

**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO
MOTION 39-17(5): DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Motion

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services Investigates the feasibility of a Domestic Violence Death Review Committee for the Northwest Territories;

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

GNWT Response

Domestic violence in the NWT is a complex issue with no single solution.

A main goal for the 17th Assembly of the Northwest Territories is to support the development of sustainable, vibrant, and safe communities.

In order to achieve this goal, we need to reduce the levels of family violence across the territory.

To this end, the Department of Health and Social Services is collaborating with the Authorities to address and reduce family violence through prevention, intervention services, and funding to support the five family violence shelters and victims living in regions without shelters.

The Department and the Authorities spend approximately \$3.2 million annually toward family violence prevention and intervention services.

The Department's 2015/16 family violence prevention initiatives include:

- Working with regions where no shelters exist (Sahtu, Dehcho, Tłı̄chǝ) on the development of protocols and response teams in their communities;
- Providing recovery and support programs for children who have witnessed and/or have been victimized by family violence; and,
- Expanding the "*What Will it Take?*" (*WWIT*) social marketing campaign aimed at changing attitudes and beliefs about family violence.

In the 2015/16 fiscal year, the Department will be supporting communities to deliver *WWIT* workshops as well as promoting the campaign to all Northwest Territories residents.

The Department is also supporting the Premier's involvement with the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women by providing program and funding information.

The Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services will look at the feasibility of establishing a domestic violence death review committee. However, this is something that will have to wait until the 18th Assembly.

The Department of Justice has done some preliminary research into the establishment of a domestic violence death review committee in the NWT, and believes that there would be significant costs associated with establishing such a committee, and that new legislation may be required.

In other jurisdictions in Canada, these types of review committees are usually established under the authority of the Chief Coroner. Ontario, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Alberta have standing committees that review fatalities relating to domestic violence and make recommendations to prevent similar incidents.

Further research is required to ensure that a sustainable model can be developed in the NWT. This would include working closely with the Department of Justice.