving forward on this. Yes, I will work with the Finance Minister. There is my "yes" for the day. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Nunakput.

MR. JACOBSON: Yes. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When will the House see results of the work that the Minister tells us he has asked his deputy minister to do, developing options and reconstructing the Northwest Territories Power Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: I was waiting for this question. I thank the Member for asking that. The board is working on it, and we are hopefully having it by the end of this month in something we can present in June. We are working on this. They are looking again across Canada to see how the boards are done, operated. Again, what we are trying to do is make sure it is an informed decision and work with committee on it. At the end of the day, it's about working together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 249-19(2):
SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. As I said in my statement, I believe the GNWT has failed small business in this territory by not offering enough support through the pandemic. At the end of April, the Minister previewed her recovery plan and made the statement that some small businesses are expected to fail or scale down. My question for the Minister is: what is her responsibility to prevent small businesses from closing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I made that statement, I was definitely talking about a global situation. That is what I had heard, that, globally, we would be seeing small business fail. Ultimately, my goal is to not have any Northwest Territories businesses fail through COVID-19, but of course, that is going to be a challenge as we are all aware. My role for small business is to be an advocate. I have been doing so. I know there has been conversation around: federal government is doing things and the GNWT is not. I would like for people to be aware that the way that the federal government knows what the GNWT or what the Northwest Territories residents need is through the lobbying efforts of myself and my colleagues here with them at our federal tables as well as our one-on-one meetings that we do have.

My role is to be the voice of small business. I do understand that small business is feeling not heard

at the moment. However, we have introduced supports, and we quickly introduced the BDIC loan. It was actually rolled out on March 20th. The border closed March 21st. By March 25th, applications had ended and money was starting to flow, or it at least being assessed. I do not have the exact date of when payments would have started. I know there is concern that they were loans and not free money. However, in order to get that liquidity out fast to people, we wanted to be able to make the requirements less. There would have been a lot more requirements around getting relief funding out by just handing it out as a grant. We wanted to ensure people could access money quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. I hear the Minister say she thinks she is done all she can, but small business mostly doesn't agree. I want to ask you specifically about BDIC. BDIC has a surplus of \$30 million. Small businesses told me very clearly that they need grants, that in a situation where they are closed for good or their revenue has gone down by 90 percent, they are not interested in taking on more debt. My question for the Minister is: why didn't the Minister offer grants from BDIC to qualified businesses rather than loans?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: I don't believe I said that I have done everything I can do. I will say, though, that I am doing the best that I can to my ability. I have several areas of business and industry where I need to advocate for everyone. I am only one person, and I do acknowledge that there are things that we could be doing better. I believe I already answered the question as to why we went with loans instead of grants with the BDIC. However, I do commit to coming back to the Member with a more fulsome answer on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister's commitment to come back with a fulsome response. That is helpful. My next question is about the business advisory council. The answer to my colleague's questions yesterday indicated that this is a secret committee which would have the final say on whether to reveal their membership and their terms of reference and whether, in fact, we are going to know anything about them. Can the Minister confirm that this government is giving this council discretion to be a secret committee?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: What the question was yesterday was: would I make the terms of reference and the membership public? It was not whether I would share it with the Members on the other side of the room. No, this will not be a secret committee. The reason for my response yesterday was that I do not want to tie the hands of anyone prior to even having the first conversation with them. I am open to sharing that and posting that

publicly. However, I will have that discussion with the council, and we will move forward as the council sees fit.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that answer from the Minister. It's actually imperative that you shore up the credibility of this initiative by making as much of it public as you possibly can as soon as you can. My next and final question is what this council is supposed to accomplish and over what period of time. Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: This council will be one of three that will be used by Cabinet and all of the government in order to be better informed by the stakeholders as was part of our 19th Legislative Assembly mandate and commitment priorities. We will be working towards making more evidence-based decisions by looking at or getting the feedback from the councils and their inputs, their recommendations. There will be reports provided that will be sent to the executive council and also shared as part of the co-committee that we will be having with the Regular MLAs and ourselves on economic recovery. The plan is to use the experts in the areas of their industries and sector in order to provide the better responses or the better relief packages or recovery packages that we can provide as a government. There is no way that we are going to be able to do it if we don't take feedback. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 250-19(2):
LIQUOR REGULATIONS

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This is a question for the Minister of Finance. Just for some context here, on April 16th of this year, there were some liquor restrictions for sales that you announced. I have some figures in front of me that people are allowed to buy no more than six 375-millilitre containers of spirits or a maximum daily purchase up of \$200 for individual customers. I have a two-prong question. My first part of that question is: how are these amounts determined? The second part of that is: what consultation was carried out with our Indigenous leaders prior to the announcement of these amounts? Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Liquor regulations are a regulation entirely within the department of finance and typically

wouldn't necessarily be the subject of significant -- certainly not consultation as a legal concept but engagement, more generally. What we did do in this case, Mr. Speaker, is that certainly, at the same time that this was happening, there was a liquor-related motion by the Dene Nation that was made and a fairly lengthy response provided to them on April 7th. I was involved in an Indigenous governments' call that has been happening weekly now with the governments during the pandemic on April 9th to discuss the decision around closing of liquor stores. Then on April 15th, when the letter went out, that went out only after I would had that length conversation with the Indigenous governments and had received also correspondence from them. At that time, I sent a detailed letter to them to explain what was done. While that was the liquor changes that were made on April 16th that the Member makes mention of, they are regulations. They are changeable.

We got back on the phone and had another long conversation with the Indigenous governments on April 17th. On April 23rd, I had written to the Indigenous governments again, seeking their input on the changes to date and then some further changes that, again, a number of parties were requesting. On April 24th, I again went on to the Indigenous governments' call and had a lengthy discussion with them. At that point, set up a targeted call on April 28th, specifically with the Department of Finance to have a lengthy conversation with them around how the liquor regulations were working and whether further changes needed to be made. That is the one part of the question, Mr. Speaker. The second was on how the amounts were chosen. There was a real balance being struck between the desire to put some regulations that would create a restriction in place to try to target bootleggers, to try to target those who were buying mickeys, those who were buying large amounts and then taking them back to smaller communities, in particular, for resale, but also not to create a barrier that would hamper the health system by driving people to consume other types of alcohol. We looked at the kinds of consumption patterns that we could see, and we looked at who was being impacted and who was being targeted, and tried to target those who were seemingly purchasing for improper purposes, and not target the large proportion of individuals who can consume responsibly.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker, and Marsi cho to the Minister of Finance for those responses. I listened very carefully to those responses, and some of the feedback that I got from some of our Indigenous leaders in my riding was that these amounts were still way too high. If we get six of us going into a liquor store, I'm going to make an example of say, Hay River, and then we go into one

of the surrounding communities, we could still have a party for a very, very long time. Do you know what I mean? These amounts are still very high.

I guess my second part of that question: have there been any specific requests from our Indigenous leaders to lower these amounts since then? Marsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been requests around liquor for the last two months to impose complete bans, complete restrictions, to open it up, to make it available for sale from taxi cabs. I have had no end of requests and varying requests across the board. I simply can't accommodate every request because they are at opposites, one with another. I acknowledge that not every Indigenous leader's request to impose a complete ban has been followed. Obviously, that's not what we've done. Some of the Indigenous leaders who we spoke to were saying, "Please, just keep it as a simple restriction." There's not a simple solution to this, Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge that. I'm not going to make everybody happy with this one. We did our best to try to strike a balance between looking at the health system, looking at what we need to do to maintain the health system, trying to support some of the small businesses who were asking for changes to the Liquor Act, at the same time. As I've said on all of these calls, Mr. Speaker, the Liquor Act and the liquor regulations are not going to be where we address the fundamental problem of alcohol abuse in the territory. It's a crisis. It is absolutely a crisis, and it needs to be addressed in a much bigger way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NORN: Thank you for that response. Just listening, I want to thank you for staying engaged because I think that's a proper way to categorize that instead of consulting. I understand the need to keep businesses afloat, and it's so important because, like I've said, everybody's feeling the pinch during this crisis. On May 8th, I guess I mentioned, the class A and the class B licensed establishments are allowed to sell beer and alcohol with their food. I guess my final question is, what consultations were made with our local Indigenous governments before this was implemented?

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: I apologize. I should have been briefer in my original answer. I happened to have a chronology of the efforts we made because it's not the first concern that's been raised to me about what I've done to engage and the time we spent speaking to not only Indigenous governments but also our community governments and others. We did write out, seeking input. We also had two further conversations about this, and it

was actually as a result of those conversations and of the input that we received that, in fact, we did not allow taxis to be involved in the sale and distribution of alcohol and that, if a licensed establishment now is going to include alcohol sales with their takeout, it has to be through their own delivery service; it cannot use the taxi cab. So we did remove that, and we also removed the sale of cannabis, which was also one of the proposals. Again, while it's not answering what everybody wanted, it certainly did make an effort, I believe, to be responsive to some of the requests that were being made.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Hay River South.

QUESTION 251-19(2):
BORDER SECURITY

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Just for clarity, what department has authority over border security and under what authority? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The compliance and enforcement of the public health order falls under the Public Health Act and is the responsibility of the deputy chief public health officers and the compliance and enforcement public health officers who are appointed by the Chief Public Health Officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister confirm how her department will address the ongoing issues surrounding border security such as documentation, essential workers exemptions, status cards, drug dealers, bootleggers, and tourists coming into the territory. They seem to be getting across the border.

