

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 231-19(2): STATUS OF PERSONAL PROTECTION

EQUIPMENT ON HAND

May 26, 2020

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I know that, recently, there was a recall on N95 masks. That led me to wonder how much PPE we do have on hand. How many days or weeks, or some other measurement, of PPE is available to us here in the NWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Infrastructure, Minister Nokleby, and I both participate at a national FPT, and we participate with the PPE, trying to find the requirement here in the Northwest Territories. You look at the situation now, we are having a number of low cases of people who have the flu symptoms, but we do need to prepare for, one, the second wave, and we need to prepare PPE for when the flu season comes. Right now, in terms of the N95 masks, we are looking at it's called a reusable PPE, so we have been reusing PPE in accordance with the federal guideline. We have four sterilization machines that have been secured to extend the life of the N95 masks and to help maintain our supply. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I am not sure how much PPE we have, but it's useful to learn that there is now a trend towards making it reusable. Can the Minister tell me where in the NWT the supplies are located? Are they all in Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River, or are they in other places, as well?

HON. DIANE THOM: The national emergency supply system sends all of their supplies here, and we have what is called a dashboard, so, at any time, we are able to see what we have. With Stanton Hospital, what we have with gowns, gloves, sterilizers, N95 masks, pique masks, visors, facials. So we have quite a list, extensive list, of all of the equipment, and we are able to show how many stock days we have by region.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. Can the Minister just clarify that some of the supplies are in the regions and some of them are here in Yellowknife?

HON. DIANE THOM: If you saw the CBC headlines this noon, there was a big announcement that PPE supplies have arrived in Canada, so we are all quite excited, which means that we will start to get more and more supplies. The idea is to continue to stockpile so that, when we get the next wave and we get the next flu season, we would be able to have enough in stock. However, at any given time right now, we are able to see where our stockpile is by the regions and by the communities. When numbers start to get low, we have a tracker so we are able to

track how many gloves someone needs, and right now they only have enough for so many days, and we are able to send them out so that in any of our health centres or our hospitals, we are able to track and give them the supplies.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for clarification. My final question is: who has access to these supplies? Is it only the medical professionals in Yellowknife and the regions, or are there other service providers who have access to the NWT stock of PPE? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: We have a variety of stockpiles. Health, we maintain and we track our own list of supplies and PPE. We also, Infrastructure, we have a stockpile of PPE, as well as MACA, and MACA is working on distributing it now to Indigenous groups and the communities. Thank you.