

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**QUESTION 360-18(3):
YELLOWKNIFE ADULT DAY PROGRAMMING**

October 11, 2018

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services about the day program for seniors in Yellowknife.

To recap briefly, AVENS ran the program until it closed about a year ago, and then the department advertised for a new service provider in the winter, but had no success finding one. Then the department advertised again over the summer. My question is: what response did the Minister get to the second call for interest in running the program? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an incredibly important program, and following up on the Member's recommendations in one of our previous sittings, we did go out for another call on that RFP and we reached out to potential proponents to get some additional input on what wasn't right in the first RFP. Unfortunately, we had the same exact result. There were no applications or no submissions submitted on that RFP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister. I'm wondering what the Minister's understanding is of why the non-profit agencies aren't bidding on this opportunity.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There was a variety of concerns raised by potential proponents. One was there was space, and having some dedicated space for the type of program that we were hoping to deliver. There were concerns about being able to provide, you know, the care for higher-need seniors in this program. There were some budgetary concerns, as well as some other minor administrative-type concerns, but there were a number of concerns raised by potential proponents.

MS. GREEN: In some communities in the Deh Cho, also in the Beaufort Delta and Behchoko, an adult day program is delivered at least three times a week. So why is it possible to make those services available in those communities, but not in Yellowknife?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There is a variety of different day programs that are provided. There are those day programs that are provided by different organizations to provide socialization and those types of things. There are also day programs that actually provide some sort of respite to family or other caregivers, where family members can come out of the home.

We have provided a number of them. We can do it in Yellowknife. I don't think there's any reason why we can't. We had pursued a model where we were seeking somebody to provide some of that higher-acuity respite day program-type services. We have been unsuccessful.

Mr. Speaker, I did meet with the Yellowknife MLAs on September 13 to explore options

that are available to us, based on what we learned from these experiences. Based on that meeting, the department is actually going to move forward, and we are convening a meeting of other community stakeholders to explore other creative solutions for the delivery of a day program here in Yellowknife.

We believe that there is an appetite. We just have to find the model here in Yellowknife that works for those residents who need those services. I applaud and thank the Members for meeting with me and sharing their insight at providing some direction on how to move forward.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize the Minister is attempting to find a solution to this impasse. The fact is, this is an urgent problem. We have both frail seniors and seniors who have dementia who need these services. Families need the respite of having their people go to these programs during the day.

I would like to hear a sense of urgency from the Minister, an indication of the time that it might take to get this program up and running. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I share the Member's concerns, absolutely. I mean, we have gone out for RFP on this twice. We had hoped that we would find a proponent. The model that was suggested doesn't work. I met with the MLAs. We have come up with some proposals to move forward. We are taking action. A meeting is booked for October 18th between the department and other stakeholders to actually start breaking down some creative solutions to address this problem.

I see it as a priority. The department knows it as a priority and we are trying to get something on the ground as quickly as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.