

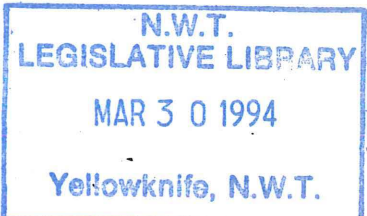


Department of Health
Government of the Northwest Territories

RESPONSE:

Committee Motion 9-12(5) to Adopt
Recommendation 20 of the Standing Committee on Finance

March 28, 1994



RECOMMENDATION 20

THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DEVELOP A CONCRETE PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- THE AUDITOR-GENERAL OF CANADA;
- THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS;
- THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES;
- THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS;
- AND THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

THE COMMITTEE FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT REPORT ON HOW THEY PLAN TO IMPROVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 20

- I. The department has reviewed 102 recommendations that have been made by the Auditor General of Canada, and committees of the Legislative Assembly. Most of the recommendations (56) require direct action by the department within its mandate to preserve and promote the health of NWT residents, and its specific role to define services, establish and monitor standards. Many of these recommendations have been acted upon and completed, work on others is under way, as indicated in the detailed responses of the department to specific recommendations.

Responses to the recommendations involving others are being developed in consultation with principal stakeholders:

- a. Health and Hospital Boards, whose special roles are to plan, organize and manage services at the community level (primarily in relation to the 17 MOU-related recommendations);
- b. Professional groups, who participate in the management of the system in addition to providing direct services (in relation to many MOU and planning-related recommendations);

- c. the Social Policy Group (consisting of the departments of Health, Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment, operating under a Memorandum of Agreement) whose role is to plan and coordinate programs and services which exceed the mandate and capability of individual departments (11 specific recommendations, but applicable to others in addition); and
- d. Government (Cabinet, Legislative Assembly) which sets policy for, and finances, the operation of the system (10 recommendations, especially in relation to information requirements).

In developing its responses, the department has used the same principles as those for planning activities across the health system: a broad definition of health, wide consultation, optimum use of available resources, and sensitivity to cultural, economic, and political issues.

Briefly, this has involved:

a. **Agreement on Key Participants and Process**

The identification of key participants, and the development of objectives, approach and time frames for most of the consolidated recommendations are either explicitly identified in the department's response, or implicit in the question. For example, the many matters relating to board operations require the involvement of board chairs to assist in the development and to approve the proposed approach as a matter of policy, and subsequently to endorse recommendations which emerge from the working level of department and board officials. This will be accomplished through regular meetings between the Minister and board chairs (initially four times a year).

b. **Analyzing Information and Options**

The response to some recommendations will require efforts over an extended period to achieve the desired result. This is especially so in relation to human resource development related recommendations, such as achieving aboriginal representation in proportion to population in health professions. Both short term and long term strategies, involving extensive consultation are being developed.

c. **Preparing an Action Plan and Implementation Schedule**

Increasingly it has been necessary to involve a broader range of "stakeholder" groups in both the planning and implementation of recommendations. In many of the areas identified by the reports, this process is well advanced, in others only the general shape of the response has been identified. Time frames for completion have been specified wherever possible..

d. **Evaluating the Results**

The department will monitor progress on responses to individual recommendations and assess results in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

- II. The department is assessing its ability to support the development of policy as part of the functional review which is now nearing completion. The scope, nature and extent of current policy development activities will be guided by the results of this review.

