

Health and Social Services System Transformation Implementation

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to continue the integration of the health and social services system to improve care for our people. Today, I want to provide an update on our work to transform the Northwest Territories health and social services system.

This work reached a major milestone with the establishment of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority on August 1, 2016. I would like to thank all of my colleagues here today for their support in reaching this goal.

At the same time as the Authority was established, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Leadership Council, chaired by Mr. Jim Antoine, began its work to inform future changes to the way we deliver care and services. The council has met numerous times, with two formal public meetings taking place in September and December of 2016 and further meetings are being planned in March of 2017.

Members of the Leadership Council continue to be supported in their information gathering and decision making by the new Regional Wellness Councils. The councils have all participated in development sessions that allowed members to build a shared understanding of their new roles, with an emphasis on engaging residents in their regions. Regional Wellness Councils have all held at least one meeting in their regions with many more planned. Taking their meetings beyond regional centres so residents in all our communities will eventually have the opportunity to meet their members is part of the plan.

Mr. Speaker, creating a responsive, high quality health and social services system our residents have confidence in, is a priority for us. Giving residents an easier way to bring any

concerns they might have to our attention so we can find solutions is one of the reasons we created the new Regional Wellness Councils. We also look to the Regional Wellness Councils to provide a strong and clear voice for their regions at the territorial level.

Another area where progress has been made is in the move to a single Territorial Medical Staff, a priority item that will have an immediate positive impact on our system. A unified medical staff will be able to deliver more consistent care as they set shared standards and work across geographic boundaries to make improvements to our entire system. Fostering an environment of collaboration among our medical professionals is an exciting development and I look forward to seeing it roll out.

Mr. Speaker, change will not happen overnight. The new governance and administrative structures are foundational building blocks to improving our system, but there is still much work to be done. We are also developing a robust evaluation plan to ensure that we can measure and monitor progress as change occurs.

Behind all of the work in our system is a dedicated staff. We have made it a priority to engage staff throughout the transformation process and asked them to help identify what areas of our system need improvement. In support of this goal, senior staff from the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority completed a number of regional visits to have face-to-face conversations with those on the front lines.

In this time of change we will continue to focus on delivering the best possible care and services to patients and clients. I know that our front line workers throughout the territory work hard every day to ensure the people of the NWT are taken care of, and I continue to commend everyone involved in this work.

I am confident that with the help of these staff and our new councils, we will be able to deliver improved cultural competency, enhanced quality and consistency of care, and better outcomes for those who rely on us.

Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic that we will continue to see improvement, and I look forward to providing updates on system transformation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.