



November 18, 2024

JANE WEYALLON ARMSTRONG
MLA, MONFWI**Oral Question 328-20(1): Speech Language Pathologist Positions**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on October 21, 2024, regarding Speech Language Pathology (SLP).

The Member asked how many SLP positions are currently vacant in the NWT. Of the **14 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions** in the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) and Tłı̄ch̄ Community Services Agency (TSCA), **11 positions are vacant** as of September 01, 2024. Current vacancies by region are listed below.

- TCSA: The two positions within the TCSA are currently vacant. Recruitment for those positions has been ongoing since 2021.
- Yellowknife: Five of the eight positions located in Yellowknife are vacant (includes one long term sick leave which is operationally equivalent to a vacant position). Active recruitment has been ongoing since 2021.
- Hay River HSSA: The one position within HRHSSA is vacant. Active Recruitment has been ongoing since June 2023.
- Inuvik: The two positions located in Inuvik are both vacant. Active recruitment has been ongoing since 2019.
- Fort Smith: The one position located in Fort Smith is vacant. Active recruitment is ongoing since 2022.

Further, the Member asked the number of children in the Tłı̄ch̄ region who are currently on the waitlist for SLP services as compared to the rest of the Northwest Territories. Of the **148** total children on the SLP waitlist, **23** of those children reside in the Tłı̄ch̄ region.

Lastly, the Member asked the current wait times for SLP services, specifically, for children in school.

As the Member may know, with the shortage of SLPs to deliver services, reductions to in-school services have been necessary. In-school services have been prioritized for students demonstrating a severe communication delay/disorder. With the reduction of in-school services, the NTHSSA has provided schools with a list of priority needs to assist schools in directing referrals to NTHSSA or private services. Students may encounter an increased wait time depending on the urgency of their needs.

.../2

The current wait times for SLP services, summarized by service coverage, as of September 9, 2024, are listed in the table below.

SLP	Inuvik <i>(reflects Beaufort-Delta region residents)</i>	Yellowknife <i>(reflects Tlicho, Sahtu, and Yellowknife region residents)</i>	Ft. Smith <i>(reflects Fort Smith region residents)</i>	Hay River <i>(reflects Hay River region residents)</i>
Pediatrics (0 - 17 years)	4 waiting (5 months)	124 waiting (7 months)	6 waiting (6 months)	4 waiting (routine), (19 months)

Thank you.



Lesla Semmler
Minister of Health and Social Services

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning