



JUL 17 2017

MR. DANIEL MCNEELY
MLA, SAHTU

Oral Question 806-18(2): Sahtu Regional Wellness Council

This letter is in response to the Oral Question you raised on June 1, 2017 regarding staffing and scheduling of physicians in the Sahtu region. In the Sahtu region there are nine active locums; four regular locums, and a pool of five other physicians available to fill in gaps. With four regular locums providing services to communities it helps build relationships with families and maintains consistency and continuity of care for patients. A monthly schedule of locum physician rotation, showing which community they will be in on a given date, is posted on the Sahtu region website: <http://www.shssa.hss.gov.nt.ca/upcoming-events/when-doctor>.

Regarding your question as to whether incoming locums receive cross-cultural training, I can confirm that all staff in the Sahtu take mandatory online Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training through the Department of Finance. We recognize the importance of providing culturally respectful care, and this training along with other measures helps achieve our goal of advancing cultural safety across the health and social services system. In addition to this training, the regional office provides new locums with Sahtu-specific orientation and resources.

As I mentioned in the House, it is a challenge to find permanent physicians who are part of the community. To help address this challenge, the Department is developing NWT-specific resources to encourage NWT youth to pursue a career in health and social services, so they can hopefully return back to their community to live and work. These resources include a career guidebook that will be published online, and an update for the Practice North website with a larger section for youth and students. We hope to have these resources ready soon. In the interim, resources from other jurisdictions that provide information on health and social services careers can be found through links on the Practice North website.

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Community healthy living fairs provide a great opportunity to encourage healthy behaviours, but also a chance to engage with youth. In February, staff from the Department visited Tulita as part of these fairs and set up a booth with fun and interactive material to engage with youth and talk about health and social services careers as a future option. Staff listened to their questions and used this feedback to help develop the NWT-specific career guidebook.

Supporting and encouraging youth to pursue rewarding careers, and training local people for local work is incredibly important. I welcome the opportunity to work with leaders throughout the NWT to find innovative ways to encourage youth to pursue careers in health and social services, and I hope you and others in your region will share career information available through the Practice North website, and promote the NWT Career Guidebook once it is released.

Thank you.



Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator, Executive