HON. DIANE THOM: In terms of documentation, we will continue to demand valid Northwest Territories documentation and provide them with information that I've outlined in the statement, and will follow-up if a complaint is made to protect Northwest Territories. In terms of the essential workers, we will continue to monitor the essential workers and their adherence to our rules. The case you cite in your Member's statement is very disturbing to me, and I commit to looking into the details and getting back to you. In terms of exemptions, exceptions are one-off and are granted for compassion or other valid reasons, such as caregivers and childcare are just two examples. There are also several categories of exemptions under the travel restriction order, so all Northwest Territories as well as essential service workers, mine workers, supply chain workers, are

considered exempted under the travel provision. In terms of the status cards, we are only accepting Northwest Territories IDs where there's clearly NWT residency. In terms of the drug dealers and the bootleggers, of course we don't want these people in here. However, if they do have a valid Northwest Territories proof of residency, there's not a lot we can do other than, in the past, we have advised the RCMP when there are suspicious behaviours. That's been very successful because of the partnership with them.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Can the Minister relay to our Chief Public Health Officer that we will be seeing more residents travelling south throughout the summer and that, upon return, some of them may start to ignore the self-isolation order and look to self-monitoring as an option? Also, ask her how that will be addressed? Because the last thing we want to do is make criminals out of our residents.

HON. DIANE THOM: Our compliance and enforcement task force are expecting and are prepared for more Northwest Territories residents that are travelling south during the summer months. They are working closely with officers who are manning the borders and airports to protect the Northwest Territories, to ensure that there is a consistent approach for returning residents, including extensive public awareness and communication efforts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister confirm what authority the Chief Public Health Officer has, and can it be overridden by this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE THOM: The authority is under Part 5 of the Public Health Act, respecting public health emergencies, as well as sections 11 and 25. The Chief Public Health Officer is a statutory appointment who reports directly to me, as Minister.

There are several categories in exemptions under the travel restriction order that all Northwest Territories residents, as well as essential service workers, mine workers, supply chain workers, are considered exempted under the travel-prohibition provisions. The best way to track the total exemptions would be to count the number of self-isolation plans, which we share weekly with our Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 252-19(2):
REMEDIATION OF MINING SITES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Premier, who is responsible for federal relations. My statement earlier today outlined how the federal government has made very substantial investments, hundreds of millions of dollars, in Western Canadian provinces to support the energy sector by expediting well site remediation. Has the Premier considered similar assistance to the NWT to accelerate action on our extensive contaminated-sites inventory? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, the remediation from mine sites has always been a priority. I take ownership for some of that. Just recently, a drill was returned to my brother that was left from my father. My father has been gone for over a decade, but, in the 1960s, the mining and the drilling here was not okay. They were dumping things all over the place. There are huge issues within the territories, and there is a huge economic opportunity to clean that up. It wasn't based on rudeness; it was based on ignorance. They did not know better back in the day. Mining is different. My Minister of ITI, as well, has been on this. That is not only her portfolio. It is her background. She also is well aware of the economic opportunities and the issues we face within that.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Premier for that. I think there are hundreds of millions of dollars at stake here and that, if we made the right pitch to the federal government, we could tap into that. Can the Premier tell us what specific work has been done to pursue this opportunity to drive economic recovery in the NWT through this strong federal investment in contaminated-site remediation here?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: On our side, with EIA, our officials have had discussions with officials before COVID-19, in all honesty, on a regular basis. I also know that my Minister of ITI is also right now working on a pan-northern letter to the federal government, to Minister O'Regan, actually, with CanNor to actually advocate for that funding.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. It's good to hear. She might have anticipated the next question, so I'm just going to change it up a bit. Earlier today, I had mentioned that there are opportunities where we could perhaps work with our neighbours in Yukon and Nunavut on the dedicated accelerated Northern Contaminated Sites initiative. Sounds like some of that work may be underway. Can the Premier tell us specifically what she has done? I understand it might be a letter. Can she give us a copy of that letter when it's done

and keep reporting back to us about progress on this initiative?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: There are two things. One, of course, I just checked with my Minister of ITI. Absolutely, she will give you a copy of the letter that she is writing on behalf of it. The other thing I want to speak about wasn't really asked, but I'm going to go there, is that every week since the beginning of March we have been meeting with the Prime Minister. We've been talking at our what is called FMM, First Ministers' Meetings. We've been talking about COVID-19. The last meeting we had, the council, the federation, the premiers across Canada decided that we were, and we told the Prime Minister, that from now on we are going to have one-week talks about COVID-19. One week goes back to our normal needs that we have longstanding. This will be something that I'll carry forward, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. That is all good news from the Premier. I want to thank her for that. Just as the federal government is using this funding as leverage to get Alberta to commit to better management of resource extraction to prevent these sorts of things from happening, we haven't gone there. Five years after devolution, we've made no changes to our legislation or at least even brought them into force to make sure this doesn't happen again, and again, and again. Strategic Oil & Gas, we're going to inherit the site Cantung, it goes on and on. I want a commitment from this Premier that she's going to fix this issue and problem so that, when the feds say, "What are you doing about it," we can actually say that we are actually on it, finally.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do like to work with the Members. However, I would have to look into that. I can't make a commitment on the floor that I'll fix that in this Assembly. I have to look at what the legislation is and what we have going on. I will make a commitment that I will look into it, and I'll get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 253-19(2):

SEED FUNDING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. In relation to my Member's statement today, I'd like to talk about the SEED funding. Is the department tracking how many applications for SEED funding are being

submitted specifically as a result of COVID-19, and, if so, how many applications for COVID-19 SEED funding has ITI received, how many have been approved, and how much funding is associated with these approvals? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we revamp our guidelines for our SEED funding, it's now sort of open to all, so that distinction of COVID-related or not is not really relevant. There have been 40 applications for SEED to date, requesting approximately \$410,000. Thirty applications have been approved, equalling approximately \$220,000 in funding. Two applications have been denied as they did not meet SEED policy criteria. Two applications were withdrawn. Six applications are awaiting review by the regional panels. Applications for the 2020-2021 SEED started being reviewed by the regions on May 13, 2020. It has only been two weeks that we have been receiving applications, and yet we have already gotten a lot out the door.

MS. CLEVELAND: According to the backgrounder that accompanied the announcement of top-up funding, I quote, "a flexible approach shall be taken to the provision of SEED strategic initiative funding, with an allowable funding range between \$30,000 and \$70,000." However, the ITI SEED program webpage and the policy itself indicate that the maximum funding available under any specific entrepreneur support category is \$25,000 per year. Can the Minister please clarify first what is meant by the term "entrepreneur support category" in the SEED policy, and are there separate pots of funding under the SEED umbrella? Thank you.

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: There are a number of sub-programs described in the SEED policy that fall under that entrepreneur support category, and there is no specific pot of funding associated with each. Generally, we have \$4 million fund that supports economic development in our communities.

MS. CLEVELAND: Can the Minister speak to what is the maximum amount available to an eligible business under SEED, and can an applicant seek funding under more than one of these entrepreneur support categories?

HON. KATRINA NOKLEBY: The maximum available for any individual business under regular SEED programming in a given year is \$25,000 and up to \$30,000 with a Ministerial waiver. Applicants can apply for any type of support. The limit is on the total quantum. The one exception is for strategic initiatives, with up to \$75,000 allowed. This was

introduced as a pilot program two years ago, and the intention was to support larger projects that could have a real impact in terms of investments in local employment and communities. We had previously targeted two strategic investments per region at \$75,000 apiece. This year, we are currently targeting one strategic investment per region in order to make as much funding available as possible to as many NWT businesses. However, as reflected in the guidelines released on May 11th, our approach is one of flexibility. I would encourage anyone who has been rejected under the SEED funding to follow up with my office and we will look at their application on a case-by-case basis.

MS. CLEVELAND: As I alluded to in my Member's statement today, one of the most difficult parts about this policy is the market-disruption clause. Is the Minister willing to suspend or remove the market-disruption provision in the SEED policy so that existing NWT businesses can be assured of access to this funding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: The SEED Program contains a market disruption provision in order to refrain from providing businesses with funding for investments when their competitors have funded similar improvements on their own. As with any government program, the objective is fairness. However, in light of COVID, we may want to review this approach in order to support businesses that need to pivot. The challenge will be funding business improvements or COVID pivots when their competitor across the street funded such improvements on their own. That said, again, I'll note our flexible approach, given the current circumstances.

I do want to thank the Member for bringing this to my attention. I will ask my department to consider how we can support Northwest Territories businesses as they prepare to operate in this new COVID reality and do so in a way that is fair. I will keep the Member apprised on what this department is able to recommend within the policy before the end of next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Our time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 13-19(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COVID-19 TESTING
AND CONTACT TRACING CAPACITY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social

Services. We have been fortunate to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the territory during the first wave of this pandemic. We were told a second wave is inevitable and likely to emerge at the end of the summer. In order to be ready for the second wave, we need to ensure that we have the capacity to conduct rapid testing and contact tracing on a large scale in the event that we have community spread of the virus.

1. Please provide an overview of how many tests, both rapid and standard, are on hand as of the end of May, and how many additional tests are available on short notice to meet our additional needs, and how quickly they can be delivered to Yellowknife?

2. How quickly are rapid test results available, and how long does it take to have the test results verified by the lab in Alberta?

3. How many staff are trained to perform contact tracing, and how quickly can this capacity be scaled up if the need arises?

