



JUL 19 2016

MR. DANIEL MCNEELY
MLA, SAHTU

Oral Question 277-18(2): Implementation of Regional Wellness Councils

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on June 27, 2016 regarding the implementation of Regional Wellness Councils.

On August 1st, 2016 Bill 44: *An Act to Amend the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act* will come into effect. On this date the new Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (THSSA), NWT Health and Social Services Leadership Council and Regional Wellness Councils (RWCs) will be established. This new governance structure will allow us to make necessary changes across the system, which will help improve care and services for NWT residents.

Regional Wellness Councils will play a key role in the new system, ensuring that local and regional priorities are addressed and supporting the delivery of culturally appropriate care and services.

On June 24th, 2016 members of the six regional Wellness Councils were announced. The six members, along with the board chair, will act as advisory bodies to the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, and assist in the roll-out of new programs on a local level. The newly-appointed members of the RWCs will receive orientation and training to ensure they are familiar with the new system and their role in it, and are prepared to serve in their new capacity.

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As I mentioned in the house, the Regional Wellness Councils are not political bodies. Their role is to tailor programs and services to meet local and regional needs. Therefore, it would be preferable if MLAs from the region did not take part in the RWC orientation process. However, I am always open to hear suggestions from MLAs, Aboriginal leaders, and community members on ways to improve the health and social services system to better serve the needs of residents. I welcome any discussion on how to best customize programs to reflect regional and cultural differences.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen Abernethy', written over a horizontal line.

Glen Abernethy
Minister of Health and Social Services

c. Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator, Executive