



A Fall 2018 semester celebration was held by the Dechinta Centre for Research & Learning and University of British Columbia (UBC) recently at Northern United Place.

At left, Myia Antone, a Squamish student working on her undergrad in geography with a focus on environment and sustainability, addresses the graduates.

They included: Andrea Tetliichi, Ryan Tetliichi, Jill Gilday, Jasmine Vogt, Kurtis Kamiksana, Coya MacLean, Megan Samms, Kyla Le Sage, Savannah Lantz, Thumlee Folio, Myia Antone, Melissa Webb, Margaret Lacorne Chicot, Cheryl Mandeville, and Dominik Mandeville.

Simon Whitehouse/NNSL photo

GNWT to cover cost abortion pill

Northern News Services

The Mifegymiso pill can terminate pregnancies up to nine weeks and now the GNWT will pay for prescriptions if a patient is not covered by their own insurance or health benefits. Access outside regional centres is still limited due to insufficient diagnostic capabilities.

Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green asked Health and Social Services Minister Glen Abernethy to report progress on the department's assessment of whether it can extend full coverage of the Mifegymiso pill in the legislative assembly Nov. 1.

Abernethy gave his department a directive to bring in interim measures to cover the cost of the medication, which uses mifepristone and misoprostol to terminate a pregnancy, he told Green.

The cost of the series of pills is between \$300 and \$450, depending on the provider, making it cost-prohibitive for many women, states Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights on its website.

A single prescription costs roughly a quarter of what the average Yellowknifer pays monthly for a one-bedroom apartment.

The Yukon government announced it too would cover the abortion pill, only a day earlier in its legislative assembly.

Eight provinces have universal cost coverage programs that allow clients to access Mifegymiso for free by presenting a health card.

After New Brunswick instituted universal coverage, the number of surgical abortions fell and the number of terminated pregnancies rose, according to the New Brunswick Department of Health.

"Universal coverage is now universal not determined by economics," said Green in a tweet Nov. 1.

The pill is offered in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Smith and Hay River through the Northern Options for Women (NOW) program.

In August, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Ser-

vices Authority (NTHSSA) said the authority was monitoring use of the pill in the NWT "to determine whether expansion of use would be both safe and appropriate," said NTHSSA spokesperson, David Maguire.

To obtain a prescription, an ultrasound is required to ensure the fetus is under 63 days old and there are financial limitations to offering the service, including the cost of installing ultrasound equipment – between \$20,000 and \$50,000 – and staff training and hiring, stated Maguire.

Although low-income workers in places like Yellowknife and Fort Smith will have access to the pill, there is still limited access outside regional centres.

There has been progress but "not enough," said Abernethy, adding there are technical challenges, namely around the required ultrasound diagnostics that must be available before the pill can be prescribed.

Abernethy has also directed the health department to assess extending prescriptions for patients outside regional centres "in the life of this government," he said.

In November 2017, the federal government eased restrictions on prescribing Mifegymiso, extending the term limit for prescribing the pill to nine weeks of pregnancy from seven weeks, and loosening restrictions for prescribing practices, allowing pharmacists or a prescribing health professional to dispense the pills directly to patients.

GNWT moves closer to 911 service

The legislative assembly moved Bill 31, which would establish 911 service in the territory, closer to becoming law.

The bill would direct the minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to establish 911 and a service for receiving and transferring emergency calls in the NWT.

The bill would mandate the GNWT, telecommunications carriers, local authorities and emergency service providers to participate in the new service.

NEWS FROM legislative assembly

by Avery Zingel

email: editorial@nnsi.com



Local telecommunications companies would be required to collect a cost-recovery fee and remit the fee to the GNWT.

The bill will now be referred a standing committee, before it can be given third reading and final assent in the next sitting of the assembly.

GNWT establishes ombud to oversee administration

The legislative assembly unanimously voted Nov. 1 to create an ombud (a term adopted by the assembly) to investigate complaints about fairness and the administration of government practices.

The NWT now leaves Nunavut and P.E.I. behind as the only two remaining Canadian jurisdictions that do not have an ombudsperson.

The public now has an arms-length officer who will act on behalf of the public and investigate complaints and concerns about administrative fairness.

They are tasked with promoting fair, reasonable and equitable government administration for a five year term, which can be extended by reappointment.

Members of the legislative assembly and the public service are ineligible for the position, but can refer matters to the ombud.

The ombudsperson has the duty to investigate any decision, recommendation, act or omission of government administrators.

They can attempt to resolve a complaint through negotiation and mediation. The ombud does not, however, have jurisdiction to investigate decisions, acts, orders or omissions from the legislative assembly, a standing committee or cabinet.

The ombud can recommend that a matter be referred to another authority for further consideration.


They can also recommend that an act, omission or delay be rectified, that a decision or recommendation be cancelled or changed, or for administration to give reasons for a decision or omission.

It can also recommend that practices, procedures or an aspect of law be reconsidered.

If the resulting action from a recommendation is not "adequate or appropriate," the ombud can notify the premier and subsequently the legislative assembly in a report.

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Honourable Bob McLeod
MLA Yellowknife South

Constituency Office: 867-445-9457
Email: bob_mcleod@gov.nt.ca • www.mla-yellowknifesouth.ca

The Yellowknife Shooting Club will be holding its

Annual GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, November 13, 2018
7:30 pm

at the Shooting Performance Centre located in the bowling alley building (side entrance).

Section report will be followed by election of officers.
Please plan to attend.

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