4. Are the contact tracing staff able to provide services in all of the official languages of the Northwest Territories?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. 10, replies to the Commissioner's address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 105-19(2):
ACCREDITATION REPORT: NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
AUTHORITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 106-19(2):
ACCREDITATION REPORT: HAY RIVER HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

TABLED DOCUMENT 107-19(2):
ACCREDITATION REPORT: TLICHO
COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents: the accreditation report for the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority; the accreditation report for the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority; and the accreditation report for the Tlicho Community Services Authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 108-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 40-19(2): PROVISION OF RCMP HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 109-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 44-19(2): PROVISION OF RCMP HOUSING

TABLED DOCUMENT 110-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 46-19(2): HOUSING PROGRAM DELIVERY IN COMMUNITIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 111-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 50-19(2), 136-19(2), 162-19(2) AND 167-19(2):
PROOF OF INCOME FOR PUBLIC HOUSING CLIENTS AND RENT SCALE POLICY REVIEW

TABLED DOCUMENT 112-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 80-19(2): ARNICA INN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROJECT

TABLED DOCUMENT 113-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 89-19(2): HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN INUVIK

TABLED DOCUMENT 114-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 129-19(2): HOUSING FOR SENIORS AGING IN PLACE

TABLED DOCUMENT 115-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 189-19(2): CONTRACTOR SUSPENSION LIST

TABLED DOCUMENT 116-19(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION 192-19(2): HOUSING WAITING LISTS

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following nine documents: "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 40-19(2), Provision of RCMP Housing;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 44-19(2), Provision of RCMP Housing;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 46-19(2), Housing Program Delivery in Communities;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Questions 50-19(2), 136-19(2), 162-19(2) and 167-19(2), Proof of Income for Public Housing Clients and Rent Scale Policy Review;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 80-19(2), Arnica Inn Transitional Housing Project;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 89-19(2), Housing and Homelessness in Inuvik;" "Follow-up

Letter for Oral Question 129-19(2), Housing for Seniors Aging in Place;" "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 189-19(2), Contractor Suspension List;" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 192-19(2), Housing Wait List." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 117-19(2):
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT ON
THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2019
TERRITORIAL GENERAL ELECTION

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 266(2) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act, I wish to table the "Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2019 Territorial General Election." Thank you.

Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, motions. Item 17, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 18, first reading of bills. Member for Yellowknife North.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 6:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

MR. JOHNSON: One brief moment, Mr. Speaker. Apologies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. A motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 6 has had first reading. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, for the Department of Health, with the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021, with Health and Social Services. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with the first item.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): We are going to call committee back to order. All right. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 30-19(2): Main Estimates 2020-2021. We are doing Health and Social Services. Does the Minister of Health and Social Services have any opening remarks?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, Madam Chair. I am here to present the 2020-2021 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$26.7 million or 5.4 percent over the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. These estimates support our fiscal objectives to prioritize responsible and strategic spending while matching the modest expected revenue growth over the coming year.

Highlights of these proposed estimates include \$15.2 million to address forced growth and \$12 million for programs we have partnered on with federal counterparts, through funding agreements. These estimates support the priorities of the 19th Assembly. We will focus on activities that are already underway to support our mandate and our priorities as a government. Some highlights include:

- our focus on quality and increasing the efficiency and sustainability of health and social services;
- better coordination of services for children and families;
- supports for targeted recruitment plans across the system that address critical nursing shortages;
- increased supports for mental wellness and addictions recovery;
- a focus on helping seniors stay in their homes and communities; and supports for vulnerable populations.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. DIANE THOM: [Microphone turned off].

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Sergeant of Arms will escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce her witnesses?

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, with me, Deputy Minister Bruce Cooper and Director of Finance Jeannie Mathison.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): All right. Thank you. Committee, we have agreed to forego the general comments. We will proceed to the detail contained in the tabled document. We will defer the departmental summary review, the estimates, and the review of the estimates by activity summary, beginning with administrative and support services, starting on page 166, with information items up to 169. Questions? Comments? Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess just a general question if the Minister could update me of how and any progress we have made on telehealth and kind of what we can see to continue out of the progress we have made due to COVID-19 and if that is expected to be found in this budget or whether there is a supplemental appropriation for a more digital healthcare system coming. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, the federal government announced some money for virtual care. The department is now looking into accessing. If and where possible it's our best interest to utilize federal funding versus using money out of our budget. Yet, we do recognize the importance of virtual care. We have been practicing it for the last two months. It's important that we continue to do so.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there any further comments or questions to this section? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I notice on page 168, on contributions, that there was some funding provided to the nurses association of the NWT and Nunavut a few years back. I seem to recall that there was going to be some effort towards having one regulatory framework for nursing professionals. Can I just get a bit of an update as to where that work is at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: I am going to bring this over to my deputy minister, Mr. Cooper, to answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Madam Chair, yes, indeed. We did have one-time funding that flowed to the nurses association to support work towards the one regulatory body. We are currently still working with the RNANT/NU to update the Nursing Profession Act so that we can move towards regulating all nursing professions under one regulator. This work will continue through this year that we are heading into. I don't have a firm date on when we will be back, given some of the adaptations we have had to make to work, planning around what we are obviously going through right now, but we are certainly working to consolidate legislation and have all nursing professionals' credentials managed and monitored by the one regulatory body.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you Mr. Cooper. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That is good to hear and understandably delayed probably as a result of COVID. Is this, dare I say, some sort of almost a co-drafting process, where the associations are involved in drafting the legislation or giving feedback, having an opportunity to review drafts or whatever? How is that working? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. While we are on the topic, I will get Mr. Cooper to answer that, as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, it is a process of co-designing. I wouldn't say necessarily the co-drafting component, but, certainly, we are working to ensure that we align our legislation with the best practices and working in partnership with the association to do so.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That is good to hear. I think that is the way that we need to approach this. I am glad to hear that that is being done. This is, I guess, the place where health and social services authorities' funding flows through. I have raised this in the past. I am wondering if we are making any progress on some sort of consolidated reporting of features of our integrated system now. The health transformation system was supposed to allow for reporting of things like wait times for key medical services. Look, I understand folks are working flat out in terms of pandemic

preparation and all of that, but have we started to make any progress in this consolidated reporting of things like wait times for different kinds of medical services so that the public understands where focus might need to be better made or even us as legislators? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, in terms of increasing information systems, one of the things the department has done just recently is to incorporate our financial system, SAM. This is something that we are looking at in terms of putting all our systems into one place. We have done it with our financial. We recognize that there is need for improvements in terms of putting all our other systems together. That is something that the department is looking into.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. That is good to hear, but I have raised this for, I think this is probably about the third or fourth year in a row now. When are we going to be at a point where we can have public reporting of wait times for a variety of medical services? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The information that we have, we do track wait times in many of the different services that we provide. This is something that the department can look into, because we need to improve wait times for any of the different services that we provide here. There is room for improvement. I understand that, and that is something that we can look at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there a schedule, though? When could we expect to see public reporting on an annual basis, even, of wait times? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will turn it over to Mr. Cooper.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the department and the system has been working and certainly recognizes the importance of reporting on

wait times in a variety of areas. We have some areas where we are already reporting wait times. There are other areas that we are developing as part of the bilateral agreement with the federal government. We have an obligation to do public reporting on wait times around homecare, mental health, and performance indicators around that. We have been tracking wait times for audiology services, rehab services, and so, this is something that we are very much committed to. It's going to take us several years to get to a place where we have a robust wait time reporting process, but we are at a place now where we do have wait times available by programs, others that are coming on stream, and programs working away to try to do better in that regard. We can certainly make that listing available if MLAs wish to see a more fulsome briefing on that issue.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, thanks, Madam Chair. I would very much like to see that list. Can the Minister confirm that that would be provided? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that is something I can provide to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess one of the other big issues system-wide is recruitment and retention. I'm just wondering if I can hear if we're making any process on recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals across our whole system. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Recruitment for health professions is one of our priorities in the 19th Assembly, and this is something our department is looking at doing. As a result of COVID-19, we were able to repatriate a lot of nurses coming back from outside of the Northwest Territories, which is very promising, because we were able to then possibly even keep them. That is something that we are looking at. We need to meet our target. Our Assembly identified a target for the 19th Assembly, and that is something that we are working at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. My questions are related to RNANT/NU, the Registered Nurses Association of the NWT and Nunavut. I am aware that they are a governing body that governs registered nurses or nurse practitioners in the Northwest Territories. That whole body seems to be separate from the whole health department. I know that people before me have filed complaints to them. I think it goes to several other places, too. It could be to the leadership council chairman. It could be going to the department of health, but the majority is funnelled to RNANT/NU.

I even filed a formal complaint for three or four people back in November regarding problems with misdiagnosis, different causes, inappropriate comments to our Dene people. Those were being made in our health centre, but we weren't receiving responses. I asked those other people, too, who filed some back in May of last year, and they said they have never ever once received anything back from anyone to even acknowledge that they received their complaints and stuff like that. I am just wondering: what's the relationship between our health department and this governing body? If you could try to paint me a clear picture of what has happened there, I would appreciate that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The complaints process is not straightforward. I'm going to maybe ask Mr. Cooper if he can talk about the process in detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Two points to make on this. The first is that, as a regulatory authority, RNANT/NU has been granted, obviously, by this legislature, the right to self-regulate and the obligation to ensure that they have a complaint investigation and disciplinary process established that meets the rules of natural justice so that there is a good and fair complaint investigation process put in place. These things normally do take place behind a bit of a veil of confidentiality, as, once a complaint is laid, there are sometimes issues that might occur that might make it difficult for people to know everything that's happening. I guess the point here is that they are a standalone entity with their own professional regulatory investigation processes. Certainly, we are aware that there are many investigations that take place, but we do not receive reports about the status of investigations because of the independent nature of their role.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Mahsi for that. It's still muddled, that whole process, because now we're dealing with an independent body, and a lot of times, when you deal with independent bodies, you're always having problems, because we're not totally regulated by something under the GNWT umbrella. We get answers there, right now. Here, we don't. I believe you guys look after recruitment and retention, and you're sending them over there. You're cutting the ties, type of thing.

