

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 2-18(3): FUNDING FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE SHELTERS

October 17, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I said in my statement, it is time to provide secure funding tied to standards of service for the five family violence shelters that now exist in the NWT. Work has been under way for years on these standards, so my question is: when will the draft standards be finalized, and what is the delay? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have talk to the department to get the specifics on that detail. I am not exactly sure when those will be ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for one of the shortest ever answers from the Minister. My second question is: what progress has the Minister made on developing a funding formula for family violence shelters, and when is this work scheduled to be complete?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Department of Health staff met with different individuals from the family shelters around the Northwest Territories on September 16th to start developing a work plan on how to work together to develop a funding formula. I do not know the exact timelines of that. They are working amongst themselves, something that will work on both sides. I will get some additional information to share with the Member.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that answer. As the Minister is aware, there are no family violence shelters in the Deh Cho and Sahtu regions. What plans does the Minister have to address this gap in service for women who are fleeing violence in those areas?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do invest about \$3.8 million annually towards family violence prevention and inter-prevention services in the Northwest Territories; \$2.9 million of that goes to the different territorial family violence shelters. Where there aren't family violence shelters in communities or regions, we do have some dollars allocated that we can use to bring those families or those individuals to the regional centres where the family violence shelters do exist. On top of that, we are also contributing about \$477,000 to a number of different campaigns to bring awareness and combat family violence in the Northwest Territories. Things like What Will It Take? We have non-shelter regional protocols and response teams. We have programming for children who witnessed violence. We do have the shelter network that's getting some additional funding as well as Family Violence Awareness Week. There are a number of things we are doing trying to support those individuals who are suffering from domestic violence.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the run-down on the family violence, but it doesn't tell me when there will be shelters in the Dehcho and the Sahtu. The other five shelters are often full and having these additional resources closer to home is important to the residents of that region, especially to women in that region. Will the Minister be looking at new investments such as in these shelters in the next budget? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, during the capital budgeting process, the Minister of Finance did indicate that we would be working together to see if there are any opportunities to provide some funding in this area, especially if the federal government was going to come to the table in support of family violence shelters. We are going to work together to see what opportunities exist and, as we have more information, we are happy to share that with Members.