

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 847-18(3): SENIORS' HOME CARE

August 22, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As the population of seniors grows, so does the demand for homecare so that they can age in place. Of course, the Minister is well aware of this. I know that he has contracted a review of home and community care. Can the Minister begin by reminding us of the purpose of this study? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent of this study is to determine whether or not we have adequate resources in this area, including homecare workers, home support workers, homecare nurses, and other things to help support, not just seniors and people who are looking to age in place, but all people of the Northwest Territories who receive homecare services. It's not always seniors; there are many people that can receive those services. That is the intent: to give us an indication of where we are and whether we are adequately resourced to meet the needs of our residents.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the reminder from the Minister that homecare is actually for all us. I benefited greatly from their attention during an accident that I had at the beginning of this Assembly. My question for the Minister is: what is the status of the homecare study now, and does he know when it will be made public?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We received an early draft in the middle of July, and it did raise a number of questions about some of the findings based on the data. Clearly it indicated that there were some difficulties getting some of the data. We had to confirm some of the data. We sent back some comments and some updates on the data to make sure that the contractor had accurate information in their assessments and in their provision of recommendations.

I have been told by the department earlier today that we will get that report at the end of August. We will make it available. It likely will not come to the existing MLAs in time for the election, but we will make it public, hopefully during the election period, so that everybody who is interested in coming into this building can have the data that they need to make informed decisions in the future.

MS. GREEN: I wonder what the plan is to secure the money to implement the report's recommendations. I realize that there is an election coming, but will there be any work done on an FMB submission so that there will be money for additional resources, should they be required?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is going to have to be a decision of the future Assembly and the future government. What I do know is that, through the transition document, there have been some suggestions on how we roll forward or, rather, the

future government rolls forward with their budgeting process. I anticipate that this will be an area of discussion. We are hoping to have the information necessary so that there can be an informed discussion in run-up to that budget process.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I receive a lot of calls from seniors who are concerned about homecare services. Ultimately, what I would like to leave them with is when they will see the benefit of the recommendations of this report. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It won't be in the life of this government, and I would hate to presuppose what the priorities of the next Assembly are going to be. Unfortunately, as much as I would love to give the Member an answer saying, "This will happen on X date," I just can't do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.