



**GNWT Response to the  
Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight  
Committee Report 3-15(5)  
Report On The Review Of The 2004-2005  
Annual Report Of The Languages Commissioner**

### **Recommendation #1**

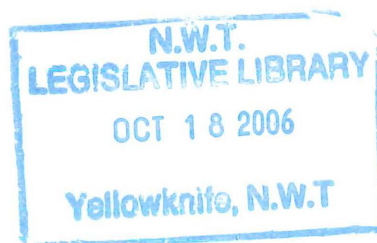
The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) examine the feasibility of re-establishing in-house interpreter and translation services and report back on its findings in its response to this report. *Committee Motion 18-15(5): Carried*

### **Response**

To respond to the recommendation, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment reviewed the provision of language services through the GNWT Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services, researched the re-establishment of in-house interpreter and translation services as an effective strategy for acquiring, maintaining, and revitalizing Aboriginal Languages in the NWT, and examined costs to re-establish in-house interpreter and translation services.

Language services, as defined in the *Official Languages Guidelines Manual*, include interpretation, direct services, and facilitation services. GNWT language services are provided through contracted services and by employees who receive bilingual bonuses for providing services in an official language other than English. In 1998, based on public consultation and best practice research, the GNWT made a decision to close the Language Bureau and to transfer its resources to GNWT program departments and to Aboriginal language communities to support their efforts in language acquisition, maintenance, and revitalization.

In the GNWT today, the key public service areas requiring language services include the courts, victim services, legal aid, and health services. Although a few GNWT employees provide interpretation services, most services are contracted and provided through casual staff. In addition, a large number of GNWT employees receive bilingual bonuses to provide direct services and facilitation services. Also, many of the public information materials are available in a number of the official Aboriginal languages.



The Department of Justice believes that it is currently providing adequate language services in the official Aboriginal languages. Records are kept and services are provided upon reasonable request. The Department has been pro-active in translating a number of public information materials and providing interpretation at community consultations. The Department examined the feasibility of developing legal terminology in an Aboriginal language. It found that the time and the financial and human resources required would not be cost-effective and that the use of English plain language in preparation for interpretation and translation is a preferred option.

The Department of Health and Social Services is working to ensure that interpretation, and direct and facilitation services are accessible in a timely manner in health services delivery. An Aboriginal Languages Office is located at Stanton Hospital with several interpreters in each Aboriginal language working on either a full-time or part-time basis. As well, employees receive a bilingual bonus, particularly in the Tłıchǫ and Dehcho regions. Health and Social Services is finding it difficult to meet the demand for language services at the Stanton Regional Hospital. To meet the demand, HSS is considering a number of options for improving services including additional training and the use of Telecare and Telehealth at hospitals and health centres.

Public consultation Research and Previews, as identified in Appendix 1, do not support re-establishing an in-house interpreter and translation service as an effective strategy for acquiring, maintaining, and revitalizing Aboriginal Languages in the NWT. The research identified a relationship between relocating language experts to a regional, institutional setting and the loss of language and expertise in communities. Should new funds become available, the Government would recommend investment in the education of language speakers and building the capacity of the Language Communities.

Based on the GNWT languages services organization that existed prior to 1998, the department estimates that an interpreter and translation service would need to employ about fifteen staff with a budget of between \$2 and \$3 million depending on the level of services offered. One time start up costs to establish the office and potential reductions in language services now provided by other departments would also need to be determined.

## **Recommendation #2**

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the GNWT work with Aurora College to deliver a basic interpreter/translator training program for Aboriginal languages, as well as specialized training in medical terminology. *Committee Motion 19-15(5): Carried*

## **Response**

The Review of Language Services in the NWT (Attachment) supports the development and delivery of interpreter/translator training, including medical terminology, should there be sufficient demand and program funding made available. The attached report also reviews training currently underway on a number of fronts. The Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency, Akaitcho Territory Government and the Dene Cultural Institute have expressed a strong interest in participating in the initiative.

Aurora College believes that a two-year program would be needed to provide the recommended training, that it should be based on occupational standards, and that success will be linked to graduate Interpreter/Translators having full-time employment opportunities with salaries commensurate with their expertise.

The College is open to coordinating the training if the cost of development and delivery is sponsored by another agency.

