



SHERYL YAKELEYA
MLA, DEHCHO

Oral Question 284-20(1): Mental Health Training

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on June 11, 2024, regarding training for mental health workers in the Dehcho region and the number residents accessing out-of-territory treatment.

In 2023-24, mental health workers in the Dehcho region have participated and completed the following training:

- Mental Health First Aid – Northern People
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Community Counseling Program Staff Training
 - National Eating Disorder Information Centre: Decolonizing Eating Disorder Care Training
 - Indigenous Language and Education Secretariat Capable Person Teaching – Decolonizing Wellness Work
 - Suicide Risk Screening and Assessment SOP Training
 - Community Counselling Conference

The Department receives referrals for out of territory care for mental health services which require prior approval. These referrals may be for services related to an eating disorder, or for virtual care offered by private firms located in other Jurisdictions. Most referrals are for patients who have exhausted local community and territorial resources for PTSD or Concurrent Disorders. Concurrent Disorders refer to the co-occurrence of a treatment-resistant substance abuse disorder and a serious mental health disorder in the same patient. These patients require very intensive and lengthy care, such as what is available in a 9-week residential treatment program.

Prior Approval requests are completed by a psychiatrist or Primary Care Practitioner, in close collaboration with a Community Health Worker. Requests are made to the Director, Health Services Administration. The Director engages a contracted Medical Advisor in the review of the request, and makes a recommendation based on whether the requested care is medically necessary and NWT resources have been fully exhausted.

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Over the past three fiscal years (2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24), 83 clients have received approval via the Prior Approval process for out-of-territory addictions or mental wellness treatment; the average being 27.6 clients per year.

Prior approval is required when residents are being referred to private facilities. Some residents may also be referred to public facilities for mental health services. These referrals are not included in the 83 referenced above.

Thank you.



Les Semmler
Minister, Health and Social Services

- c. Principal Secretary
Deputy Secretary, Premier's Office
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Director, Legislative Affairs and House Planning