



OCT 19 2017

MR. SHANE THOMPSON
MLA, NAHENDEH

Oral Question 770-18(2): Mental Health and Homecare Funding

This letter is in response to the Oral Question you raised on May 29, 2017 regarding allocation of homecare funding. As I mentioned in the House, the Department of Health and Social Services is working on an action plan for enhanced home and community care services. To inform the work of the action plan, we are also conducting a comprehensive review of Home Care services that will define our basket of core Home Care services which should be available by community and region, and determine if we are adequately resourced to effectively support seniors to age in place in community.

Though we have yet to complete the comprehensive review of Home Care Services that is planned for 2017-18, we know that there are pockets of undocumented unmet demand for home care services in many of our communities. With the additional \$2.5 million in core funding allocated in the 2017-2018 budget, we will work to address these unmet needs by strengthening home care services in three large communities, and introducing home care services in six communities where there are currently none offered.

The new funding will allow us to put one additional Registered Nurse, as well as two additional Home Support Workers in Inuvik, while in Yellowknife we will fund three more Home Support Worker positions. In Hay River we will be funding Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to add one full time, and one half-time Home Support Worker. This will provide additional services to Hay River itself, as well as allowing us to increase services to Enterprise, where there were no Home Care services previously. I am also pleased to announce that we have also added funding for half-time Home Support Workers in each of the five smallest communities in the Dehcho region (Wrigley, Jean Marie River, Somba K'e, Nahanni Butte and Kakisa).

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The work to develop and fill these positions is already underway, but as I had mentioned in the House, it would be difficult to give a potential timeline as to when these positions will be staffed. There are a number of steps which must take place, which include writing job descriptions, conducting evaluations, and staffing; all of which take some time. Staff with the Department and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority are working hard to get these positions filled, recognizing the importance of providing home care services to elders in our communities.

We also recognize the opportunity this funding provides in employing local people in these positions, and so I have asked the Department to utilize the Regional Recruitment Program. This program provides financial and human resources to support on-the-job training for program participants through a structured and managed approach. By using this program, we can help identify potential local candidates, and develop and implement training programs so that some of the new positions being created are staffed by local people, while ensuring they have the skills and qualifications necessary to offer the same high-quality home care services found throughout the Northwest Territories.

By expanding and strengthening home care services in our communities, we are working to meet the 18th Assembly priority of taking action so that seniors can age in place.

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