



April 09, 2024

SHAUNA MORGAN
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE NORTH**Oral Question 103-20(1): Alcohol Strategy Implementation**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on February 26th regarding the NWT Alcohol Strategy Implementation. As this is an all-of-government strategy, the answer to your question is complex, and not all the costing is complete. This is because many of the actions are designed to be customized to community needs and preferences, and the costs will depend on future community decisions about how to move forward.

When the actions in the strategy were developed, it was with an awareness that no funding had yet been allocated to implementation. Wherever possible, actions were designed to fit within planned changes and maximize existing resources. For instance, the first action, to create an interdepartmental body to collaborate on alcohol-related messaging, is underway, and part of this work is to identify how departments can collaborate on messaging to maximize reach within our current budgets. Changes in policy around alcohol pricing and legislation, to support community control over liquor sales, was planned to coincide with the Liquor Legislation Review that is still underway so implementation costs would not increase, and substance use education will be considered within the curriculum review presently underway. The work on strategy implementation will continue to seek similar efficiencies wherever possible.

Some activities in the Alcohol Strategy will be addressed with new funding opportunities. The roll-out of territorial substance use resources included in the recently announced federal bilateral health funding agreement will be used to advance the actions outlined in the treatment section, as well as to coordinate community-directed communications about the services available. Other activities will use existing funding; for instance, health promotion funds and social responsibility funds will be directed towards efforts to increase sober gatherings and non-alcoholic drink options through mocktail campaigns and other promotions.

Other costs are yet to be determined. It's important to note that community safety programming may vary from one community to another, as will healthy recreation programming and behaviour change campaigns aimed at reducing impaired driving. We are particularly interested in exploring ignition interlock programming to enhance road safety. Our commitment lies in collaborating closely with communities and other departments to identify the most suitable solutions for each community. Moreover, we aim to implement these solutions in a cost-effective manner wherever feasible.

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Part of our approach to addressing our 20th Assembly priority of ensuring safe residents and communities will involve actively seeking funding opportunities that align with the actions outlined in the strategy.

Thank you.



Lesla Semmler
Minister of Health and Social Services

- c. Principal Secretary
Deputy Secretary, Premier's Office
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning, Executive and Indigenous Affairs