



JUN 25 2020

STEVE NORN
MLA, TU NEDHE-WIILIDEH

Oral Question 312-19(2): Ability to Visit Patients in Hospitals

This letter is in follow up to the Oral Question you raised on June 9, 2020 regarding the Ability to Visit Patients in Hospitals.

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is currently reviewing their visitation guidelines. At the outset of the COVID-19 response, the Authority implemented strict visitation processes that included limited visitation at all acute care sites and no visitation in our Long Term Care facilities. Across Canada, health facilities and long term care facilities in particular have been at greater risk of COVID-19 spread. Knowing this, NTHSSA measures were put in place with the best intentions to protect patients and clients.

The NTHSSA recognizes limited visitation puts an extra burden on patients and their families. Throughout this response, the Authority has taken measures, such as enabling virtual visitation, to ensure there are options for social interaction between patients and the people that are important to them. It has also implemented an exception process that allows for exceptions to visitor limitations based on the specific circumstances of the patient. This remains in place.

As we move through the phases of Emerging Wisely, NTHSSA will continue to revisit their visitation guidance. With entering Relaxing Phase 2, they are taking the opportunity to review current guidance. In the coming weeks, they expect to release revised guidelines that will enhance opportunities for visitation.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Thom".

Diane Thom
Minister of Health and Social Services

c Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Legislative Coordinator
Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs