

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 671-18(3): PALLIATIVE CARE ACTION PLAN

March 11, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. First, could the Minister tell us the status of the mandate commitment on developing and implementing an action plan for expanded palliative care services? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That item is 4.2.1. In an effort to limit the number of action plans that we are developing, we have actually incorporated the palliative care work within the existing Continuing Care Services Action Plan. That is actually under objective 4 within that action plan. Palliative care is a component of home and community care, and this review is currently under way and will help to inform these services when they are rolled out and delivered.

Also, Mr. Speaker, palliative care is also a component of the Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy 2015-2025, and we have hired a territorial palliative care specialist to work in collaboration with the authority, with the Tlicho Community Services Agency, and Hay River to finalize palliative care policies, care pathways, and protocols for the implementation across the entire health system in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I just have to make sure I understand what was said there. This plan is becoming part of another plan, and the other plan is coming to us I'm not sure when?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Continuing Care Services Action Plan has already been released. It's a public document, and objective number 4 is the area where we're focusing on some work in the palliative care. We're doing the homecare review, those types of things that are going to help inform how we move forward in this area. Also, Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy 2015-2025 has also already been released, and we've already hired a territorial palliative care specialist who is doing a significant amount of work to help streamline palliative services here throughout the Northwest Territories.

MS. GREEN: I'm wondering what advice the Minister took from families and people who have requested and used palliative care in the development of the provisions in the continuing care plan?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In the development of the Continuing Care Action Plan, we reached out to stakeholders across the Northwest Territories and got feedback from a number of them. With respect to Charting Our Course: Northwest Territories Cancer Strategy, the territorial palliative care specialist is working with the different authorities and communities in order to streamline services and programs. Some of the things that we're looking at are helping individuals in smaller communities who have family

members who might be palliative, to support them in their own homes and communities. This may include support from community health nurses. It may include providing tools or resources, equipment that is necessary to help maintain that person in their home. We are working, where it is safe to do so, to actually have individuals remain in their communities during their final days, but also when they need support, as well.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I want to ask a question with reference to the Cultural Safety Action Plan that was recently released. Can the Minister tell us how the development of the palliative portion of the Continuing Care Services Plan included traditional knowledge and the healing approaches of all the cultures of the NWT? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The activities within the Continuing Care Services Action Plan are focused on ensuring culturally safe palliative care for clients and their families throughout the Northwest Territories, and staff are being supported to have cultural safety awareness training. This includes, obviously, updating and adapting practises and resources and tools to ensure that they are contextually as well as culturally appropriate. I know the Member knows, we recently released a Cultural Safety Action Plan which would also be applied in all the work that we do in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.