We do have a lot of legitimate complaints out there, and we haven't resolved them. Like I said, some were back from May a year ago. We're still here with no answers. There is a big disconnect and a problem there. I would really like the department to look at tightening or strengthening the relationship that you have with this group, in order that we get some timely responses to formal complaints. Right now, we're just not getting anywhere. My community, a year later, we're still up in arms.

I think we may be requesting to meet with the Minister of health in our community in the near future to really discuss this issue with RNANT/NU and a complaint process. We need to do better than that and not just say, "Well, they're a regulatory body. They're on their own." We're hiring the nursing profession in there. Those are just comments on that one.

Recruitment and retention that my colleague brought up there is another one, too, because I know we've had a person or two go through the nursing profession from our small communities now and again. Now, it's just gone by the total wayside. I'm wondering if the GNWT, the department of health, would consider an aggressive recruitment program in high schools and going out to all the small communities to speak to them because I think there could be some very good people in there who would be interested if somebody were there to talk to them about it, maybe an actual nurse, too, to pique their interest, and that may be where our youth might take that up. It's a profession. We've got to get into their faces. I would really like to see that happening. That's just another general comment. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. The recruitment piece is essential. Right now, we're pulling people in from outside the territories and it shouldn't be that way. We should be able to have training here in the Northwest Territories. We have many institutions that we can be able to provide health training. I agree with the Member's comments about having the careers in earlier schools, so that way students can understand that they need certain courses in

order to get their grade 12 and carry on into a nursing profession. I agree, and that's something that the department of education, culture, and department of health can have a look at to start to capture students at earlier grades so that they can take the appropriate courses so that they can go right into college for a nursing profession. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Are there further comments to this section? Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. I'm looking at page 168, the French language services, \$970,000, which stands out. As you know, the population of the Northwest Territories, the majority is Aboriginal-language-speaking people. Is that due to the course of a federal contribution towards the French language services? Is that why it's identified on its own? That would be my first question. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. If that's the case, I think we, as a territorial government responsible for Stanton, territorial government needs to push more to identify similar to French language. I know that the French population is aggressive. We need to be aggressive, as well, Aboriginal-language-speaking people in the Northwest Territories, because a majority of our communities speak the language, but it's not identified here on its own. I would like to see that even more. I guess a direction to either the Minister or the department to push that with the federal government. I know the federal government increased Aboriginal language funding to ECE just recently, not too long ago, so they've identified the importance of Aboriginal language. If we can identify that here as part of a line similar to French language services, with identification of funding, that would be very much appreciated. Is the Minister willing to push that from her end with the federal government and her colleagues from Nunavut and the Yukon territory, as well? Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you. That is absolutely something we should be looking at. The Member did identify that, here in the Northwest Territories, we have the majority of our residents Indigenous, and the language piece is so important. I spoke earlier in the House about the translation and how important that is for patients coming in and to be

able to have those services available to them. That is something that we would look at. That's a key part of the services, is to be able to have that language aspect, so that's important. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. Obviously, whenever we're in session, the federal government is listening to us, looking out for our discussion here. Clearly, this is of importance to the Northwest Territories. We have 11 official languages, and the federal government only recognizes two. We recognize our 11 official languages, and we have to stand firm to say, "These are our own Northwest Territories. We identify nine Aboriginal languages." We need to identify that as part of our budget going forward.

In the previous terms when I was education Minister, I spoke my language to the federal government, and they always put their earpiece on. They had no idea what I was saying, but I was making a point to them, that we do exist, and there are Aboriginal languages out there. I'm glad the Minister is willing to pursue that with the federal minister, but it will take time, but we've done it with ECE. There's been an increase on federal. I don't see why Health and Social Services, I'm sure we can do that, too. It has to take a firm approach from all of us, and I just want to highlight that, Madam Chair. More of a comment, but it's the importance of the language to be identified in the budget. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. I will just take that as a comment. Are there further questions to this section? If there are no further questions, please turn to page 167. Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$52,038,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. We will move to Health and Social Services programs, beginning on page 170, with information up to page 174. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions for this page. It's a very expensive page in our book. It's very obvious that health has a lot of fabulous health and social programs, and one of the ones we've heard the most about in the last few years has been the child and family services program. I notice that the increase for the child and family services program in the budget this year is just under half a million dollars. I'm wondering if the Minister can speak to whether or not that is enough money for this

program to cover what they would like to achieve with child and family services?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now under the child and family services, we do have the quality improvement plan that we are looking at, and we are also looking at innovative ways to be able to meet what our standards are. We continuously try to improve where we can. If the Member is asking: do we want more money in the budget line item? Of course, we do, if we can. This is where we are at right now with the child and family services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be curious to know if the Minister can speak to what it would cost for them to be able to address the issues raised in the Auditor General's report? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a big question. We looked at the Auditor General's report, and there were a lot of actions. That is something our department can go back to have a look at. Maybe I'll turn it over to Mr. Cooper.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department has developed a three-year plan to essentially answer the question of what staffing is going to be required to meet the workload and caseload demands, part of what was operating behind some of the OAG issues and findings. What you see in this particular budget line is the continuation of our first year of that three-year plan, with some of the UNW increases. We do have a plan, a costing. As the Minister referenced, the quality improvement plan is very much in line with the spirit of that plan, which is to implement new measures, monitor, evaluate, and then shift. What we have done, we did do a costing of a three-year trajectory for getting new staff and new resources to be able to meet the call to action OAG report. It is very much a living document and something that, as we go, we are learning and making changes. What is not showing up this budget is other planning that we've done for year two, which I believe would be part of the consideration of the sub-process.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I very much believe that child and family services is, given the changes that health and social services wants to implement, a form of preventative care because we've all seen research that says, when you invest in kids, when you invest in families, the benefits that come back to communities and the benefits that come back to your society are huge. I think my colleague from Yellowknife Centre once said, and she can tell me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure, she once said, for every dollar you invest in kids, your return is \$13. I believe that was actually from UNICEF that that was pointed out. I definitely think that this is somewhere where we need to put our energy and put our money. My second question is for the family violence line that is in here, that this hasn't changed from the previous year. Does the Minister consider health and social services a lead on family violence prevention? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Earlier today we had our meeting in Cabinet where we talked about family violence and the multi-departmental approach. You're looking Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Justice, and Department of EIA. That is something that our government is looking at because we don't want to be pointing fingers at different departments. Family violence is very important here in the Northwest Territories, and everybody seems to be turning a blind eye and pointing at departments. That is not what this government wants. This government, Madam Chair, wants to be able to have a go-to at a very senior level so that they can work within the departments to be able to take some action. That is where we are at right now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much Madam Chair. Yes, this was a conversation that the Minister of Justice and I had during our last sitting that was cut short. I have let her know that I am coming back around to finish that conversation during this sitting. I appreciate that answer, and I agree that it does need a lead. My next question is in regard to the antipoverty fund and the day shelter fund that is on the next page. Over the course of the last 10 weeks, the day shelter showed up in media quite a bit, and the conversation was around does the day shelter go back to being a day shelter because it turned into an isolation centre over the course of COVID. They supplied MLAs with some research that showed some of the great work that they were doing. My question became: how do all of these levels of care fit together, and who has the

oversight of that? I'm wondering if the Department of Health and Social Services does have somebody that looks at levels of care for day shelters or transitional homes, and who has that oversight, and how does that work? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a really good question. Here in the Northwest Territories, we a variety of different services that we provide to vulnerable populations, the day shelters, we also have the NWT disabilities; we have a variety of different service providers that we partner with. I think that partnership is key. We, as a department, look to help fund different NGOs here so that they can provide the services where we're not able to. I agree that partnership is ideal and is key to be able to make successful progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much Madam Chair. I absolutely agree that NGOs are crucial in that sense. As you mentioned the NWT Disabilities Council, they end up being the ones actually delivering the programming. My question is: who provides the oversight of all these NGOs? Because sometimes they end up administering the same programs, whereas, really, we could be working together to make sure that we're offering different levels of care throughout our system of partnerships. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's the key. It's the communication. Although the department does fund a portion of some of these programs, the key is the communication, to be able to get everybody together on an ongoing basis to be able to provide some communication and support is ideal. I don't want to say that department has the official oversight. For us, the key is partnership. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much Madam Chair. I'm just looking at the time, so I'm going to move on from this one a little bit. I'll come back to it with the Minister at a later time. My next question is in regard to the mental health and addictions line item in the budget. Within COVID, we've talked a lot of mental health and addictions and how the increase in need for mental health supports is huge. Does the Minister foresee that line item going up or them coming back for the need for additional

