



JUL 17 2017

MR. SHANE THOMPSON
MLA, NAHENDEH

Oral Question 779-18(2): Mental Health and Wellness Programs

This letter is in response to the Oral Question you raised on May 29, 2017 regarding mental health and wellness programs. The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has offered the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) as requested, to staff of other government departments and agencies. Both of these training courses involve discussion of available resources in the community for mental health and wellness.

The DHSS is also involved in collaborative projects with other Government of the Northwest Territories Departments, (i.e. Integrated Case Management, Wellness Court) which involves sharing of information about programs and services amongst the different departments.

Thank you providing me with information on the High-Five training program. It is the responsibility of the whole community to support the mental wellness of its children and youth, and I am pleased to see non-government agencies like the NWT Recreation and Parks Association also taking on education and awareness of children's mental health.

As you know, the Department of Health and Social Services' "Mind and Spirit" Strategic Framework for Mental Health Addictions and Recovery contains a main strategic direction around using a Whole of Government Approach towards addressing mental health and addictions in the NWT. As part of this Strategic Framework, we are developing a Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan which involves interdepartmental manner working groups with representatives from the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and Justice.

I have passed along the information you provided on the High-Five program to Department staff who work on the development of the Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan to ensure they are aware of it as an option that is available.

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The Child and Youth Mental Wellness Action Plan will have a strong focus on training for front-line staff working with children and youth. Working with this population requires a special set of skills and in many cases, training will be necessary. The interdepartmental working groups will review the High-Five program in light of the action plan process to ensure it meets the necessary requirements.

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