

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY
JUN 12 2003
Yellowknife, N.W.T.

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 59 - 14(6) TABLED ON JUN 11 2003



Sandy Lee /YK /LEG

From: sportz /unix [sportz@theedge.ca]

Sent: Tuesday, June 10, 2003 9:54 PM

To: Tony Whitford /YK /LEG; Vince Steen /YK /EXEC; Floyd Roland /YK /LEG; Jake Ootes /YK /EXEC; Steven Nitah /YK /LEG; Michael McLeod /YK /LEG; Leon Lafferty /YK /LEG; David Krutko /YK /LEG; Joseph Handley /YK /EXEC; Jane Groenewegen /YK /LEG; Charles Dent /YK /LEG; Bill Braden /YK /LEG; Jim Antoine /YK /EXEC; Roger Allen /YK /EXEC

Cc: sportz /unix; Sandy Lee /YK /LEG

Subject: Fw: Voice your opinion!

I am also forwarding this email to all MLAs so they can see what the Health Minister on June 5, 2003.

Sue Portz
Yellowknife, NT

----- Original Message -----

From: Susan Portz

To: Robert Hawkins ; Jerome Babyn ; Wanda Keating ; Sean Ivens ; Sandy McPhee ; Rene'e Lelievre (h) ; Rene'e Lelievre (w) ; Niels Konge ; Mike Dunsmore (w) ; Melanie Dunsmore (w) ; Mary Rivers ; Kathy Yurris ; Kathryn Vennard ; Dean & Simone Warren ; Dave Power (Miramar) ; Christina Ivens ; Darrell Portz (w) ; Glen Jarbeau

Cc: michael_miltenberger@gov.nt.ca ; sandy_lee@gov.nt.ca ; stephen_kakfwi@gov.nt.ca

Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2003 12:10 PM

Subject: Voice your opinion!

Hello everyone.

As you have probably heard/read, the negotiations with our medical specialists at Stanton Hospital have failed. The news has reported that our Health Minister - Mr. Miltenberger, stated the "specialists rejected a 27% wage increase and will not entertain binding arbitration".

As you can all appreciate, in some cases news reporting may not be accurate. Therefore, I have been in contact with my MLA to get some facts. Here is what I found out:

- The compensation package is very complex, and deals with much more than just a wage increase, it also includes holidays, benefit packages, etc. The common items in most negotiations are there as well as a wage increase.
- The specialists were NEVER offered a 27% wage increase. It appears the Health Minister is attempting to sway public opinion into making all think that the specialists are greedy and that they have turned down a decent proposal. The 27% was not offered.
- In some areas of the negotiations, the specialists are being offered money, when they are seeking time instead (i.e. less "on call" duty, etc.).
- The comparability the Health Minister is talking about with our specialists, ignores the credentials and background of each specialist. You have to compare apples to apples - for example, what would Dr. Jones make in BC vs. NWT, with his experience, training, etc. This would be a better comparison than what the Health Minister did by comparing the average salary of the specialist to an average salary of another specialist in another province, then take the lowest and highest salaries and average them out.
- Mr. Miltenberger is waging a PR war against the specialists. In knowing only "half truths" the public is easily swayed in thinking that our specialists are demanding too much and that we should not be paying them anymore than they are making right now.

So now the question comes to you, as a resident of the NWT, as a taxpayer, as a concerned citizen - how

much do you want to have specialist care in the NWT? Here are some questions that you should ask yourself, your MLA, the Health Minister, the Premier... etc:

- As a non-aboriginal resident, if I have to fly south for a test, surgery, or simply to give birth to my baby, who will pay for my accommodations, meals, and transportation while await these happenings? If I have to wait 2 weeks before I go into labour, how am I to pay for this wait in another city?
- If my spouse or significant other has to join me, due to the nature of what is being done, who will cover his/her flight, accommodations, meals and transportation while they are with me?
- Who will pay to look after any children that are left behind in NWT while I am down south?
- We have a medivac team here in Yellowknife and they serve the ENTIRE Northwest Territories. There are definitely 2, possibly 3 planes available for medivacs if needed. If we start sending all of our patients south, because anything from a broken leg to simply a woman in labour will be sent south, what happens if a critical patient needs care? The planes are gone, there are no specialists at the hospital to even maintain that person until they can get south.
- Family physicians are exactly that, family physicians. Some do have some extra skills in areas of anesthesia and assisting in surgery. Most family physicians freely admit that they cannot take over the areas of the specialists because they do not have the training, nor do they have the time because of their own enormous patient load they must tend to.
- An average medivac will cost anywhere between \$10 000 to \$20 000. I believe, right now, even with specialists in place, there is approximately 2 to 3 medivacs done every 24 hours. This includes flying to the remote communities to get patients, remember the team services the entire NWT. If we have no specialists, will that number double, or even triple? So we may average in spending \$60 000 to \$100 000 every 24 hours in sending patients south if there is no specialist care...
- There have been several vacancies in specialist areas for a number of years, i.e. a second orthopedic surgeon, a second psychiatrist, etc. Even with what the specialists make now, their benefit package, holidays, etc, the GNWT has been unable to recruit any specialists to fulfill these positions. Why? What makes Mr. Miltenberger think that he will be able to recruit and retain new specialists when all of them quit July 1? They have not been able to do it over the last 3-4 years... is there a magic hat that the public does not know about where these new specialists will come from?
- As residents of Yellowknife, we all know that the housing situation is grim. There is less than a 1% vacancy rate in this town. Does the Health Minister really believe that a specialist is going to relocate to Yellowknife, with his/her family, if there is no where to live?

I know these questions may be irrelevant to some of you. The bottom line is what are you willing to pay or do to have specialist care in the North? If your decision is nothing, then that is fine. **But if you believe that it is necessary to retain these specialists then I encourage you to add your comments and forward this to people you know that reside in the NWT, send a copy of this with your comments to the Health Minister - Michael Miltenberger, to the Premier - Stephen Kakfwi, to one of the only MLA's fighting for this situation - Sandy Lee, and to your MLA for your area.** I will list the email sites below.

As residents, we cannot sit idly by and wait for our misdirected Health Minister to throw away what has taken years to build in our health community. If he succeeds, we will step 100 years backwards in medicine in the North, we will spend millions of dollars trying to recover from this loss, and, yes, people are going to die... I just hope its not people close to you or me. The clock is ticking... voice your opinion, it will make a difference!!!

Premier Stephen Kakfwi
Health Minister - Michael Miltenberger
MLA Range Lake - Sandy Lee

stephen_kakfwi@gov.nt.ca
michael_miltenberger@gov.nt.ca
sandy_lee@gov.nt.ca

The remainder of the MLA's email addresses can be found at this website:
www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/Members/index.html

Thank you everybody, for your assistance in this very important matter. I have attached the statement written by Sandy Lee, Range Lake MLA, regarding the facts of this matter.

Regards,

Sue Portz
Yellowknife Resident