monies because of COVID in relation to mental health and addiction?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are in a situation now of a pandemic. You look at a lot of the programs that have delayed because we don't have the one-on-one with the mental wellness. We do access a lot of the virtual care, and that is something the department will continue to do as we get through this pandemic. In terms of the mental wellness and addictions, we've been asked from a lot of residents to have more addictions here in the Territories. I can see this as something that we will have to have a look at and get back to the Member, unless, Mr. Cooper, you have anything to add?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we certainly have implemented a significant number of new things in relation to COVID, like managed alcohol, some of the sheltering-in-place options that have happened. Some of the expansion of the use of virtual care has essentially eliminated our wait times for community counselling. There has been a cluster of things that we have done that we are taking a look at, to basically answer the question: how do we need to change going forward, and is this something we can do by reprofiling, or is this something that we're going to need to make other changes to be able to fund, or is it something we need to come back and seek funding for?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. I'm going to move on to Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just would like clarification on page 171, community clinics and health centres. That \$73,936,000, an increase of probably about 2.5. I just want to see, what does that include, and then I'll ask for another line after that. Is that the health centres in all of the communities?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The community clinics healthcare, the majority of the budget is going towards the grants and the actual budgets. It's all going to some of the different health authorities is the majority of the community clinics and healthcare centres, so yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I just want clarification. Community clinics and health centres is the \$73,936,000. I need clarification on that. That's everything in the communities outside of Yellowknife; right? Am I correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me just find it here. The community clinics and health centres, this funding is for primary care services, which is considered the first level of contact for individuals within the health system. These are going towards the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority; also, some of the other hospitals, the Stanton hospital. Yes, they are going to regional health authorities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Then there's a line there, hospital services, for \$134,607,000. There's an increase in there of about \$14 million. That would be the two designated hospitals, which is Inuvik and Stanton. Am I correct, Madam Chair? Just wanted clarification.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask Ms. Mathison to respond back to that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the hospital services line does include Stanton, Hay River, and Inuvik hospitals. The line that's called community clinics and health centres, that includes all the health centres across NWT, including also physician clinics and public health clinics.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I need more clarification, Madam Chair, for the \$134,607,000. That includes the Hay River, considered a hospital, the Inuvik hospital, and Stanton, and then I want to see the breakdown. I would like clarification on the breakdown.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Hospital services includes our UNW collective agreement increases and also some of the supplies. Sorry, maybe I'll ask Ms. Mathison if she

can help me here. I'm not finding it on the page. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, hospitals services includes Hay River, Inuvik, and Stanton. I don't have the breakout as to how much goes to each authority with me, but the increases in that area are mostly related to collective agreement impacts for the new collective agreement that was settled within the past two years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. You have page 171 in front of us, and I am being told that I can't get clarification on where the money is going? That, to me, is very unacceptable, but I will keep on with my statement. What I am trying to point out is the disparity between health centres and community clinics compared to three designations and possibly only one designation with Stanton. I would like to see how much is spent south of the lake at the hospital designated there. I would like to make comparisons. That's the way, usually, budgets are done. Obviously, I am being told that the numbers are not here. I think that I would like that clarification as soon as possible, because I think there are a lot of disparities in this whole COVID-19 situation that we are in. A lot of procedures were lost at some health centres just before the pandemic hit. I think that it is extremely important that we, as MLAs in this Assembly, understand that a lot has to be improved to ensure that the communities and the regional centres are also looked after to our very best of our ability. Considering that I can't even get breakdowns of figures that are put in here is unacceptable. Again, I am going to ask you the question. I would like to know, with the \$134,607,000, how much is being spent at Stanton, how much is being spent at the Inuvik hospital, and I want to know how much is being spent at the Hay River hospital.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will look to Mr. Cooper to see if we have that number for the breakdown. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will certainly get that information. The reason it is not part of the package is that there is a process. After we go through the departmental budget, this money then gets dispersed to the authorities, and they

have their own budget process that we participate in approval. We certainly will get that information and make it available to the MLA.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let's go back to the \$73,936,000 for all of the community clinics and health centres. I would like a breakdown of all of communities and how much each community gets and the health centres and how many they're allocated. That is part of my question. There is too much disparity here, and I am concerned about healthcare access by all members of the Northwest Territories equally, especially in the communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. When we're looking at the budgets, the majority of the budget goes to authorities. Like Ms. Mathison and Deputy Minister Cooper have mentioned, once we do the breakdown, then they have their own separate budgets. This is something that we could look to the authorities to get more detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I think I am making myself very clear. I am not saying I want a breakdown of every little item that goes to -- I just want to know the exact amounts that are being allocated, okay, for each community, each health centre, and all the hospitals.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, this is something we can look at getting. I am sorry I don't have it in front of me right now, but we can get back and provide a breakdown. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MS. MARTSELOS: I don't have any further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Are there any further questions for this section? Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. The interpretation services that I spoke about earlier with the statement and questions, I'm just curious: how many staff do we have on board with the new Stanton Hospital, and which category does it fall under? Is it Indigenous health and community

wellness or hospital services, is my first question? Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does Mr. Cooper have the breakdown of numbers handy? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't actually have the precise number here in front of me, but the interpretation services is funded through the regional health authority budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Member for Monfwi.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. What would be the regional funding allocation? Are we not on that page? I'll ask another question, Madam Chair. As you can see, I'm trying to get to messaging, importance of languages. The Northwest Territories has 11 official languages. Here in the House, we have two interpreters per individual who speaks the language. With the Stanton Hospital, do we have just one interpreter for patients who speaks the language? Let's say, for example, Tlicho. Do we have one interpreter or two or three? I'm just curious because we have so many patients from across walks of life in the Northwest Territories, all communities, 33 communities plus Nunavut. I'm just wondering if we have the capacity to provide those services to our patients. My question is: for one specific official language, let's say Tlicho, do we have one or more individuals working at Stanton in a given time, like one day, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Earlier today, we talked about in the House how many different interpreters we have at the Stanton Hospital, and we have interpreters for seven of the different languages that we offer here in the Stanton Hospital. As for the amount of how many staff we have at any given time, we'd have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions?

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Madam Chair. If the department doesn't have that information, I would really appreciate, at any given time, do we have one interpreter or two interpreters for one language at the Stanton Hospital? It will be information if they can provide that, if they don't have it now, at a later time.

Madam Chair, on page 173, if I can ask one more question, that's On-the-Land Healing Fund, \$1.825 million. My question to the Minister and to the department: is that funding adequate? Because we're servicing 33 communities, and \$1.8 million can only spread so much throughout the Northwest Territories. As you noticed here in the communities, there is far too much violence, elder abuse, and substance abuse in our communities, ongoing, steady, and yet the funding is so low. Why is that? Masi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding, we also received some federal funding as part of the wellness population funding. That is in the tune of over \$11 million that we dispersed out to the Indigenous groups for on-the-land programming. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions from Member for Monfwi?

MR. LAFFERTY: Madam Chair, I am assuming that it's been identified as part of the regional contribution that the deputy minister has alluded to earlier. If I can get the breakdown as well on the funding level because I've been questioned from my constituents on the on-the-land healing program. Especially, we've had so many passings in my region over the last several weeks, there is a huge demand for whether it would be a treatment program, treatment centre, or a healing fund in my region, not only in my region but in other regions, as well. If I could get the breakdown because I'm very interested in what kind of funding is allocated, if it's adequate enough to support our constituencies. I'd appreciate more detailed information to come, Madam Chair. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Monfwi. Minister, can you make the commitment to provide that information?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes,

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Any further questions, Member for Monfwi? Member for Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions relate to the increase. When you look at the overall budget from last year to this year, there is a \$16-million increase. Can the Minister explain how it jumped up \$16 million for the overall?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. If you look at the difference for the revised to the

main estimates, a lot of our programs have increased. I'm going to ask Mr. Cooper to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The majority of the increase, \$10 million, is relating to a new accounting treatment for the Northern Wellness Agreement. It used to be that we would have the Northern Wellness Agreement money recognized as work performed on behalf of others, and now we've brought it in as revenue. That has added \$10 million you're seeing throughout the budget, with the UNW collective bargaining increases. Those would be the two biggest reasons for increase.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, deputy minister. Member for Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. I'm going to go into the expenditure category, grants and contributions. The big part of our budget here we've spent is on that grants, contributions, and transfers. Where is that going? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase in the 2020-2021 budget of 13.4 is due to the increased wages for positions as per the negotiated collective agreement between the GNWT and the UNW, which is about \$2.6 million, the increased wages with the health and social services authority and the Union of Northern Workers. It's also a reflection of inflation on supplies. It's also an increase to reflect costs associated with the contract negotiated with the NWT medical association for physicians. The additional funding is also to operate the new Stanton hospital and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, the additional funding for Health Canada funding on mental health and addictions, the bilateral funding. Those are some of the reasons of the increase on the grants and contributions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Just to clarify, those items that you just labelled, those are what we are spending those grants and contributions, that total \$243 million on? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, I can get Ms. Mathison to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$243 million that is there under grants and contributions, \$230 million of that goes to the authorities to do all of the work that you see above in the program detail. All those activities are flowed through there for grants and contributions. The rest of it is held here at the department and given out to a variety of recipients under each of the programs in those areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just under Purchased Services, from the last year's budget, it's gone up from \$486,000 to \$1.2 million. Can the Minister just explain what is the big jump in the increase there?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase in the budget is \$715,000, and it's for the Northern Wellness Agreement, which is funded by ISC, Indigenous Services Canada. This agreement was recently negotiated for another five-year term. In prior years, the budget used to show up in work performed on behalf of others. As part of the new accounting treatment for shared service agreements, now it's included in the overall main budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just going through some of these numbers and some of my colleagues have already mentioned, knowing that we know we have a shortfall of nursing staff, that we are trying to increase staff, and I know that there is a separate budget that is going to be per our priorities, given with COVID, looking at these numbers, do we expect that this is going to increase in our budget here that we are presenting today as another additional supplemental with everything that is been carrying through COVID right now? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, what we are doing now within our financial system is: we are trying to utilize a lot of our expenditures towards the COVID budget. That would alleviate some of our overall budget. Although I want to say "no," but I believe, as a result of the budget, it perhaps could increase. It would come in the form of a supplemental. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: One final question: under specialty services, it hasn't gone up very much, but, when I look under the category for specialty services, my colleague says we have wait lists, we have extensive wait lists in certain areas. Without increasing this budget and without increasing the specialist numbers that we are going to have and the hard time getting these specialists, do we feel that, this budget that we have here, is this number going to increase because it costs us so much more to get extra stuff? Are we going to be able to meet the needs of our wait list with this budget this year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, I am going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Certainly, our budget is based upon past experience. We have been working to try to make best use of our specialist resources and other physician resources by undertaking a review of our current configuration and to ensure that we are optimizing the taxpayer money that we have there. There has been a review that is underway between ourselves and the NT authority to look at specialist services that may be required to meet needs going forward.