Currently, the Department of Health and Social Services has worked with Aurora College to develop and deliver a medical interpretation course in South Slavey. Four individuals have completed the course as part of the Community Wellness Worker Certificate Program. The Department would expand the Medical Terminology Course to languages other than South Slavey and to health employees other than Community Wellness Workers if funding were available.

The Department of Justice is also in support of additional training and is committed to giving preferential treatment to contractors with Interpreter/Translator Training and Certification.

## **Attachment 1**

The attached paper, Review of Language Services in the NWT, provides further background for the above responses.

## Review of Language Services in the NWT

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# REVIEW OF LANGUAGE SERVICES IN THE NWT

## Background

In 1998-99, the GNWT ceased to provide in-house Aboriginal language interpretation and translation services so that the resources could be redistributed to support Aboriginal language communities in their efforts to acquire, maintain, and revitalize their languages. Resources for Aboriginal language research and development were also transferred to language communities at this time.

The policy shift resulted from a combination of factors. There was limited demand for interpretation and translation services through government offices; most of the work focused on interpretation during Legislative Assembly sessions; and the translation of public documents. People said that translating many government documents through the Language Bureau was an ineffective use of resources given the number of people who can read or write some of the languages. Conversely, there was a higher demand for translation services in the regions and communities – particularly for education programs.

Additionally, Aboriginal language communities and linguists recognized the declining status of the languages and the limited numbers of people with fluency and literacy, and that this situation required a different set of strategies if Aboriginal communities were to maintain and improve the vitality of their language. Each Aboriginal language community needed to take ownership of its language and language resources, to maximize the involvement of elders in recording the grammar and dictionaries, and to encourage people of all ages to use the language at home, work and school.

This transfer of authority and responsibility for language from government to communities is also the approach recommended by linguists worldwide. Bauman (1980), for example, cautioned against relocating language experts from the community setting to a regional, institutional setting. "This so-called brain drain from reservations has in the past effectively negated many of the hoped-for benefits of sending tribal members to colleges and technical schools. Many of these people end up working in urban settings for the government or for non-Indian concerns, and the potential benefits to the community are lost..." (p. 7-8). The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples', released in 1996, stressed that intergenerational transmission of language is necessary for languages to stay healthy, and identified that Aboriginal communities and families are more important than formal institutions in making sure this happens.

Following the 1998 decision, each Official Aboriginal Language Community received funding to develop a Strategic Plan that formed the basis of annual funding arrangements. The following table shows the recipients of funding in each language community.

Language Community	Funding Recipient
Inuvialuktun/Innuinaqtun	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Gwich'in	Gwich'in Tribal Council
North Slavey	Sahtu Dene Council
South Slavey	Behchokò First Nation
Tłıchq	Rae Edzo Friendship Centre
Chipewyan	Akaicho Territory Government
Cree	Northwest Territory Metis Nation

In 2006-07, \$1.2 million will be contributed to language communities and community organizations to further the language plans.

The GNWT, through Education, Culture and Employment, has also continued to support the efforts of Aboriginal Language Communities in a number of ways:

- The Aboriginal Languages Strategy was developed;
- A program was established for language nests where pre-school children learn alongside adults and elders;
- Training for Aboriginal Culture and Language Instructors was developed and continues to be delivered. In 2005-06, a training workshop, in which 50 people from all language groups participated, was held for Language Nest personnel and Aboriginal Language Instructors on Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA);
- New Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs) were established to ensure that there was one in each language community. The role of TLCs was expanded to support comprehensive language activities in schools by working closely with Elders;
- The *Aboriginal Languages and Culture Based Education Directive* was implemented in September 2004. As a result, the number of schools providing a minimum of 90 hrs of language instruction each year has increased; and
- Designated funding for school language instructors and assistants was established and as a result the number of language instructors and assistants has increased.

In 2006-07, schools will receive \$7.5 million to implement the Aboriginal Language and Culture-Based Education Directive. Language Nests will receive \$727,000. Adult language learning and literacy will also be supported through the Literacy Strategy.

Since the closure of the GNWT Language Bureau, the GNWT has contracted to provide interpretation services and translation of documents into the Aboriginal languages according to its *Official Languages Guidelines Manual* (the Manual). Additionally, the

GNWT provides services by employees who can speak the official languages, in which case interpretation services are not necessary. In the areas of Justice and Health, which are of current concern to the Committee and the Official Languages Commissioner, services are provided directly or facilitated by bilingual employees or contractors.

