

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

FAMILY VIOLENCE

August 20, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. In our mandate, we describe community and family violence as a crisis and determined to take action. Four years on, it's still a crisis, and our efforts have flagged. According to Statistics Canada, the national incidents for intimate partner violence is 313 people per 100,000 population. In the Northwest Territories, the rate is an astonishing 2,906 people per 100,000 population, or about nine times as high. These are 2017 numbers, but they have been at this level for 10 years.

When the Coalition Against Family Violence was still active, it had three priorities. The first was to prevent and address the normalization of family violence. The ask here was to make intimate partner violence as unacceptable as drinking and driving, or smoking, or deciding not to wear a seat belt. My pleas to repeat the Family Violence Survey conducted in 2007 fell on deaf ears. A new survey would have produced valuable and updated information about prevailing attitudes to family violence so that messaging could be targeted to specific groups of residents.

The second priority of the Coalition Against Family Violence was to ensure an adequate emergency response. I am pleased to say that there has been some movement in this area. Funding for family violence shelters has increased, and operating standards are going to be rolled out this fall. I advocated for a safe house pilot project in one of the 11 communities without police, but to no avail. If you are a woman looking for safety in one of these communities, help may still be hours away.

The final Coalition Against Family Violence priority was healing. Women have asked for healing for their partners because they believe that the whole family will benefit. The evaluation of the A New Day men's healing program said it was effective, but that didn't stop the Department of Justice from revamping it and narrowing its scope. As a result, a fraction of people are enrolled compared to number who took part in the previous Tree of Peace program. I am disappointed with this outcome. We need more healing, not less.

The government has taken an important step by creating an interdepartmental committee on family violence. They need to start by looking at the priorities outlined by the Coalition Against Family Violence, because they are still relevant. Their challenges to create policies and programs that demonstrate that family violence is not normal, and there is something that we can do about it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.