

## REGULAR MLAS VOTE TO EXTEND FUNDING FOR A NEW DAY PROGRAM

**CJCD November 4, 2016**

**The territory's MLAs strongly believe funding should continue for a pilot program that offers counselling to men who use violence against loved ones.**

All 11 regular members voted in favour of extending funding for A New Day in the legislature while cabinet abstained from the vote Wednesday afternoon.

Funding for the pilot project is provided by the territory's Department of Justice but is set to expire on Dec. 31.

A New Day provides culturally appropriate, community-based counselling to men who have used abuse in their relationships. Many users of the program are self-referred.

Deh Cho MLA Michael Nadli put forward the motion Wednesday.

Nadli, who spent eight days in jail last year after pleading guilty to assault causing bodily harm, credited the program for helping him after he brought pain to his own family.

"A New Day Program has helped me," he told MLAs Wednesday. "I made a wrong choice and sought help to understand myself and how abuse affects our families and our communities.

"Today I'm doing well with my children and family and it's because of the program.

"I'm living proof that the A New Day Program can help us come to terms with our past and move beyond the use of violence as a way of coping with the things we all struggle with.

"There is far too little support for our residents who accept that they need assistance. Let's not eliminate one of the few programs that is available and working."

Family violence rates in the Northwest Territories are significantly higher than rates in other parts of the country.

MLAs are concerned that without an alternative program already in place, stopping A New Day would create an unnecessary gap in service.

"It is important that we take immediate steps to preserve this program," said Yellowknife North MLA Cory Vanthuyne.

"Impacts of violence are felt throughout the family and community and don't just go away. Indeed these impacts can be multi-generational if they're not addressed.

"Family violence is well known to be cyclical, and only through active, directed intervention will the cycle be broken."

MLAs say the healing program has helped more than 300 people since its launch over two years ago.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green says anecdotal evidence 'overwhelmingly' suggests A New Day has been effective.

She also said it was 'key' to have all 11 regular members throw their support behind the program Wednesday.

“I felt that this was really a watershed moment for this assembly,” she told Moose FM. “It’s not only an intervention, it’s a solution.

“To have all of these leaders from communities around the NWT say that men’s healing is important, I feel is a very significant accomplishment.

“This program starts with asking men to take responsibility for their violent actions. They begin a healing journey that addresses their unresolved trauma.

“Women have the right to be safe from violence, and that means intervention like family violence shelters, but it also means systemic addresses such as the New Day program.”

Louis Sebert, the territory’s justice minister, says he’ll wait for an evaluation of the program to be completed before deciding how to move forward.

That evaluation is expected to be finalized in the coming days. It will then be shared with MLAs and discussed further during committee meetings in early December.