### **Definition of Language Services**

The *Official Languages Act (R.S. N.W.T. 1988, c. O-1)* provides for the use of all Official Aboriginal Languages in the Legislative Assembly (Section 6) and the Courts (Section 9 (2)). It also gives the public the right to receive services from any regional, area or community office in any of the Official Aboriginal Languages where,

- (a) there is a significant demand for communications with and services from the office in that language; or
- (b) it is reasonable, given the nature of the office, that communications with and services from it be available in that language. (Section 11 (2)).

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, as the lead for Official Languages in the GNWT, developed the Official Languages Guidelines Manual to further clarify these statutory requirements in an operational setting. Guideline 4 of the Manual identifies three methods for delivering services to the public in the official languages:

Direct Service:	When a bilingual employee provides a service to a member of the public in that person's preferred official language.
Facilitation Service:	When an employee, fluent in the official language preferred by a member of the public, assists in the delivery of a service in the official language.
Interpretation Service:	When an interpreter assists in the delivery of a service.

Guideline 2 of the Manual describes two categories of designated office for Official Aboriginal Languages as follows:

Category 1:	Community offices which provide services to the public in a Designated Area shall make those services available in the official Aboriginal languages of that Designated Area.
Category 2:	An office which provides services to the public in a Designated Area other than the Designated Area in which the office is located, shall make those services available in the official languages of that other Designated Area.

In the Department of Justice, designated offices fall into the secondary category and would include court services, legal registries and legal aid, while victim services falls into the first category as it is delivered on a regional basis with one office in each of the language communities.

In the Department of Health and Social Services and its health and social services authorities, designated offices for health services at Stanton Hospital fall into the first category. This requires Stanton Hospital to provide services in all of the Official Aboriginal Languages. Designated offices for health services at regional hospitals and health centres fall into the first category as they are delivered on a regional basis within each of the language communities. They would be required to deliver services only in the Official Aboriginal Language(s) of the communities in their service region.

### **Language Services in the Department of Justice**

The majority of on-site interpretation services under the responsibility of the Department of Justice are provided when delivering Court Services. Section 14 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* gives all individuals the right to the use of an interpreter in court if they do not understand or speak the language of the hearing. During 2005-06, 32 Aboriginal Language interpreters were hired. Of this total, 19 were Tłıchǵ, 8 were South Slavey, 3 were North Slavey and 2 were Chipewyan. These statistics are similar to the seven-year average percentage of languages for which interpretation was provided from fiscal year 1999-00 to 2005-06, as follows:

- Tłıchǵ: 46%
- South Slavey: 22%
- North Slavey: 16%
- Chipewyan: 9%
- Inuvialuktun: 4%
- Innuinaqtun: 3%
- Cree: less than 1%
- Gwich'in: less than 1%
- Inuktitut: less than 1%

Other than court services, the Department of Justice also uses interpretation services at its public offices. These include legal registries in Yellowknife, legal aid in Inuvik and Yellowknife, and victim services in Fort Good Hope, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and, in the near future, Fort Simpson. The Department has contracted with a company that provides simultaneous interpretation in over 100 languages. During the 2006 calendar year, it was used approximately five times to provide service in the Official Aboriginal languages.

The Department of Justice employees also provide direct services. Two Corrections Officers receive a bilingual bonus for Chipewyan at the North Slave Correctional Centre in Yellowknife and the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre in Hay River. In Behchokǵ, a Court Worker and a Probation Officer receive bilingual bonuses for delivering services in Tłıchǵ.

During 2005-06, the Department completed community justice consultations and provided simultaneous interpretation services upon request. The only Aboriginal languages requested were:



- Chipewyan
- Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)
- North Slavey
- South Slavey

Regarding the development of legal terminology in the official Aboriginal languages, the Department of Justice uses English plain language rather than legal terminology in order to aid translation. This approach applies both to public information materials and to interpretation in the courts. Court interpretation is handled in the same way it would be if a person spoke perfect English, but did not understand a legal concept. If the person were a witness, he or she would ask for clarification and the lawyer or judge would usually rephrase the question in simpler words. In other situations, like a hearing or sentencing, the person's lawyer would meet with him or her to provide any necessary explanation. This is routine, even for people who speak perfect English. The Department currently has the following public information materials available in the Official Aboriginal Languages:

#### Chipewyan

- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### Cree

- Booklet - Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### Gwich'in

- Breaking and Entering Brochure
- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### Inuinnaqtun