At this point, we feel this is good, but we believe it's a responsible thing to do as part of our overall trying to address our deficit to ask ourselves some good questions about what kinds of services we need, what are some alternatives to delivering those services to ensure that we are optimizing taxpayer money. The answer is: we believe this is an appropriate allocation. Our focus is on trying to deliver better value for money and better management of the resources we have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just with this, it's brought to light through COVID that we have a lot more and my colleague has related to it about mental health, going through virtual. Our doctors' appointments are virtual. By looking at our specialty services, it's \$26 million here. I think about: we go into medical travel. There are a lot of costs involved with medical travel, meeting the specialist. Is there a plan, looking at these high numbers, to ways to look to save costs for our government by more virtual care specialty clinics to

try get rid of some of our wait lists and maybe start using that for a lot of our cases that are sitting on these wait lists throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is absolutely correct. That is our intent. For the last two months, we've been looking at telehealth virtual care. We have been doing a lot of our mental health services through virtual care. This is something that we can look at once we get through this pandemic and try to find ways to be creative in our budgets. We do spend a lot of money on specialty services. That is something that we can look to in the future of cost savings. If it's working, then why not continue using the way it's working. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list, I have the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Go ahead.

MR. NORN: Marsi cho, Madam Chair. Just a quick statement. With this COVID pandemic, a lot of our mains that we are going to be reviewing, the complexion is going to completely changed. I think, again, this is going to be no different. I just reviewed. I am probably going to go back and forth a little bit, though I will try not to be too confusing. If you could turn your page to 172, there is a line item here for Rockhill Apartments. My question here: we are very sad of what happened here, by the way, with Rockhill. It was a good program. My constituents used that building, and it's no longer here. My question to the Minister for this contribution, this line item: this \$266,000 that is mentioned here, is that still somehow funnelled to the YWCA in another line item? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, no, it is not.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for that response. These allocated funds are completely discontinued, and so I guess for lack of a better word then, why do we seize out this money from here on in? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Due to the fire in October 2018, there was no budget in this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you. I'm going back to page 171 now, Madam Chair. There is a line item for contract services. Back from the 2018-2019 actuals, it was at \$8.4 million, approximately. It spiked up to over almost \$25 million. Now, we are back down to \$22 million. Can the Minister just explain a little bit how that came about and the reasons why we are at the number we are at today? Marsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair, I am going to look to Ms. Mathison to give us the breakdown. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Director of finance.

MS. MATHISON: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. The increase from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 was related to the service payments for the new Stanton Hospital. That was \$18 million. In 2019-2020, there were some one-time costs as Stanton was settling, that are now out of the budget for 2020-2021. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Director of Finance. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair, another sticky cost at the hospital that we've incurred. My other quick question here was with travel. The complexion of all this is going to change. We're not going to be travelling a whole lot for the next while. If there is any surplus for this year, would that just go back into the consolidated revenue fund? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair. The travel amount, we are all still doing patient travel. We still have patients who are receiving care here in the Northwest Territories as well as outside the Territories, for appointments like cancer appointments. We still will incur travel, but, if we don't use up the budget, yes, it will go back in. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you for that answer. I imagine, for the patient stuff, that budget will be a lot higher. Just to be clear, this travel budget here is for staff for HSS travel? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes. Sorry, I apologize for that. Yes, it is the staff travel, to be able to go into the communities to perform health services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you for that response. Something else that I want to make a quick comment about, about suicide, it is something that has always plagued our people up in the North. For me, personally, I lost two uncles, and it hit the family very hard. I know that we do what we can to put funding in. I just want to know a little bit more about this community-based suicide prevention. It says here on page 172 that it's funding to support suicide prevention projects, groups, workshops, after-school programs, and land-based programs. It says after-school programs. Has there been any work or kind of joint projects with ECE for this program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The community-based suicide prevention is funding to support community-based suicide prevention projects, including groups, workshops, after-school programs, as well as on-the-land programs. I'm not sure right now if there are activities we do in partnership with Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the response. If I could just get the Minister to find out a little bit more, it will be good to know if there is any overlap for this, and I want to make sure that we are spending our money wisely within our departments. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Minister, can you make that commitment?

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Further questions, Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh?

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair, nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you. Are there any other questions on this area of health and social programs? Seeing none, I'm going to call the page, then. Health and social programs, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$318,333,000. Does committee agree?

SOM HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, committee. We're now moving into the section called long term and continuing care of services, beginning on page 175, with information items on page 178. Questions? Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My first question is in regard to the respite fund under contributions. We have a lot of people in the Northwest Territories right now who are spending an unprecedented amount of time at home with people who require a lot of care, whether that's children with disabilities or adults with disabilities. Especially with people who are used to sharing the care of loved ones, now that everybody is at home, the need for respite care, I think, is probably greater than it was before, to be able to have that support in the home. Does the Department of Health and Social Services foresee an increase to the need of amount of money in the respite fund, and does Health and Social Services, given COVID, anticipate actually doing a lot more outreach in the community to see if people do need that care that they normally wouldn't have tapped into because maybe kids are at school or maybe they do have additional help or support in the home? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair. The respite fund in the budget of \$225,000, it's to provide community-based respite services to caregivers of residents with disabilities in the Northwest Territories. The Member is asking if we do see an increase. One of the things that the department is doing and looking at is the long-term care review and some of the recommendations as a result of that. That is something that we are looking at. The respite fund is very important. A lot of people in the Territories rely on that because they do need that respite care. That is something that, once we start looking at the review and looking into recommendations, it is quite possible that that would increase. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions, Member for Kam Lake?

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Would the Department of Health and Social Services be willing to work with community organizations to make sure that community members are aware that this fund exists and how to access it so that we can kind of be a bit more proactive to make sure that people who need support in the home, who need that relief and that respite, know that it's available and have access to it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, right now the fund goes to the Disabilities Council of the Northwest Territories. That is where our funds of the \$225,000 goes directly to them. The Member is asking if there are ways that we can advertise new budget line item? I'm not sure. Right now, this is a contribution agreement with the NWT Disabilities Council. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. No, I don't think it needs to be a new line item. I think that Health and Social Services has a really strong communication team who does a lot of great work. I think that this is something that we can just simply ask them to highlight in communities right now, given that people probably do need additional support in the home; not a new line item. My next question is in regard to with long-term facilities, I see that there is not a line item for languages here. Would language requirements or language needs within long-term care facilities be involved here, or where would we see that line item? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair. I'm going to look to Deputy Minister Cooper to answer that, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister?

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have a line item in relation to languages and translation services available in long-term care. This is money that would flow to the authorities as part of their regular line budget, but there are those services that are available. I don't have the actual expenditure of that detail with me.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Deputy Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My final question in regard to this section is: the Minister mentioned a couple of questions ago the homecare review report. I'm just wondering when we can expect to see that report online? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair. The review right now, I went through a briefing with the staff

earlier last week. Now we're bringing the review to Cabinet to review, and the next step after that is to bring it to the AOC, accountability and oversight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Maybe the Minister can just help me with the process here a little bit. Does it have to come to AOC before it goes online, and then, as soon as AOC sees it, does it immediately become online and available to the public? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, we are just looking at bringing it to Cabinet, getting some feedback, and then we'll bring it to AOC. We haven't decided now what the next step is, whether it be how we engage the public or how we put it forward. We haven't made a decision on that. I would like to bring it first to Cabinet, and then AOC, and then get some feedback on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. Under operations expenditures summary for long-term and continuing care services, for contract services, the number kind of has quite a bit of movement from year to year. If we are looking at the 2018-2019 actuals, we see \$850,000. If we move along to the main estimates for this year, we see \$365,000 with quite a fluctuation between the two. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to that change in the budget item and where that comes from. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The difference in the line item for contracting services is because we used a tool, the interRAI project software, which, in previous budgets, was a lot higher. Now that we have gone ahead using the new software, now the budget line item has gone down. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. For the following year, would we expect to see the same type of a budget line item for here, then? It would be consistent within that, kind of, \$365,000 mark? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Kam Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will ask Ms. Mathison to answer that.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Director of finance.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the 2019-2020 revised main estimates, we had additional money that was showing up there to reflect new money from the federal government related to the bilateral funding agreement. We had a proposal and a project timeline, and a part of that funding was to support the implementation of the interRAI project. Like the Minister said, there's kind of a phased plan for that implementation. In 2019-2020, we had some contract work that was required. That is no longer needed for 2020-2021, so that's why that number has been reduced. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, director of finance. Member for Kam Lake.

