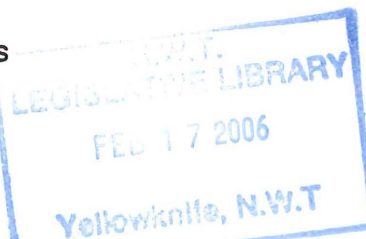


December 20, 2005

Honourable Michael Miltenberger  
Minister of Health and Social Services  
Legislative Assembly  
Yellowknife, NT

Administration and  
Program Offices  
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Dear Minister Miltenberger:

The YWCA Yellowknife is seeking a remedy for a serious and growing problem affecting our ability to continue to deliver responsible social services. We operate nine support programs in a variety of locations that deliver services 24 hours a day, seven days a week (see the attached description of current services delivered by the YWCA Yellowknife).

The problem we face is our inability to compete for staff in a very competitive employment market. Our funding from the local Health and Social Services Authority for the provision of key contracted services has remained flat over the past several years, which has seriously reduced our ability to attract staff to front-line positions, and to retain key knowledge staff who hire, train and supervise front-line positions.

An inability to fill front-line shifts can soon become a crisis. And if staff are not properly oriented and trained we face increased risk as a board for liability and difficulty in maintaining insurance coverage.

A salary survey to test our current wage scale, implemented in 2001, against the market of other service providers was completed in October 2004, and showed that for front-line positions, we are less than market by at least \$10,000/year (\$5/hour). Key knowledge staff of our YWCA are being hired by our local Health and Social Services Authority at an increase of \$20,000 annually, or by your department at an increase of \$30,000 annually! We do not expect to be on par with government wages. However, we do expect to be able to maintain our salaries at a certain percentage of GNWT salaries for comparable skill sets.

**We want to be able to sign new agreements for April 1, 2006. We want to be able to uphold our obligations under those agreements. That is why we are appealing to you for help.**

Our request has two parts. One is an immediate short-term remedy whereby we could adjust our salaries by the same percentage increases as were given to GNWT and local Authority staff over this and the next several years. This way, we would not fall even further behind in our salaries, and in our ability to hire and retain staff. This was referred to in the last session of the Assembly, an 'escalator clause.'

The second is a longer-term remedy, involving an assessment of the skill sets required by non-governmental agencies to provide front-line services, and a negotiation of a fair percentage (of GNWT wages) that a wage would be for people working in non-governmental organizations who provide legitimate services on behalf of government funding agencies. We understand that the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority has requested funds to perform this piece of work, and we hope you will support that request.

Our board is communicating with you to seek a reasonable and viable solution for both of us. In the long-term, we are seeking financial remuneration that recognizes a fair value for our services in the market in which we operate. In the short-term, we need to be able to hire and keep staff. We want the YWCA Yellowknife to remain a strong and vibrant community resource, so we will be available to meet current and future challenges in the NWT.

Sincerely,



Julie Green  
President

Cc: Greg Cummings, CEO  
Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority

Sandy Lee, MLA and Chair  
Social Programs Committee

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES DELIVERED BY YWCA YELLOWKNIFE

- Support to adults with developmental disabilities, originally provided in group homes, but since 1996 provided in the person's own home, usually shared with roommates who also receive support. We have provided this service continually since 1985, and we have recently purchased houses in order to stabilize the housing situations for these adults, who will require support over their lifetime.
- Support to adults with mental illnesses or mental health issues, in a wide variety of living situations, since 2003:
  - In a shared home, purchased by the YWCA with assistance from the Homelessness Coalition;
  - Individually, in their own apartments, through outreach services for clients needing medication administration and help with managing finances or other life skills;
  - In a group home setting, where the facility is owned by the GNWT; this is a new service started in early 2005.
- Shelter and support for women and their children who are experiencing family violence. This also includes various outreach activities to reach women who may not need to be in a shelter, but need support services to cope with violence in their families. It also includes activities to raise public awareness of violence against women and how the public can help.
  - A 12 bed shelter in Yellowknife, that we have continuously operated since its inception in 1986;
  - A 6 bed shelter in Fort Smith, operated by the YWCA since 2004.
- Group and individual support services for children who have witnessed abuse; we implemented this program in Yellowknife in 2000. Originally developed by YWCA Lethbridge, we have recently taken this program to Tulita, Deline, and Fort Providence, with travel support from the federal government.
- Awareness and support services on dating violence and healthy relationships for teens of both sexes, in partnership with the schools in Yellowknife. This program, which also traveled to Fort Smith, was the result of discussion with teens in a local high school in 2001. This is a violence prevention program, as teens have indicated through formal feedback that they learned new strategies and would change their behaviour due to those learnings.
- Transitional housing and life skills support for families who need to stabilize their lives and improve their tenancy skills; this service is provided through a partnership with the GNWT, who owns the apartment complex we lease. This YWCA was formed in 1966 to specifically meet the need for supported housing in the NWT. Supported housing is a core service for us.
- Emergency housing and life skills support for families who are homeless, in partnership with the GNWT and through donations from the community.
- Licensed after school programs, offered continuously since 1973; we currently have 174 spaces, in partnership with the schools in Yellowknife.

YWCA Yellowknife, 5004 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yellowknife, NT

**HOURLY AND ANNUAL WAGES FOR FRONT LINE WORKERS**  
**(Salary Scale Implemented in 2001)**

December, 2005

Hourly and Annual Wage	Front Line Position
Grade 7 \$19.46/hour or \$40,480/year	Team leaders with some supervisory responsibility in the five homes for adults with disabilities
Grade 8 \$18.19/hour or \$37,840/year	Full-time staff at Alison McAteer House shelter, who work weekdays or evenings during the week
Grade 9 \$16.92/hour or \$35,200/year	Currently no positions are rated on this grade
Grade 10 \$16.08/hour or \$33,440/year	All front line staff who work part-time shifts on weekends for all delivery sites or full-time evening shifts in one of our five homes for adults with disabilities
Grade 11 \$14.18/hour	All casual staff who are called in to cover shifts when needed for the women's shelter, the Rycon Group Home for Mental Health clients, or any of our homes for adults with disabilities