

**GNWT RESPONSE TO MOTION 20-17(3):
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS RESOURCES**

Motion:

THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly urges the Government of the Northwest Territories to include sufficient new funding, of at minimum \$2 million, in the Health and Social Services 2013-2014 Main Estimates for the Department to substantially enhance addictions and mental health services;

AND FURTHER, that these funds be added to the Department's base for future years, and be directed at program delivery to address service gaps identified in the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan 2012-2015, rather than further evaluations and studies, with the ultimate objective of creating a seamless, integrated system of addictions and mental health programs delivered within the Northwest Territories;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government provide to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, before the February-March 2013 sitting of the Legislative Assembly, a list of proposed new addictions and mental health program delivery investments to be implemented in 2013-2014;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

GNWT Response:

In the summer of 2012 the Department of Health and Social Services released its 2012 – 2015 action plan for mental health and addictions, *A Shared Path Towards Wellness*. This Action Plan is based on three key elements: community focus and engagement; collaborative partnerships; and an integrated continuum of care. Using these elements as a framework, the Action Plan lays out four goals which will be achieved through 48 discrete actions to which existing resources will be directed.

The GNWT has responded to Members' request to see additional funding be allocated to mental health and addiction activities by providing an additional \$1.145 million in the Department's proposed 2013-2014 budget to actions identified in the Action Plan.

The Department is proposing to further enhance mental health and addictions promotion and prevention programs in the following ways:

In collaboration with Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Department would enhance the highly successful NWT Youth Corps program to include funding activities that are specifically focused on the promotion of mental wellness and the prevention of addictions;

The Department would expand the availability of the Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) program to include all NWT Youth Ambassadors, and extending the NWT-adapted version of the Mental Health First Aid training program to all sport, recreation and youth staff;

The Department would offer financial support to increase the availability of on-the-land health and wellness promotion activities, and addiction prevention, rehabilitation and after-care programming at the community level;

In collaboration with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department would work to integrate mental health and addictions into the Kindergarten to Grade 12 health curriculum;

The Department would continue to develop treatment models, particularly for those youth who are concurrently experiencing both addictions and mental health issues;

The Department would assess the need for medical detoxification services, including the feasibility of establishing a formal medical detoxification program in the NWT, and develop a detox program model and implementation plan;

The Department would provide administrative support for the Stanton/Dalhousie psychiatry telehealth program; and

Finally, the Department would create additional supports to the front-line Community Counselling Program which is often the first point of contact for those seeking help for addictions and mental issues, and which places a critical role in follow-up and after care services for those who have been to treatment. These additional supports would focus particularly on improving the standards of care available at the community level and on extending quality assurance measures.