- Family Violence Brochure
- Elder Abuse Brochure
- Radio PSA – Protection orders
- Inuktitut  
Booklet - Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### Inuvialuktun

- Booklet – Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### North Slavey

- Sexual Assault Brochure

- Booklet – Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### South Slavey

- When a Serious Crime Happens to You
- Booklet - Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

#### Tłıchǵ

- Mediation Brochure
- Mediation Poster
- Family Violence Brochure
- Elder Abuse Brochure
- Family Violence Poster
- Being a Witness Brochure
- Peace Bonds Brochure
- Booklet - Victims of Youth Crime
- Radio PSA – Family violence and emergency protection orders
- Radio PSA – Protection orders

### **Language Services in Health Services**

The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the delivery of health services in hospitals, health centers and stations, and residential care through regional health and social services authorities.

In summary, current records show that there are three full-time interpreters employed in the NWT Health and Social Services System. Two interpreters work in the Tłıchǵ language and one interpreter works in North Slavey. Stanton Hospital serves the public from across the Northwest Territories and provides interpretation services through full-time or relief interpreters in all Official Aboriginal Languages. Current records do not identify the training that these interpreters have. The demand for interpretation at Stanton Hospital is on the rise and currently exceeds supply. During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, Stanton Hospital received 1497 requests for interpretation services and, of these, 1243 requests were completed. The completed requests included 1059 services provided out of 1278 requests for Dene language interpretation and 189 services provided out of 219 requests for Inuit language interpretation.

The table on the following pages shows how and where language services are provided in health services at the regional and community level.

Designated Area	Official Aboriginal Language	Designated Office	Authority	Interpretation Services	Direct and Facilitation Services <sup>1</sup>
NWT-wide	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stanton Hospital</li> </ul>	Department of Health and Social Services	1 Tłıchǫ Interpreter 1 North Slavey Interpreter plus 23 Relief Interpreters (Tłıchǫ; Chipewyan; Cree; Gwich'in; North Slavey, South Slavey, Inuktitut)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
NWT-wide	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telecare NWT</li> </ul>	Department of Health and Social Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ None</li> </ul>
NWT-wide	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long-term Care Facility</li> </ul>	Department of Health and Social Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Inuvik Fort Smith Yellowknife	Inuvialuktun Innuinaqtun Gwich'in South Slavey Tłıchǫ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Telehealth</li> </ul>	Department of Health and Social Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Fort Smith	Chipewyan (Chipewyan) Cree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> <li>▪ Northern Lights Special Care Home (Multilevel Care Residence)</li> </ul>	Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Admitting Clerk (Chipewyan?)</li> <li>▪ Long Term Care Aid (Chipewyan?)</li> </ul>
Hay River	South Slavey Cree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ H.H. Williams Memorial (Regional) Hospital</li> <li>▪ Medical Clinic</li> <li>▪ Public Health Unit</li> <li>▪ Woodland Manor (Multi-level Care Residence)</li> <li>▪ Hay River Reserve Health Station</li> </ul>	Hay River Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Provided by Employees receiving Bilingual Bonus

Designated Area	Official Aboriginal Language	Designated Office	Authority	Interpretation Services	Direct and Facilitation Services <sup>1</sup>
Fort Simpson	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> <li>▪ Long Term Care Facility</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Health Rep</li> <li>▪ 2 Home Support Workers</li> <li>▪ 4 Residential Care Aids</li> <li>▪ Clerk Receptionist</li> <li>▪ Manager, Mental Health and Addictions</li> <li>▪ Senior Housekeeper</li> </ul>
Fort Providence	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activity Coordinator</li> <li>▪ Community Health Rep</li> <li>▪ Custodian</li> </ul>
Fort Liard	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Custodian</li> <li>▪ Community Wellness Worker</li> </ul>
Nahanni Butte	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Station</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Trout Lake	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Station</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 Community Health Workers</li> </ul>
Wrigley	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wrigley Health Centre/Residence</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Health Worker</li> <li>▪ Custodian</li> </ul>
Jean Marie River	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jean Marie River Health Station</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Health Worker</li> </ul>
Hay River Reserve	South Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Judith Fabian Elders Centre</li> </ul>	Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Deninu K'ue (Fort Resolution)	Chipewyan (Chipewyan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> <li>▪ Elders' Facility (Supported Living)</li> </ul>	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Health Rep</li> </ul>
Lutsel'Ke	Chipewyan (Chipewyan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority	1 Receptionist/Interpreter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social Work Supervisor</li> <li>▪ Administrative Assistant</li> <li>▪ Community Health Rep</li> </ul>

