

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**QUESTION 593-18(3):
FORT SIMPSON HEALTH RECORDS SECURITY BREACH**

February 21, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. They concern the discovery of the health records in the Fort Simpson dump, a discovery that caught the attention of my constituents, as well. I am aware that there is work going on behind the scenes to investigate how they got there, but let's turn to the people whose information has been compromised. Has the department been able to contact everyone whose file was found there? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the breach was incredibly troubling. We take it very seriously. We have been working very closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who actually has possession of those files that were found. We have attempted to reach out to all of the clients, but the records are quite old and some of the contact information on those records is not current, so we are trying to track down some individuals. As of February 21st, 69 individuals have been notified by the authority, by mail. As I said, the documents, some of them, are very old, so we have not been able to get contact information from everybody. We will keep reaching out until we have reached everybody.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the files are old, but I am interested in knowing what efforts specifically the department is making to reach out to the other half of that group whose records were found.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Some of the individuals no longer reside in the Northwest Territories. Some have passed away. We are trying to reach out to family where appropriate. We are also reviewing our own records to see if we could find current locations, current addresses, for those individuals. We will take all mechanisms, all means, to try to find current location, current contact information. We are still at it. We have not stopped. We will keep going until we have reached everybody.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the detail the Minister was able to provide. I understand that the department appointed two people to investigate, and the investigate is ongoing. Are there any early results that the department is going to act on immediately?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are always looking for opportunities to strengthen our response to these types of breaches, to make sure that they do not happen again. This one is very complex. There is lots of information out there, lots of conflicting information, and I think it's too early to presume we know what the findings are going to be. We are working closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The Information and Privacy Commissioner, will likely be making a report on this, as well, and I look forward to discussing those findings with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, with committee, to make sure that we find ways to ensure this does not happen again.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The analogy here is that sometimes the transportation safety board will issue an early report on an accident because the findings are of such importance that they cannot wait for the year that it takes to do a full review. My final question is: when will the public learn why this data breach happened and how another can be avoided?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are certainly not waiting a year. We are anticipating we will get a report back by the end of March, barring any unforeseen circumstances or other challenges. We will need to get that report, review it, have discussions with committee and other stakeholders, and then we will be releasing what we can. Some of the information we may not be able to release as a result of privacy concerns, but, where possible, we need to be able to discuss what happened, how it happened, and what we are planning to do to make sure it does not happen again. We want to do that as soon as possible, but we have got to get the report first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.