

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 113-19(2): SEXUAL ABUSE IN SPORTS

February 28, 2020

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs responsible for amateur sport. CBC's revelations about sexual abuse in amateur sport was really a call to action for prevention measures given the large number of children affected. One clear and obvious precaution is a requirement for a criminal record check for persons who are working directly with amateur sports players. Can the Minister tell us whether there is a requirement for a criminal records name check, whether that is for coaches, for every adult involved in these team activities? What kind of criminal record check requirement is there? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to report that all organizations that receive sport recreation and physical activity funding from the department will also be required to have the new policies and practices in place by 2021 in order to continue the eligibility for funding. The department is not undertaking the establishment of registry related to abusers for this, as this would be a criminal justice system matter. I am committed to be working with my colleague from the Department of Justice and look at this further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Lots of good information in that answer. Can the Minister tell us more about the new policy that is being developed, what areas it will cover?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and partner organizations work to support the Northwest Territories athletes, and take their responsibilities related to the protection and wellbeing of young athletes very seriously. The Red Deer Declaration approved on February 15, 2019, has committed all governments and sport organizations to make improvements to make sports safer, more inclusive, and free from abuse and harassment. The department is taking steps through the development of the Northwest Territories sports, physical activity, and recreation framework, and the associated Western Canada lottery funding policy, to work with the Northwest Territories' sports organizations to update and develop their policies and programs in these areas, to make sure these athletes are safe from harassment experiences during their sports activities. The department is in cooperation with Sports North in planning a safe sports summit in Yellowknife at the end of May. The summit will include sports organizations across the Northwest Territories.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. One thing that I've heard consistently is that implementing new policies within volunteer organizations can be challenging because they are volunteer organizations. Has the Minister given any consideration to how the new policy that is being developed will be implanted within these volunteer organizations?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: I'd like to inform the Member that, as we go forward, we will be developing these policies and including the surrounding sports organizations, including, I don't know them at the top of my head, but we will be working in conjunction with each other.