Designated Area	Official Aboriginal Language	Designated Office	Authority	Interpretation Services	Direct and Facilitation Services <sup>1</sup>
Yellowknife, Dettah, Ndilo	Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dettah Health Station</li> <li>▪ Jan Stirling Centre</li> <li>▪ Family Medical Clinic</li> <li>▪ Frame Lake Family Physicians</li> <li>▪ Gibson Medical Clinic</li> <li>▪ Great Slave Medical House</li> </ul>	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority	Served by Stanton Hospital interpreter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Behchokǫ (Rae-Edzo)	Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mary Adele Bishop Health Centre</li> <li>▪ Jimmy Erasmus Centre (Personal Care Residence)</li> </ul>	Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency	1 Interpreter/Translator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 Ambulance Attendants</li> <li>▪ 3 IT Technician</li> <li>▪ 4 Community Health Reps</li> <li>▪ Lay Dispenser</li> <li>▪ Pharmacy Clerk</li> <li>▪ Secretary</li> <li>▪ TB Community Worker</li> <li>▪ Travel Clerk</li> <li>▪ 2 Home Support Workers</li> <li>▪ Family Support Worker</li> <li>▪ Activity Coordinator</li> <li>▪ Food Services Supervisor</li> <li>▪ 8 Resident Care Aides</li> <li>▪ 1 Addictions Counselor</li> <li>▪ Community Wellness Worker</li> <li>▪ Manager, Social Programs</li> </ul>
Gamèti	Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Home Support Worker</li> <li>▪ Community Wellness Worker</li> </ul>
Wekweèti	Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Station</li> </ul>	Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>
Whati	Tłıchǫ (Dogrib)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Home Support Worker</li> <li>▪ Community Wellness Worker</li> </ul>
Norman Wells	North Slavey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health Centre</li> </ul>	Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul>

Designated Area	Official Aboriginal Language	Designated Office	Authority	Interpretation Services	Direct and Facilitation Services <sup>1</sup>
Deline	North Slavey	▪ Health Centre	Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority		▪ Community Health Rep
Tulita	North Slavey	▪ Health Centre	Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority		▪ Community Health Rep
Fort Good Hope	North Slavey	▪ Health Centre	Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority		▪ Community Health Rep
Colville Lake	North Slavey	▪ Health Station	Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority	Served by Norman Wells	▪ Community Health Rep
Tsiigehtchic	Gwich'in	▪ Health Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Fort McPherson	Gwich'in	▪ William Firth Health Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Aklavik	Gwich'in Inuvialuktun	▪ Joe Greenland Centre (Personal Care Residence) ▪ Susie Husky Health and Social Services Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Inuvik serving the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta Regions	Gwich'in Inuvialuktun Innuinaqtun North Slavey	▪ Inuvik Regional Hospital ▪ Inuvik Public Health Unit	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Tuktoyaktuk	Inuvialuktun	▪ Rosie Ovayouk Health Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪ Community Health Rep
Paulatuk	Inuvialuktun	▪ Paulatuk Health and Social Services Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Sachs Harbour	Inuvialuktun	▪ Sachs Harbour Health and Social Services Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪
Ulukhaktok (Holman)	Innuinaqtun	▪ Enegak Health and Social Services Centre	Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority		▪

## Tele-care NWT

The NWT health system provides bilingual (French and English) health information and symptom triage services from a Registered Nurse with interpretation services, upon request, 24 hours a day, seven days a week through Telecare NWT. The Department of Health and Social Services contract Clinidata Corporation to provide the service. Tele-care NWT can provide service in all of the official Aboriginal languages through CanTalk, a Winnipeg-based company that provides the interpretation service for Clinidata. The Clinidata nurse contacts CanTalk at the time that a caller requests services in a language other than English or French, and a three-way connection is established, usually within 45 seconds. The interpreter stays on the line for the duration of the call. Regarding quality assurance, there is a complaints mechanism for the general public and/or the Department of Health and Social Services, as the contracting authority, to alert Clinidata to any quality issues including those that might arise from interpretation services. Clinidata reports that they have been very satisfied with the quality of services, accessibility, and responsiveness of CanTalk over the six-year contractual experience. Since inception, there has been one request for interpretation services in North Slavey.

