



MAY 24 2017

MR. RJ SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER NORTH

Oral Question 411-18(2): Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Services

During the October 27, 2016 sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I committed to working with my Cabinet colleagues to determine what can be done to address challenges that municipal authorities are experiencing with the delivery of ground ambulance and highway rescue services, and to provide a timeline for future work.

Since 2007, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has been working with Community Governments to support and strengthen ground ambulance and highway rescue service delivery on territorial highways. Progress over the past ten years includes \$1.8 million to support community based services; first responder training; a toolkit to help smaller communities recruit and retain volunteers; and a multi-agency rescue coordination system to promote and support coordination of emergency response efforts.

Despite the progress made, communities continue to raise concerns, which have prompted the necessity for a GNWT Action Plan that will help address identified gaps and deficiencies and establish a long-term vision involving rescue activities on territorial highways. Working closely with key communities, the GNWT will examine:

- relevant GNWT funding arrangements to ensure they adequately meet operational needs;
- municipal ground ambulance and highway rescue operations, including mobile equipment, budgets, expenditures, cost recovery, by-laws, and recent activity; and
- comparative inter-jurisdictional practice in relevant areas.

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Ground ambulance and highway rescue services funding of \$185,000 remains in the GNWT's 2017-2018 Main Estimates and was available to communities in fall 2017 based on the findings of the review. The goal is to ensure maximum value and equity for communities delivering services.

Work began in April 2017 to prepare a detailed terms of reference for the project that will be shared with communities. I am confident this effort will help identify actions necessary by the GNWT and community governments to maintain adequate and consistent emergency care on all territorial highways now and in the future.

Thank you for raising this important topic.



Caroline Cochrane
Minister of Municipal and
Community Affairs

c. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive