

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTION 648-18(2): CRITICAL INCIDENT INVESTIGATION  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**February 28, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Yesterday, the Minister released a set of recommendations aimed at a critical incident that took place last year in which the family alleged there had been a cultural bias toward the treatment. So my first question is: to what extent are the recommendations unique to Aklavik and to what extent will the rest of them be applied to the NWT? Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the critical incident investigation, 16 recommendations were provided to me. Of those recommendations, two of them are specific to Aklavik; the remainder are more systemic or system-based. The two recommendations that do reference Aklavik specifically in my mind also are for the whole territory, not just for Aklavik, but clearly we have some work to do in the Northwest Territories to improve care for all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that response. How soon will the community's specific recommendations be implemented?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** There are two recommendations that were specific to the community, and, as I said, I feel that those recommendations, although they reference the community, are still a territorial recommendation. The first one, recommendation number 3, was to review first responder training in Aklavik. Mr. Speaker, we have provided training around the Northwest Territories. Now, we are just reviewing. The last round was delivered in Aklavik so that we could deliver it. We are looking at enhancing and ensuring that training gets out to all communities in the Northwest Territories. We are currently looking at a pilot study in Tsiigehtchic to provide this type of services on a more fulsome basis.

The second recommendation was the medical and transport and ambulance recommendation. Mr. Speaker, we are not moving forward with a territorial ambulance services. We aren't going to be putting an ambulance in Aklavik. I did make a commitment when I met with leadership in the community, as well as the residents, that we would work with the community to find some solutions that work for the community. In the interim, we are looking at the stretchers and other equipment that we have in our health centre to make sure that it is the best equipment and the most suitable equipment for the community. We are doing that work right now.

**MS. GREEN:** I wonder if the Minister can assure us that an incident like this is unlikely once these recommendations are implemented to be avoided elsewhere in the NWT,

and how soon is full implementation likely to occur?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** A critical incident investigation of this sort is intended to do just that, provide us with recommendations and thoughts on how we can improve our system for all people of the Northwest Territories. There are 16 recommendations. Some of them, I think, are easier than others, and we are moving on all of the recommendations with the exception of two. Those two recommendations that we are not doing, as outlined, we are doing portions of. Specifically, like I say, we are not going to move forward with the territorial ambulance service. The other recommendation we are not moving forward is the creation of a stroke centre here in Yellowknife. There is work we are doing on those, just not as outlined in the recommendations. Mr. Speaker, these are important recommendations. Some of them, I think, are foundational. We have made commitments to move on all of them, but I don't have timelines.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my recollection that this case came to public notice because it was reported by the media. My question is whether the method of taking and responding to complaints of this kind has been improved so that there is a more direct mechanism for the department to respond to complaints. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, both prior to going to a single authority and after going to a single authority, we have implemented and put in place quality assurance mechanisms within the Health and Social Services system. This is an office of individuals that can be engaged by residents of the Northwest Territories who have concerns of the healthcare or the social services provided. What has become clear, both with my meeting with the family on Friday and my meeting with leadership in the community, is that, although these positions exist, people don't know that they exist. People do not know that this mechanism is available to them. I made a commitment to the leadership, to the family, and I am making a commitment here to the Members to do more to get that information out to the public.

Early in the life of this Assembly I provided all of that information to the MLAs. The problem is we have to go beyond notifying the MLAs of this information. We have to get it into the health centres. We have to get the nurses and doctors and other healthcare providers talking about the quality assurance mechanism. We need to encourage people to use it, because it is input from our residents who are having difficulty or concerns that will actually help us improve this system. I have made a commitment to finding better ways, more effective ways to get this information out to all residents of the Northwest Territories.