



JUL 11 2016

MR. SHANE THOMPSON
MLA, NAHENDEH

Oral Question 216-18(2) and Oral Question 225-18(2): Medical Travel Challenges

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Questions you raised on June 14, 2016 regarding medical travel challenges.

We are currently working to update and modernize medical travel to improve customer services and the patient experience. As a result we engaged with over 210 public stakeholders on how to make improvements and this resulted in the development of the “Patient Supports (Escorts) Report on What We Heard” which was released in September 2015.

In this report, the public stated the need to provide better information on medical travel. As a result of this, we are developing a Medical Travel Navigation Toolkit to assist the public, which will be completed and released later this year. To develop this resource and use the expertise of front line and medical travel staff, over the last year, we have fully engaged with all medical travel staff as well as key front line clinical staff from each authority (i.e., we engaged with over 120 health and social services staff for up to three day workshops in each authority). In addition, we arranged for all medical travel staff to attend certified service professional training together in Yellowknife last October. As I committed in the House, we will continue to engage medical travel staff as we move forward on the medical travel modernization project.

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We are always looking for ways to improve the patient experience during medical travel. Staff make their best effort to ensure the comfort and safety of patients, and to make travel arrangements that minimize wait times. However we do recognize that based on certain itineraries some clients will wait for extended periods of time between flights or appointments. For those who qualify, Larga House in Edmonton, the Transient Centre in Inuvik and Vital Abel in Yellowknife have day rates to provide transportation, meals and common areas as a place to rest (note: these arrangements should be requested and made prior to travel). In addition, to support all residents who travel, the Medical Travel Navigation Toolkit will provide a list of community resources and their contact details for each regional center. As I committed in the House, as part of our ongoing process to improve medical travel, we will continue to explore what additional options are available for people to stay and rest in between appointments.

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