



JUL 09 2018

MR. KIERON TESTART  
MLA, KAM LAKE

**Oral Question 312-18(3): Cannabis Education Plan/Funding**

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on May 28, 2018 regarding cannabis public education funding.

The Department of Health and Social Services (Department) has launched a public education and awareness campaign to make sure residents have good information about cannabis use. The campaign includes web content, direct mail to all households and businesses in the Northwest Territories (NWT), traditional advertising, social media, radio ads and web content in all NWT indigenous languages. Messaging and materials under this campaign are culturally relevant, tailored specifically to the NWT population, and are delivered in a way that effectively reaches our residents. The cost for implementation activities related to this public education and awareness campaign is approximately \$125K and is funded internally.

As I mentioned in the House, the Department is also working to secure federal funding to further support public education and awareness in the NWT under Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program. An investment by the federal government will help reach people in our communities and make sure they have the information that they need to make informed choices when it comes to cannabis use.

The Department has proposed a highly interactive public education campaign that uses both traditional and social media alongside community engagement using theatre and sharing circles. Some of the proposed activities under this campaign would include:

- A series of infographics geared towards specific target populations who are more vulnerable to adverse side effects from cannabis. Topics would include:

.../2

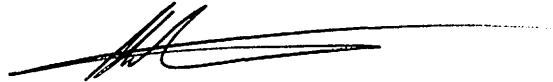
- Brain Development and Cannabis
- Pregnancy
- Harm Reduction
- Mental Health Concerns and Cannabis
- General Health Effects
- A highly visual portable roll-up display that can serve as a consistent backdrop for a variety of community engagement events
- Short, entertaining but informative health information videos (“memes”) that can be shared easily via Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat – social media platforms popular with NWT youth
- Facebook live events (real-time interactive videos) with experts (i.e. medical staff or people with lived experience) which can be broadcast in classrooms and serve as Q&A opportunities with NWT residents
- Interactive community theatre workshops with local youth as co-directors and actors, using an established baseline script with approved key messaging.

To achieve meaningful results, it is important that we work with community members in the execution of this campaign to plan, implement and evaluate this campaign. If we are successful in receiving this funding, we will seek partnerships with Indigenous Governments and local community organizations to help plan, implement and evaluate the campaign. We will also be working with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the NWT Recreation and Parks Association and the NWT Association of Communities in the development of this campaign.

A copy of my letter to the Standing Committee on Social Development on Cannabis Public Education has been sent to you separately.

I will ensure that the Members of the Legislative Assembly are kept informed of our plans as we move forward with the public education and awareness component of the legalization of cannabis in the NWT.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen Abernethy', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Glen Abernethy  
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Mr. Tim Mercer  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings  
Legislative Coordinator  
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs