

## ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 787-18(3):  
NEW SERVICES IN DOWNTOWN YELLOWKNIFE

August 12, 2019

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement today, I spoke about the ways in which life is better downtown because of the new services offered to the population of intoxicated or homeless people who are there. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, more can be done, starting with addressing the concerns of the neighbours of the sobering centre and the day shelter. During the last session, the Minister said he hoped he would have a good neighbour agreement in place by the end of June. I would appreciate an update. Mahsi.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, the good neighbour agreement was not done by the end of June. We are still committed to getting this work done. We have hired a contractor to help us facilitate the process. It does take all the stakeholders. It does take the GNWT, the RCMP, the contract provider, as well as the neighbours to make this a reality. We did share a draft good neighbour agreement with the partners on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and we are hoping to reconvene here in August to work out the details and finalize that good neighbour agreement. We can propose. We can work with our neighbours. We can't make people sign this agreement, but we think there is value in having this agreement. We are committed to trying to get it done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate that update. Is part of the problem also that there are commitments that the neighbours want that the government can't sign off on?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** It is a negotiation. Some of the neighbours have put forward some principles or concepts that, obviously, some of the partners are having some difficulty with. We are committed to working with our partners to make this happen. Yes. There has been a negotiation. There is room to get this agreement in place.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that. I understand that the Minister recently initiated a foot patrol program around the centre. Can the Minister tell us about that program and share any early results of it?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Since we put the sobering centre day shelter in its current location, we have had a lot of concerns raised. We have been working to improve those services to make sure that we have appropriate outreach. It is continuing to evolve. One of the things that we have done recently with our current provider is to put in place a day and sobering centre safety patrol.

These are individuals who walk around a set path around the neighbourhood. They wear identifiable clothing. They are trained in dealing with individuals in crisis, providing

them with the information where they can get different supports, but also just being a person out on the street, talking to people, trying to encourage them to control behaviour and types of things that some people might have some difficulty with. It went live on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. I haven't received an update on progress or how it is working. I will follow up with the department to get the Member with a current update on how that program is going.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question concerns a constant complaint I hear about the open consumption of liquor on the streets downtown. Can the Minister say whether he has a plan of his own or with his cabinet colleagues to address this issue? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The responsibility in this area is not one department alone. It is not one body alone. It is a combination of many, many individuals and many organizations. I did raise this exact issue with the Minister of Justice earlier this summer when the Member raised it with me. I did receive an update from the RCMP that they have performed over 258 proactive patrols in the downtown core on foot, 139 proactive patrols in the day shelter area. This is between January and June of 2018. It has resulted in over 280 alcohol pours and/or seizures. We have this information by month, showing the amount of patrols and how it has increased significantly over the years. I will work with the Minister of Justice to see if I can get that data and share with the Members of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.