

Government of the Northwest Territories' Response to Standing Committee on Government Operations Report 2-16(6): Report on the Review of the Auditor General's Report on NWT Health Programs and Services - 2011, Department of Health and Social Services

The review of the Auditor General's report on NWT Health Programs and Services – 2011 examined whether the Department of Health and Social Services adequately manages health programs and services provided to residents. The review was completed in 2010 and released in March 2011.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations ("the Standing Committee") conducted a review of the Auditor General's report on the NWT Health Programs and Services – 2011. The Standing Committee made a total of six recommendations.

The following is the GNWT's response to the recommendations contained in *Committee Report 2-16(6): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Review of the Auditor General's Report on NWT Health Programs and Services – 2011, Department of Health and Social Services*.

Standing Committee Recommendation #1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop a plan for implementing all the Auditor General's recommendations on health programs and services, and provide it to Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public.

The implementation plan should include a timeline and quarterly progress updates to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, beginning in June, 2011.

GNWT Response

The Government of the Northwest Territories has agreed with all the Auditor General's recommendations provided in the Report on NWT Health Programs and Services - 2011. Implementation plans and timelines have already been included in the Department of Health and Social Services' response to the Auditor General's recommendations and are included as part of the overall Auditor General's Report.

In addition, ongoing reporting will be done through Business Plans and Department of Health and Social Services' reports on Action Plans.

Standing Committee Recommendation #2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services follow through on commitments made in its strategic plan and action plan to:

- ***Revise the model to allocate funding to Health and Social Services Authorities, and***
- ***Develop performance agreements that include expected results for key programs and services, and corresponding reporting requirements.***

GNWT Response

Improving governance and accountability to ensure the delivery of quality programs and services and consistent financial management is a priority in *A Foundation for Change*, the Department of Health and Social Services' system action plan for 2009-2012. Key actions identified under this priority include the implementation of a new funding methodology and development of performance and service agreements with the Health and Social Services Authorities. These actions are to be developed during the 2011-2012 fiscal year for implementation in 2012-2013.

Standing Committee Recommendation #3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services, Health Authorities, and the Department of Human Resources develop a comprehensive, system-wide recruitment and retention plan for health professionals, for implementation in 2012-2013, and monitor progress against the plan on an ongoing basis.

GNWT Response

The maximization of human resources is currently identified as a key action contained in *A Foundation for Change*, the Department of Health and Social Services' system action plan for 2009-2012. Following the piloting of human resource plans in several departments and the finalization of government-wide tools by the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Health and Social Services will work with Health and Social Services Authorities and the Department of Human Resources to develop system-wide recruitment and retention plans. These plans will be developed during the 2011-2012 fiscal year for implementation in 2012-2013.

In addition, the comprehensive human resource recruitment plan should align with the Government of the Northwest Territories Recruitment Strategy and the redesigned recruitment process.

Standing Committee Recommendation #4

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services, Health Authorities, and the Department of Human Resources develop a service level agreement for recruitment and retention of health professionals that sets out roles, responsibilities, timelines, and services to be delivered. This agreement should be in place and functional by April 1, 2012.

GNWT Response

The plan to develop and implement service level agreements, which includes recruitment and retention, is currently underway. The Department of Health and Social Services supports the Department of Human Resources in its development of a government-wide service level agreement for human resources, including recruitment and retention, with modification of the generic service level agreement to be assessed given the special needs of the Health and Social Services system. The timelines for this project will be established by the Department of Human Resources in the near future.

Standing Committee Recommendation #5

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services and the health authorities:

- ***Develop a set of system-wide performance indicators and identify key data requirements;***
- ***Develop a program evaluation plan setting out areas it plans to evaluate; and***
- ***Regularly inform the Legislative Assembly and the public about the performance of the NWT health care system.***

GNWT Response

Developing an ongoing system of reporting and evaluation is a priority in *A Foundation for Change*, the Department of Health and Social Services' system action plan for 2009-2012. Key actions identified under this priority include introducing a system-wide performance measurement and reporting system, developing capacity for delivering the performance measurement and reporting system, and evaluating client satisfaction regularly. The evaluation plan is to be developed during the 2011-2012 fiscal year for implementation in 2012-2013.

Standing Committee Recommendation #6

In light of the time remaining to the 16th Legislative Assembly, the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides a comprehensive response to this report within 90 days.

GNWT Response

As per the Standing Committee's recommendation, the Government of the Northwest Territories will table this response during the August 2011 Session.