MS. CLEVELAND: I'm good. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know this isn't the capital projects, but I would like to ask the Minister: what is the status of the 48-bed care facility for Hay River? Where does it stand right now?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had to grab my speaking notes. The design is under way for the 48-bed long-term care services, both in Inuvik and in Hay River. However, as a result of continuing rising construction costs and the permafrost challenge that we are having in Inuvik, we are re-looking at some of the costs involved for both of the long-term care centres in Hay River and Inuvik. That is where we are at right now with those. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are probably looking at a delay. How long do you expect that delay to be? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The 2021-2022 capital plan is currently under

development. Any changes to previous approved amounts will require approval from FMB and Cabinet. The decisions surrounding the scope of the project, which is the number of beds and the location of the space, will have a direct impact on the project budget. It would have to be approved in the fall 2020 session. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. What will happen to the current Woodland Manor building? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, the plan is to build the 48-bed care facility or have a look at the project in both Inuvik and Hay River, assess the costs, bring it back to Cabinet. In terms of the Woodland facility, the plan was to keep it. I'm just going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to talk about the plan.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. With Woodland Manor, the beds will remain required. The plan would be that this new construction would be new beds.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to Woodland Manor, is there any consideration to possibly use it as a dementia facility or ward with the rest of the facility? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, that is something we could go back and have a look at. If we were to do that, that would cost additional costs, and that's something we could definitely go back to the department and have a look at. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions, Member for Hay River South.

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would appreciate that you go back and look at it, and also staff training. Right now, we probably have three or four people in extended care who are either have dementia or are close to that stage. I'm not sure, but I don't think we have people who are properly trained to look after them, because there are concerns there. I think, for the South Slave

area, a dementia ward would be great. It would allow people to stay closer to their homes in the communities. I would strongly encourage your department to look at that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you. Further questions, Member for Hay River South?

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. On that similar property, there is an old medical clinic as well. I am just wondering if that belongs to the department or someone else. I'm just wondering, if it is the department's, what is going to happen to that building? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you. This clinic is a GNWT asset and, as such, would be returned to Infrastructure, and they would assess what the plan would be for that facility.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. May I remind the Member for Hay River South that we are looking at the operations budget for health? If you could specify those questions to that area, that would be great. Thank you, Member for Hay River South. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to seeing the continued work on the long-term care review. I think we already know what it's going to say, is that, despite the beds in the capital plan, which I fully support, there are simply not enough for the rate that our population is aging. I wanted to get a sense of going forward, this budget line item, long-term care and supported living. As we bring each of these new long-term care facilities on board, do we have any projected financials of what this line item would increase or the increased costs as we bring those units online? If I could get a sense of what this budget looks like over the next few years, given the increased beds we are building? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, absolutely. You look at the numbers in the

Northwest Territories and our projected elders, our seniors' numbers are increasing, and the department is trying to go and match where we're at in terms of in five years, in 10 years, and do we have enough supports to be able to support our seniors who are aging at a high pace? How would that look as a department, and do we have enough facilities? Do we have enough resources? Are we building a 48-bed? Do we need a 58-bed? We're trying to match some of the services that we have and looking at the financial impacts, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate all that work that is occurring, and I know that is essentially the work in the long-term care review. I guess I am trying to get a number so I can look at the capital budget and get a sense of every one of these units and beds we build, how much this number would increase. If you don't have that right now, it could be provided to the Standing Committee on Social Development or just a projection of even a sense of what the operating costs are for each additional unit we build, and then I could probably do the math to figure out what this is going to increase like over the next few years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Yellowknife North. Minister, can you make that commitment?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes. Sorry. Yes, Madam Chair. This is something that we will look at. We look at our capital costs, and some of the items that were approved under capital costs, and now we're increasing as inflation goes up and the cost of the ever-growing situation on the beds. Not only that, we have to also look at the operational costs and the many other costs associated. If we have 48 long-term care beds, do we have enough in our budget and our resources to be able to operate that? Do we have enough staff who are support workers in the long-term care beds? Absolutely. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Do you have further questions? No. Are there any further questions on this segment of the budget? Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I want to make a brief statement. Our seniors and our elders are the knowledge base of what we have today. They have given us what we are experiencing today, and we have to remember that. Seniors and our elders and those who need care now have to be in a situation where we all feel that everyone is on an equal basis across the territory.

My question is: the Health and Social Services authority funding of the \$45 million on page 177, how many facilities are we talking about?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding for the 45 includes -- sorry, I'll just find it here -- the Norman Wells health centre and also the long-term care facility and the long-term care nursing for the new Stanton Territorial Hospital.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: On page 176, we're talking about long-term care and supported living. That \$36,363,000, what does that include, for clarification? They're just figures to me. I just want clarification on the figure, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I ask the Member to ask her question again? Sorry, I didn't hear.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister.

MS. MARTSELOS: On page 176, the long-term care and supported living, it has a breakdown there of \$36,363,000. I just want to know, for clarification, the breakdown.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to provide the breakdown.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. This funding flows to support our long-term care beds. We have 183 long-term care beds throughout the territory and 16 respite beds. This money goes to our nine facilities, including our territorial dementia facility. We have facilities in Hay River. We have the territorial dementia facility in Aven Manor that this funds. Also, the Inuvik hospital long-term care unit, Northern Lights in Fort Smith, the Stanton extended care unit, Jimmy Erasmus Seniors' Home, Fort Simpson's elder home, and the Sahtu Dene Necha Ko long-term care in Norman Wells. That's the system that we have for our formal beds, including the partnership with Avens in Yellowknife. That's where this funding is flowing. That's our long-term care system.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I would like to clarification on the seniors fund of \$205,000. That goes to support the NWT Seniors' Society. There are different societies in a lot of the regional centres in other places. Do they get funding from this fund? How does that work? I just want clarification.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, that allocation is given directly to the Northwest Territories Seniors' Society. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Madam Chair. The NWT Seniors' Society, the main society is here in Yellowknife, and I know they do support the other senior societies throughout, but I'm just wondering about the senior societies, say, in Fort Smith or Inuvik. If they have a seniors' society, do they get funding? Do they get direct funding also?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, under the budget, it's only going for the allocation to the NWT Seniors' Society. There are no other line items for any other societies in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I guess I just want to point out, Madam Chair, that there seems to be a disparity in allocations again. We always say that we want equal programs, equal rights, equal everything, for each and every member of the Northwest Territories. When I look at some of these services that are provided, it really makes me wonder if that is really the case. I would like the Minister to tell me how she is going to ensure that, in future estimates, because this is our first one, really, some of these concerns are brought forward in the future.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now, the budget allocation is for that specifically. There are other pots of funding that we can look at within the budget, should we have anybody coming back to the department looking for some support. That is something our department can look at, is to look at some of the other funding

allocations that we have to support other programs in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, I just have a concern, because I had a member of the Native Women's Association come to me at the airport when I was catching a plane one time, and she had asked to go to an NWT Disabilities meeting and was told that it was only for Yellowknife residents. When you have "NWT" in front of it, to me, that's supposed to be for all of the NWT, and they should be serving all of the NWT. That's what she was told. This was a person from the small community of Fort Resolution. We have to make sure that everybody has equal access. Disparity is not good. It has happened for too long. I just want to make sure that in future budgets we look at all these different disparities so that the small communities and regions are treated equally. That's all I'm asking. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. That is a comment rather than a question. Did you want to respond, Minister?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, Madam Chair. The NWT Disabilities Council does have representatives from the regions. In terms of the work that they do, they do outreach to a lot of the communities, and they counsel themselves. They also have a toll-free line that they're able to assist with seniors. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Member for Thebacha?

MS. MARTSELOS: Madam Chair, it's really important. It's all right to assist by phone and assist by this, but when you don't have funds to assist other jurisdictions, that is not equal representation and equal access. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Next on my list is the Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I was kind of curious to hear the Minister say that the homecare review needs to go to Cabinet first, before it can even be shared with Regular MLAs. Can I find out from the Minister who actually conducted the review? I would have thought that this is sort of like a contracted service or something. I'm just trying to understand why it would have to go to Cabinet first, before it could be shared with Regular MLAs. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The review is now ready to go to AOC. Now, we are lining up some dates to be able to bring it forward to AOC. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Well, that's good news, but I don't think it really answered my question. Who conducted the review, please? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We contracted with a consulting company, MNP, and they undertook the review, overseen by staff advisory group.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know we're supposed to be dealing with the budget, but can someone tell me how much it cost? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Madam Chair. I'll let you turn to Deputy Minister Cooper. If we have the number on hand, it's not in our budget. It was an operational expense that we had previously.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Approximately \$200,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks for that. Can someone tell me when the report was finished? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was September 26, 2019.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone explain to me what, if any, role the review had in terms of the funding in this budget? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll leave it to Deputy Minister Cooper to answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have plans to respond to the findings of the home support review, but there is an item that will be coming forward as part of how we're using our federal agreement that will see some new funding as part of the supplemental process. I believe you'll be seeing that. In this one, this is a status quo home support budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): [Microphone turned off] ... for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Now, I'm really interested. As Regular MLAs, we have been waiting for this review for a long, long time. People have been talking about this. Homecare is very important because we want our elders and our seniors to be able to stay in their own homes. If we can do that, we actually save money and we provide a better quality of life to our elders. I don't have to tell you guys this. That's why this is important, and I'm trying to understand when it was done and whether it has influenced this budget in any way. I'm still trying to understand. Did this have to go to Cabinet first before it's been released to the MLAs? I'm just trying to understand this. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The review, after I had a look at it with the staff at the department, then I brought it to Cabinet to review as part of the process. Next step, we don't want it to be out public; we need to go to AOC. So those are parts of the process that we decided to follow. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can the Minister tell us when she expects to provide this document to AOC? A precise date would be really helpful. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: [Microphone turned off]...Madam Chair. The department and AOC's earliest convenience, if that would be helpful. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Within the life of this sitting?

