

## ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

### QUESTION 409-18(2): YELLOWKNIFE DOWNTOWN ROAD MAP AND ACTION PLAN

October 27, 2016

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I know the Minister was at the launch of the Downtown Road Map report last week and that he's been a supporter of its development. It's my understanding that the investment in services for intoxicated people falls to his department. Could the Minister confirm that the 11 priorities in the report are his priorities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a government, we are committed to addressing the issues of homelessness and recognizing that homelessness is a very complex situation caused by many factors. Health and Social Services is committed to working on the items in the action plan that have been identified as a Health and Social Services responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, some of the priorities in the action plan which are Health and Social Services priorities include the development of a sobering centre. Could the Minister tell us how and when priorities such as those, that come under his department, will be funded? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I'm already on the record, indicating that I've already directed the department to begin the work on the development of a sobering centre. In fact, we're out currently looking for a location for a sobering centre here, in Yellowknife. As the Minister responsible for Homelessness pointed out, initially, we're intending to fund that from within. We need to get it in place, figure out what the costs are going to be, and move forward accordingly.

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether he is looking at contracting a non-profit to deliver the services of the sobering centre or whether that will be done by departmental staff? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, in the design, we're looking at both options, and we haven't yet come to a conclusion, but we are exploring, basically, all the options to move this initiative forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the most courageous and positive proposals in the road map is the creation of a managed alcohol program. Of course, implementation of this proposal will require healthcare professionals who are very knowledgeable about harm reduction. Is the Minister prepared to do the pilot project that the road map suggests? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions came up, very similar questions came up, a week or two ago. At that time, I indicated the Department of Health and Social Services is absolutely open to doing a pilot in this area, harm reduction, managed alcohol, but the first thing we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is get the sobering centre up and

running. It will be our priority once the sobering centre is up and running. We'll be in a better position to design a managed alcohol program. In my mind and I think the mind of others, the two of these come together quite nicely, and this would be the appropriate way to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.