Currently, the Telecare receptionist does not provide an active offer. Rather, the caller initiates the request for interpreter services. If a caller obviously does not speak English or French, then the receptionist or registered nurse will ask if interpretation in another language is needed. Stipulation of an active offer in Aboriginal languages could be a point for negotiation when the Department establishes an extension to the Clinidata contract that expires March 31, 2007.

## Telehealth

Currently in NWT Telehealth, if there is an interpreter needed, the clinical service coordinates with facility-based interpretation services. The interpreter can be at either site (provider or receiver) or even at a third site. This allows Telehealth great clinical flexibility. As an example, French-speaking patients could have direct services with a French doctor from France or Quebec. Telehealth's ability to provide services on an "anytime, anywhere, anyplace" basis is of true value.

Time changes can assist in allowing cost-effective services. One such project reviewed after-hour Teleradiology services for Alberta. A Diagnostic Imaging image could be read at 2 A.M., GMT, by a radiologist in Australia during the Australian daytime at a lower rate. Utilizing Telehealth in this manner is common in Latin America, where places like Venezuela are receiving clinical services from Cuba.

Telehealth is able to provide facility-based interpretation services during client care sessions. Actual interpretation services can be provided through a variety of methods such as interpretation services from the provider site, client site, or a third-party site. Additionally, interpretation services can "call in" to a client care session utilizing a normal telephone, greatly adding to the cost effectiveness and flexibility of the

Telehealth session. Interpretation through Telehealth could be strengthened in the future utilizing the Tele-care's 24-hour interpretation services, or by the client receiving care directly from a provider that is fluent in the official language of choice. Direct client care in the patient's chosen language allows Telehealth to provide high-quality healthcare directly in the client's community.

### Training and Medical Terminology Development

The Department, in collaboration with Aurora College, developed a Community Health Worker Program that includes Course 263-12 Medical Interpretation. The course was developed by Betty Harnum and is delivered for the South Slavey language. To date, four students have completed the Medical Interpretation Course. This has the potential to significantly impact health services in the Dehcho region.

### Terminology Development for Resource Development

The Department is sponsoring the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact and Review Board (MVEIRB) to host a terminology development workshop. The Interpreter/Translator Workshop's goal is to train translators and to develop standard Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) terminology for the 5 main Aboriginal languages in the Mackenzie Valley, NWT (Chipewyan, Dogrib, Gwich'in, North Slavey and South Slavey). In the workshops, interpreter/translators come together to discuss standard environmental impact assessment terminology. MVEIRB usually works with 20-25 participants during the workshop. This year MVEIRB hopes to include elders from each language group for the verification of terminology by holding the workshops in the communities.

## **Requirements for Improved Delivery of Language Services**

### 1. Language Standardization

The quality of language services is largely measured through accurate spelling, grammar, and terminology. In the early 1990s, the GNWT completed projects to standardize the writing systems for the Dene and Inuktitut languages. Further work in this important area is required.

### 2. Terminology Development – Court Services

The Department of Justice has conducted a feasibility study for developing legal terminology in Aboriginal Languages at the request of the Official Languages Board during its March 2005 meeting. Research uncovered only one similar project. It was done in Australia for the Murrinh-patha language. The project required thirteen people, including a linguist and two lawyers (one fluent in Murrinh-patha), and a period of four years to complete. Intangible legal concepts are much more difficult to handle than medical terminology and there are no lawyers fluent in any of the official Aboriginal languages of the NWT. There is one linguist working in most of the official Aboriginal



languages, but if they were to devote their time to developing legal terminology, their expertise would not be available to language communities for their important work. Therefore, the Department prefers to forego terminology development and to write all public information materials in plain language to aid translation.

#### Terminology Development – Medical Services

Expanding the availability of South Slavey Medical Interpretation Course (part of Aurora College's Community Wellness Worker Program) to other languages and other health employees would require an increase in funds.

### 3. Occupational Standards for Interpreter/Translators

In general, the success of occupational certification depends upon the availability of qualified trainers, employers prepared to pay for training of candidates for occupational certification, and access to equipped regional technical training centers. Targeted marketing and promotional initiatives are also required both to potential employers and to candidates.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is currently working with language experts and interpreter/translators from the Official Aboriginal Language Communities to establish occupational standards and a certification process for Interpreter/Translators. A meeting took place September 26-27, 2006 at the Dene Cultural Institute and another meeting is scheduled for December 2006. The intent is to have the occupational standards and certification process approved by the Apprenticeship Trade and Occupations Certification Board by March 31, 2007.