HON. DIANE THOM: [Microphone turned off]...

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Okay. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. That's good. I'm very, very curious to see this report. I think the public is, as well. Thanks, Madam Chair. That's all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Are there any further questions in the area of long term and continuing care services? Seeing none, let's turn to page 176, and I'm going to call the page. Long term and continuing care services, operations expenditure summary, 2020-2021 Main Estimates, \$48,103,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, committee. Committee, we will now go to out-of-territory services, beginning on page 179. Are there questions on this area? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that I've raised this issue in the House already, the residential care, so that is care for clients outside of the territory at \$35 million. Can the Minister tell me how many clients does that include? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, if I could just take a minute to look it up here, was the question on the residential care line, the \$35,435,000?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): It is my understanding the question is on that line.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have 119 adults, and we have under 50 children who have complex and difficult needs who we are providing that care to. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

MS. SEMMLER: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. For an average of 170 people, we have \$35 million of a total cost. Where in the plans are we to try to

repatriate some of these clients back to? I understand there are complex needs for some who can't return, but the ones who we possibly could bring back, repatriate, and to decrease some of our costs or maybe to spend some of those dollars in territory, paying for our own staff, creating jobs in the territory? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department was planning a supportive living review so that we can look at all of our patients here in the Northwest Territories who we cannot provide care for and have a look at a review to determine how do we get some of our patients back. Patients do want to come back to the Northwest Territories, and sometimes we don't have either the facilities or any of the supports that can be provided here in the Northwest Territories. The supportive living review, I think that would be helpful to have so that we can have a picture of what it would look like. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under this residential care cost, is there a cost to allow for family members to regularly visit these clients who are out of the territory? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to turn it to Ms. Mathison to provide an answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Director of Finance.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's not included in this budget here, but the authorities each have a budget for travel, for visitation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Director of Finance. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to clarify, it's not under this budget. I guess I can ask that under the regional budget if it's not under here. Within the medical services, as well, I understand that this is the line item above. It hasn't changed. Are we just assuming that this is what we pay for hospital services outside of the territory and that, on average, there's no increase? In addition to that, we're limiting the amount of patients that are going out of the territory right now, for the last two months and possibly, who knows how long, with sending them out. Are we going to have a decrease in that?

Have you talked about that within your department, with admissions outside of the territory? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The medical services includes the insured hospital physician services provided to the Northwest Territories residents outside the NWT care. The majority of these, our patients are in Alberta, and some of them are there already because of their complex needs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you. The residential care, \$35 million for 169 people, and then, on top of that, we have medical services for them in that other budget, just to clarify? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister, can you clarify that point, please?

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is correct. That includes the \$35,997,000 and the \$35,435,000. This is something, our department, we need to be able to do this review because that's a lot of money, and I hear the Member keep referring to the amount of patients that are outside versus how much money we spend. That is a lot of money, and that's why having a review to be able to look at that might help to reduce some of the costs, if there are ways that we can do things that helps the patient and helps services here in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MS. SEMMLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm shocked. I didn't realize. There is no other care? This \$73 million or \$71 million is just for 169 people, or does that include all of our admissions that go down to outside of the territory who are admitted? Thank you. I just need clarification.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Further clarification, please, Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just going to get Ms. Mathison to clarify. Apparently, I've been using the wrong notes, so I'll just get her to clarify. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Director of Finance.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that medical services line includes all costs associated with all NWT residents going down for

physician or hospital services. The reason why the budget hasn't really increased there is because we tend to deal with increases in this budget on a supplementary appropriation basis because it's very difficult to project the demand on the services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Director of Finance. Any further questions, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes?

MS. SEMMLER: The addictions treatment facility, we've got \$2 million on this. We had that last year, and again, it was up for actuals 2018-2019, and then it was down a million, and now we're just kind of staying status quo this year. Do you have the numbers of how many addiction treatment facilities, how many clients this was for in the last year that we used to gauge this number? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The addictions treatment facilities includes facilities in the South, like Edgewood, Aventa, Poundmaker's and Fresh Start's. Ms. Mathison, director of finance, just mentioned about how we budget, and it's hard to budget a line item like this, so we bring it back to supplementary for the actuals. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Do you have numbers on how many clients were served in the last fiscal year in the addictions treatment centre?

HON. DIANE THOM: One hundred and ninety-one.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, nothing further. Any further questions for this item of out-of-territory services? Mr. Bonnetrouge.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Just to follow up on the addictions treatment facilities, it's good that we're getting clients. You've noted that we get 191 clients, and I can only assume that they are all our residents from the Northwest Territories going south. Of course, there's always the issue of support services once they return to the communities. Do we provide any support services once they return home, considering that we do have social services and mental health workers in the communities? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. When we have clients go out for treatment and they come back, we have programs that are able to ensure that we keep them safe and that they just

don't relapse back on their addictions or whatever the case may be. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you for that brief answer, and it wasn't specific enough. I am looking for something specific. We have programs. What programs are they afforded to, the people coming back, and if they are aware of them, if we can get a list of the programs that you have, the support services? Maybe an evaluation on the whole program would be very helpful. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Deh Cho. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have community counselling services that are available for clients who come back. Also, we have aftercare community counselling. We have outreach services that are available when clients do go out for treatment and when they come back, and we have the services available for them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. BONNETROUGE: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you. Are there any further questions on out-of-territory services? Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks Madam Chair. We obviously want to take care of our citizens who are down south, and I understand that many of them have very complex needs and require specialized care that we can't provide here in the North. I am just wondering how often the cases, and treatment that's required for individuals, are reviewed. Is it on an annual basis, to see if those services might be available in the North? What's the process for reviewing all of this to see if any of those individuals can be moved back up to the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do annual site visits, and we check on the clients at least annually. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Site visits, is it a team that goes? Is it just one individual? Is it a medical person who goes? With all due respect, I'm just trying to understand what the process looks like, if someone has a checklist or there's a medical

assessment involved and so on. Can I get a bit more of an explanation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to respond.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you. The purpose of our visitation and its authority and departmental staff is to assess the types of services to ensure that the programs and how they're operating are aligned with the contract that we have with the organization. We would be asking questions, like, I guess, an accreditation team would ask about, you know, the types of training that they have in place, the different program changes that they've made and these sorts of things to ensure that quality is in place. I don't have detail beyond that level.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the response. It's not that I question the capability of our staff; I'm just trying to understand a little bit better. If I could get maybe a commitment out of the Minister to just prepare a little bit more information, a briefing note or something, on how that annual review takes place and what kind of information is checked and so on, I would find it quite helpful myself. If I could get a commitment from the Minister to do that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister, can you make that commitment?

HON. DIANE THOM: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Are there any further questions in this area? Go ahead, Member for Thebacha.

MS. MARTSELOS: I'm just looking at the line with the addictions treatment facilities and the 191 clients. 191 clients come back. Do you have any statistics for the success rate of those who just go back and do it all over again? Do you have any of those kind of statistics that are available?

Every family deals with addiction issues -- I don't care where we come from -- at some point in our life. One of the things that happens is that it's the aftercare. The aftercare is a major problem. You hear it from even our mental health workers in the communities, and they do an awesome job. The mental healthcare divisions in the communities and

in the regional centres do an awesome job, but they can't be going around the clock either. I am just wondering about the whole thing with aftercare, because once they leave the facility, there should be a place for them to go somewhere, like, for three months after they have done their treatment time or six months. There should be that variety, because it happens in most large cities and everywhere else, they have these different homes. Aftercare is extremely important, and I don't see a line for that. It's something to think about in the future.

The other thing I want to ask you about is the residential care that is provided for the outside extreme cases. Are you thinking of repatriating some of those back to the territories? I think that was one of the questions that was asked. Is that why we have the line on the previous page for the Health and Social Services on page 177, the \$45 million? I just wonder about that, because it's extremely important that a lot of these patients are brought back, if possible, to the territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The aftercare is crucial. I mean, we put a lot of money and effort to send our residents out for some treatment and for some help, and then, when they come back, we have programs and services that are available. You wouldn't see a line item in this "out-of-territory services;" it would come under one of our program service areas where we provide the support that way. We are also doing an RFP to be able to look at some of our patients who are outside. We have our department staff who meet with them annually to go through and see how they're doing. It's a checklist for us, so we do have that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Further questions, Member for Thebacha?

MS. MARTSELOS: I just want clarification, I guess, on the overlapping issue with page 177 and 180 when we look at the allocation to Norman Wells and to that line with \$45 million, the Yellowknife line, the \$45,056,000 on page 177 and the overlapping issue with residential care on repatriation of those clients. I'm just asking that question for clarification.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Minister.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to ask Deputy Minister Cooper to answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is no relationship between both of the lines, if I understand the question correctly.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Anything further, Member for Thebacha? Thank you, Member for Thebacha. Noting the time and our agreement to stop at 6:00, what is the wish of committee?

MR. NORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that this committee defer the consideration of the estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services at this time. Marsi cho, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green): Thank you, Mr. Norn. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? Thank you, Members. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please?

Report of the Committee of the Whole

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 30-19(2), 2020-2021 Main Estimates, and we would like to report progress, and I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder? Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Friday, May 29, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
5. Returns to Oral Questions

6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Motions
 - Motion 8-19(2), Revocation of Appointment of the Honourable Member for Great Slave to the Executive Council
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 30-19(2), Main Estimates 2020-2021
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Friday, May 29, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

