

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

“A NEW DAY” MEN’S HEALING PROGRAM

May 25, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mandate for this Assembly calls for action on the crisis of family violence and creating opportunities for healthy lifestyles. The program that provides healing for men who use violence in intimate relationships ticks both of these boxes. A comprehensive evaluation of the program revealed it is working, yet the Department of Justice has decided to dismantle A New Day. The current contractor didn't bid on the RFP for the program and nor did any non-profit service provider that might have both the skills and interest. That's not a surprise.

During a briefing in January, the Minister of Justice and his staff assured the Standing Committee on Social Development that the non-profit community had been consulted about the changes and they were receptive to them, setting the scene for continuity. I was sceptical they would support the transformation of a program they helped design that had been turned into a course. That turns out to be true. In an open letter, the coalition says the revamped offering is both incompatible with its previous success and may not generate the same level of community support.

Mr. Speaker, the evaluation of A New Day program revealed it was operating as intended using the prescribed curriculum. That is despite significant challenges, such as the collapse of the agency that was initially contracted to provide the pilot project. The program is not broken. The staff who nurtured the program are qualified and experienced. They have partnerships that enable them to make referrals throughout the NWT. Being part of the Coalition Against Family Violence has been useful, but most important, and this is most important, the dozen men formally enrolled in the program completed it, and others who completed more than half of the program reported that they had better skills and tools to control their anger.

But apparently all of this counts for nothing. The department is looking for an organization to provide this pared-down version. The flexibility of the previous program, the ability to provide both individual and group therapy, the skill of the current service providers is set to be lost for good on June 30th when the current contract ends. Mr. Speaker, it's time for the department to make good its promise to work with the coalition to design a program that incorporates the best features of A New Day. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.