If the occupational standards and certification process is approved, Interpreter/Translator will be added to the Occupation Designation Order.

Updated language standards and testing materials to measure a person's ability according to the occupational standards have been completed for the Chipewyan language. These will be available to the other language communities to use as a model when developing their own language standards and testing materials once the standards have completed the testing stage. Testing materials will allow individuals to demonstrate that their skills and abilities meet the standards so that they can become certified.

### 4. Education, Training and Professional Development for Interpreter/Translators

From 1987 to 1998, Aurora College delivered a two-year Interpreter/Translator Diploma Program at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith. Enrolment began to decline in the 1996-97 academic year and, in 1997-98, the program was discontinued. As a result of criticism by the language communities, however, Aurora College conducted a study in 2000. *A Review of the Potential for Renewal of Interpreter/Translator Programming at*

*Aurora College* was based on 26 responses out of 75 students and 25 responses out of 225 employers. The major recommendations included:

- *Delivery* - Findings could not substantiate full-time renewal of program;
- *Delivery* – Recommendation, in the short term, to deliver specialized Legal and Medical modules;
- *Curriculum* – In the short-term, Legal and Medical Modules should be revised to meet Occupational Standards, as and when required; and
- *Curriculum* – If the Interpreter/Translator program is reestablished, the curriculum of all courses should be revised to meet occupational standards.

As a result of a program review in 2000 and low enrollments, Aurora College ceased to offer the two-year Interpreter-Translator Program. Additional surveys conducted in 2001 and 2002 found insufficient interest to proceed with the delivery of specialized legal and medical modules. Nonetheless, some activity has occurred since then.

Throughout 2004 and early 2005, the Dene Cultural Institute (DCI) and Aurora College discussed the potential for DCI to deliver Interpreter/Translator Training. The College agreed to lend equipment and resources and to be as supportive as possible with respect to classroom and accommodation requests. The College also noted that it is more appropriate to link training with occupational standards rather than with Aurora College accreditation.

The Tłıchq Community Services Agency has also shown an interest to work with Aurora College to provide training for Tłıchq interpreters and translators. It has identified the Tłıchq language as the official language of its board and has adopted the following goals in its Strategic Plan for the Tłıchq Language:

- Provide interpretation and translation services for agencies and organizations in the community;
- Support the ongoing training of interpreter-translators; and
- Develop a plan for the creation and implementation of a community-based Interpreter/Translator Training Program.

### **Role and Capacity of Language Communities to Support Translation, Interpretation, and Direct and Facilitation Services**

The future delivery of language services is dependant on the participation of Aboriginal Language Communities who own the language, who have access to the most important resources, that is, elders, and who have developed plans according to their priorities and assessments of their own language. The role and capacity, more importantly, the desire, to do so can only be determined by the Aboriginal Language Communities themselves. The demand for language services is also an important factor to consider. If an active offer has been adequately provided, the combination of language utilization data and statistics on language ability seem to signify a higher demand for language

services in Tłıchǵ, South Slavey, North Slavey, and Innuinaqtun but a low or no demand for Cree, Gwich'in or Inuvialuktun. The Aboriginal language communities that have demonstrated a high demand for court and health services have also shown initiative in developing interpretation and translation services.

The Yamózhá Kúé Society (Dene Cultural Institute) successfully negotiated with Aurora College to have its Interpreter/Translator program materials transferred to it. Since that time, Yamózhá Kúé has developed *Dene as a Second Language Curriculum Outline – Level One: Establishing a Foundation – Dene Zhatie / Yati Version*.

Concurrently, the Akaitcho Territory Government finalized language standards, including a dictionary, for Chipewyan, developed testing materials, and designated two people as language experts. It also developed occupational standards for interpretation and translating.

The Tłıchǵ Community Services Agency has also shown an interest in Interpreter/Translator services. It has recently approached Aurora College to provide training for Tłıchǵ interpreters and translators. It has identified the Tłıchǵ language as the official language of its board and has adopted the following goals in its Strategic Plan for the Tłıchǵ Language:

- Provide interpretation and translation services for agencies and organizations in the community;
- Support the ongoing training of interpreter-translators; and
- Develop a plan for the creation and implementation of a community-based Interpreter/Translator Training Program.

The initiatives increase the possibility of developing an updated Interpreter/Translator training program based on occupational standards.

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