



February 24, 2021

CAITLIN CLEVELAND  
MLA, KAM LAKE**Oral Question 559-19(2): FASD Support Services in NWT Correctional Facilities**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on February 12, 2021 regarding FASD support services available to inmates in NWT correctional facilities. I committed to provide information on the number of inmates who have participated in the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program, as well as information on the FASD support services available to inmates in custody and upon their release.

NWT Corrections uses an inclusive approach and provides services and supports to offenders and inmates with cognitive difficulties and other complex needs on a case-by-case basis. Corrections staff and all new recruits receive FASD awareness education.

The Department of Health and Social Services has been operating the Territorial Adult FASD Diagnosis and Support Program since January 2020. With the inmates' consent, Corrections can refer inmates to the clinic using the referral forms accessed through the NTHSSA website or by contacting the Adult FASD Program Coordinator. Referral to the clinic is a voluntary process where inmates can withdraw their consent and participation in the clinic at any time. I can confirm that three adult offenders in the community and one adult inmate participated in the referral process in 2020. This was done with the assistance of probation officers and case managers in coordination with the Adult FASD Program Coordinator.

An FASD or other medical diagnosis is not required for an offender with complex needs to access adapted services and supports in NWT corrections. The specific needs of each offender are identified on admission to custody or community corrections through the utilization of mental health screening tools for men and women that are used in all NWT correctional facilities. These screening tools move away from specific diagnoses and focus instead on the level of functioning of offenders related to social and daily living skills as well as indicators for mental capacity.

Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case-by-case basis. Individuals with suspected FASD, but not necessarily diagnosed, would fall into this group.

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Corrections case management practices ensure that resources are used most effectively, including for those offenders with FASD and other complex needs, so that they can be supported appropriately throughout their incarceration and reintegration back into the community. Case management release planning processes include the review of immediate needs for housing, finances, community supports, employment and connecting the inmate with his/her probation officer, should they be subject to conditions upon their release. Needs are reviewed throughout the period during which the individual is under the supervision of NWT Corrections.

The Member asked if I would commit to developing a comprehensive plan to provide support services for offenders with FASD. While there is no plan to develop such a plan, we will continue to work with the Department of Health and Social Services, which plays a key role in providing services to residents with FASD, and will draw on their expertise and programming and explore opportunities for partnerships as they arise.

I would like to thank you for your questions and raising awareness about this very important topic. I hope this information is helpful, and I would be pleased to schedule a meeting if you would like to discuss further.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister, Justice

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Deputy Minister, Justice  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs