

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Quttiktuq)

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Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety
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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. Joe Enook, Hon. George Hickers, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk, Hon. Patterk Netser, Mr. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:31*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Joe Enook)(interpretation): Ms. Towtongie, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker: Premier (interpretation) and my colleagues, good afternoon. Nunavummiut who are watching the televised proceedings and listening to the radio broadcast, welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

We will proceed with our meeting. Before we deal with the orders of the day, I wish to read a letter that I have received from the Commissioner of Nunavut, Nellie Kusugak. It reads:

Money Message

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut the passage of the following bills during the Second Session of the Fifth Legislative Assembly:

- Bill 15, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020*;
- Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2018-2019*;
- Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2019-2020*;
- Bill 18, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2018-2019*.

Sincerely Nellie Kusugak,
Commissioner of Nunavut

Let's proceed with the orders of the day. Budget Address. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickers.

Item 2: Budget Address

Minister's Statement 138 – 5(2): Budget Address 2019-2020

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present the government's budget for the coming year, fiscal 2019 through 2020. I look forward to sharing the details with the House, but first let me say "thank you" to all of you for your support in helping to put this together.

Strategic context

Mr. Speaker, this budget enables us to work for *Turaaqtavut* and priorities we have chosen for our work in this Assembly. Together we said we will work for individual and community self-reliance and well-being. We will grow the economy and help prepare people for good jobs and good paycheques. We will strengthen Nunavut and celebrate all that makes us unique. And we will work with our partners to reach these goals.

Turaaqtavut is more than words. It captures the dreams that inspired our elders to create Nunavut. It speaks to the hopes that guided the four previous Legislative Assemblies. It sets out the ideas that will take us forward into our 20th year of self-government and well beyond.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a moment to look back at what we have accomplished since we created our territory.

Twenty years ago we were nearly 27,000 people. Today there are 38,000 Nunavummiut. We have grown our population by 40 percent.

The size of our economy has more than doubled. Nunavut's GDP, or Gross Domestic Product, has grown an average of 5 percent every year since 1999.

The number of Inuit GN employees has almost doubled, going from 943 in 2001 to 1,770 in 2018.

The number of students graduating from high school has increased from 98 in 1999 to 292 in 2017. The graduation rate was 21.1 percent in 1999. In 2017 it was 48 percent.

We have built 1,980 public housing units since 2001.

The GN has spent approximately \$2.4 billion on capital projects, including 12 schools in our communities, 6 community learning centres, 10 health centres, and the Qikiqtani General Hospital.

Mr. Speaker and members, we have provided more than \$100 million to students in post-secondary studies and skills training and skills development programs.

We have opened health facilities and established community justice committees in all communities.

The story of Nunavut is a story of growth. Everywhere you look, we're doing more. At the same time our challenges remain. Nunavummiut must deal with a housing shortage, high living costs, and a wage economy that increasingly demands new skills and technical knowledge. At the same time we want to remain true to the guidance and the values we receive from our elders.

The role of our government is to help Nunavummiut meet these challenges. We want to help parents who are working hard to get ahead. We want to help kids who are studying hard and preparing for the future. We want to help people to free themselves from the grip of addictions and substance abuse.

Nunavummiut believe in a better future for themselves and their children, and they expect their government to help and we can. Our 2019-2020 budget outlines the measures we're taking as a government to move our territory closer to the goals and vision we have for Nunavut, and into the next 20 years.

>>Applause

Economic situation

Let us take stock of our current economic situation.

According to the respected Conference Board of Canada, we can expect strong economic growth for several years. Their researchers suggest our economy will grow annually by an average 4.6 percent. By 2025, just six years down the road, the number of people with jobs in Nunavut could rise more than 25 percent.

Our strong growth forecast results from three things. First, our population is growing. More working Nunavummiut means more economic activity, contributing to our shared success. Second, more public infrastructure, like ports and airports, puts our people and our resources to work. The third reason is investment in the resource sector, like the mines that produce iron and gold. All of these combine to move us forward.

In particular the mining sector is performing very strongly. Mining activity last year grew 20 percent from the year before. The conference board predicts another 20 percent growth this year, followed by annual growth approaching 8 percent through the forecast period.

Mr. Speaker and members, this is good news. The economy has begun to diversify, which is something that we really need.

For much of the past 20 years, the main strength of our economy has been the public sector. Our government, schools, and hospitals, that's where Nunavummiut found over

half of our jobs, but we cannot rely solely on the public sector to create jobs and grow our economy. The best growth opportunities are found in the private sector like mining. As more mines export gold, iron, and other commodities, more jobs open up.

Mr. Speaker and members, today mines power one-fifth of our economy. That's good and we welcome further growth, but we need to find a way to connect that growth and related decision-making to Nunavummiut. The wealth from resources on Inuit-owned land flow rightly to Nunavut Inuit. As Crown lands are developed, we will ensure that the resulting wealth will benefit our people.

We also need to diversify our economy further, to branch out into sectors that today are small but promising, such as fisheries, arts, and tourism. Nunavummiut work hard in these areas now, but many more could work here if these sectors were larger. There is a tremendous amount of potential in these sectors to create economic opportunities and jobs in communities across the territory. Our government stands ready to help with training and development, and support for small businesses and emerging industries.

For the time being, Nunavut will continue to depend on a strong public sector and the demand for public services will continue to rise, but through investments in education and training, creating more economic opportunities, and diversifying our economy, we can achieve the goals and vision set out in *Turaaqtavut*.

>>Applause

Budget balance

Mr. Speaker and members, with this economic outlook, what can we do in the coming year to realize our goals? Let us look first at the overall budget balance, and then we'll take a detailed look at our financial plan.

For the current year ending March 31, we now project a deficit of \$35 million. That's almost exactly on the target we set in our original estimates. Every year we reserve \$30 million in contingency funding so we can handle any circumstances we did not expect when we made the budget this time last year. We will use that reserve money for rising costs in the departments of Health, Family Services, and Justice.

Looking ahead to the next fiscal year, the government projects revenues of \$2.21 billion, down about 1.7 percent from the current year. About \$194 million will come from taxpaying Nunavummiut, a number that is stable year over year. The remainder comes from the federal government and third parties.

Mr. Speaker and members, on the other side of the ledger, we expect to spend \$2.22 billion. That's about 4 percent less than our spending this year.

The net result is that we expect to run a deficit next year of \$12 million. That amount includes our usual \$30 million in contingencies. If we do not spend that \$30 million reserve, we will run a very small surplus.

Let me take a moment to put that \$12 million deficit in perspective. I would make two points.

First, the deficit for next year would represent just one-half of a percent of our total spending. Looking at it another way, for every \$100 we spend, we're short about 50 cents. To some that's not a big deal, but it does add up.

Second, these deficits are certainly important for what they say about our government's ability to meet the needs of Nunavummiut. As I mentioned earlier, the demand for public services continue to rise each year. That growth in demand, coupled with less revenue, means our needs are outpacing our ability to pay for those services. Each year we are doing more with less.

Mr. Speaker and members, we receive about \$1.9 billion a year from the federal government. We raise about \$194 million from our own population, and we don't receive resource royalties from the land.

Some people might say that we should haul out the credit card and live a better life today, but that's not wise. The government's approach has always been to use debt for long-term projects like airports, harbours, and our electrical system. We don't use debt to pay for operations and maintenance.

Because of that sensible approach, we are well within our debt ceiling of \$650 million. The government's debt peaked this year at \$435 million, with the last of our investment in the Iqaluit airport project. We expect the debt to begin a steady decline starting in the year ahead.

By not using credit to pay for our daily needs and by managing our debt carefully, the government earned a good credit rating. In fact only three provinces enjoy a rating better than ours. That is worth celebrating.

>> *Applause*

With our debt firmly under control and our spending closely aligned to our revenue, the overall situation is stable. We can approach Nunavut's 20th anniversary and our strategic priorities with confidence, but as you have heard me say, we will need to manage carefully. As we do so, there is this fundamental fact to keep in mind: our revenues are set to rise more slowly than the cost of providing public services. This compels us to take very firm action on cost control while at the same time raising new revenue through economic growth.

Let's look at those priorities and how we can invest in their achievement.

Inuusivut

I'll begin with *Inuusivut*, our way of life, and how the government will help advance Nunavummiut well-being and self-reliance. The government will invest in better health care, more student success, measures to reduce addictions, and steps to end family violence.

Health care is our single greatest investment. This budget provides the health care system with \$431 million, more money than any other department.

Our challenge is to provide Nunavummiut with high-quality care and to do that here at home. I say "challenge" because of the rate at which our costs are rising. As both Minister of Finance and Health, I must balance our fiscal constraints with the provision of quality health care services to Nunavummiut.

One of the most concerning issues in health care is the cost of flying patients out of the territory for medical treatment. Medical travel will cost more than \$90 million next year, more than one-fifth of all health care spending. Mr. Speaker and members, many Nunavummiut would rather receive health services here at home and the government agrees. That's why we're working on two service improvements.

The first, we will invest a further \$14 million in the medical travel program, including \$2.7 million to expand the program to allow more mothers and guardians to bring infants on medical travel and provide escorts to accompany pregnant woman during childbirth.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker and members, the second service improvement will see more Nunavummiut treated here in Nunavut. The government will provide the Qikiqtani General Hospital with a further \$600,000 this year. This additional support will improve service to Nunavummiut here at home and allow the hospital to plan for a full-scale paediatric unit.

>> *Applause*

Nunavut continues to struggle with the highest incidence of tuberculosis in the country. We are making strides in testing and screening TB in the territory, and we will invest \$683,000 next fiscal year to create more clinical positions in communities. We will also continue to work with the federal government and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) to accelerate our plans using federal resources. The elimination of TB will require long-term investments from all levels of government.

We know that as elders age, they want to be close to their families and communities. That's why our government is developing options for in-territory elder care so that more elders with long-term care needs can stay closer to home. We are currently in the process of completing a comprehensive long-term care plan and will be exploring partnerships to develop more elder care facilities in communities.

>>Applause

This planning work requires additional funds to complete, which will be requested during this sitting.

Many communities, families, and individuals in Nunavut struggle with the adverse impacts of substance use and related personal trauma. Our priority is to help Nunavummiut access support to heal. We will invest a further \$4.6 million next year in treating addictions and related trauma. That includes our effort to develop a recovery centre.

>>Applause

The government is working closely with the federal government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) to develop addictions and trauma treatment in the territory.

As well, we will move forward with on-the-land camps in each region. As we saw with the pilot program in Cambridge Bay, these camps help participants to replace alcohol and drugs with Inuit societal values. Hunting and fishing, building qamutiik, learning our culture and games, these help participants find their way back to family and community.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker and members, as we address addictions and trauma, we must also consider the victims of family violence. The reality is that these victims need more shelters. The ones we have now are meant for emergencies and other short-term stays, but they are filling up with people who stay for a long time. Women in particular need transitional housing like an apartment with support services so that they can heal from their trauma and find permanent homes, but we don't have any transitional housing at all.

Next year the government will invest nearly \$2 million to strengthen our emergency shelters, set up transitional housing for women, and improve emergency services for women and children.

>>Applause

In our work to improve the well-being of Nunavummiut, reduce harm, and make our communities safer, we will also increase law enforcement funding by about \$2.8 million. This funding, combined with trauma and addictions treatment, will help reduce our crime rates, which are higher than the national average.

Mr. Speaker and members, the steps that I have just described will help us to meet our goal of helping more people to build better lives. As I said earlier, the demand for these services will only rise. To meet this rising demand, we will need new sources of revenue, and to balance our support for healthcare with our other priorities.

Pivaallirutivut

Many of our social challenges find their roots in poverty. It should concern us all that 40 percent of Nunavummiut turn to the government's Income Assistance Program at least once a year. In the coming year, income assistance will rise to \$52 million, up from \$50 million today. The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) will receive an additional \$9.0 million to offset the cost of maintaining our growing supply of public and staff housing. The solution to poverty is to grow our economy and to do that in ways that respect our societal values. We need growth that benefits Nunavummiut today and well into the future.

Pivaallirutivut, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to opportunity, Nunavut has no shortage and we need to seize the opportunities.

For the coming year, the government will invest \$87 million in the Department of Economic Development and Transportation (EDT). Our goal is to create more jobs. As young Nunavummiut grow up, they will need meaningful employment. Employment is at the heart of the Government of Nunavut Economic Development Strategy, being developed by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation.

>>*Applause*

The strategy updates our long-term approach and aligns it with *Turaaqtavut*. It draws on our discussions with business leaders and most importantly communities about creating more opportunities in mining and construction. As this House knows, we reached a memorandum of understanding with Agnico Eagle Mines. Together the company and the government developed a detailed plan to improve Inuit employment, infrastructure, public safety, and environmental protection. We are pursuing similar agreements with other mining companies and I look forward to our continued progress.

I am also looking forward to our work to adapt our territory to our changing climate. As we burn carbon-based fuels like gas and diesel, sea ice shrinks, air warms up, and permafrost melts. We know burning carbon impacts our planet, but it will be a while before we have alternatives to fossil fuels. This is especially true for Nunavut, where we rely uniquely on fossil fuels for heat, electricity, and transportation far more than elsewhere in Canada.

The price of energy will rise when the federal government's new carbon-pricing rules take effect this year. With hard work, we have persuaded the federal government to leave our diesel electric generators and aviation fuel out of their plans.

>>*Applause*

But all other fuels will cost more. That includes the fuel bought by Nunavummiut and the fuel our government buys to provide heat and power to our buildings and to public housing. According to Environment Canada, the new federal carbon-pricing rules should

collect about \$15 million in our territory. Our government will recover all of that revenue and is developing options on how best to return that revenue to Nunavummiut. We aim to minimize the effect of federal carbon pricing on the cost of living and doing business in Nunavut. I look forward to sharing the details of this revenue return before the federal carbon-pricing program takes effect in July.

Mr. Speaker and members, we are also moving ahead with other climate initiatives. In the coming year, the Qulliq Energy Corporation will expand its energy reduction programs, including building retrofits and diesel generator improvements. These projects are possible in part thanks to the federal government's Low Carbon Economy Fund and the Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program Arctic Energy Fund. As well, the Department of Environment is working with key stakeholders in Nunavut to develop energy plans for all communities.

Mr. Speaker and members, in addition to our clean energy initiatives, we are pursuing opportunities to create jobs through construction, particularly in housing. In the coming year, the Nunavut Housing Corporation will begin to build approximately 100 new homes.

>> *Applause*

Funding comes from our government and the federal government through its National Housing Strategy. The national strategy will provide federal funding for housing over the next nine years. This long-term federal commitment, combined with a steady investment from our government, will reduce our housing needs and create economic growth.

Better housing for Nunavummiut can make a real difference in our way of life. Improved housing provides the foundation for better lives. As research has consistently shown, better housing reduces the cost of living, reduces substance abuse, improves health outcomes, and improves student success. For this reason, we will continue to press the federal government for increased, predictable funding for housing.

Residential construction together with infrastructure growth, mining, and government make up almost all of our economy. As we have seen, two of these sectors, mining and its related construction needs, rise and fall in step with the global economy. To balance these variations, the government will achieve greater economic stability through investments in diverse sectors such as tourism.

Mr. Speaker and members, Economic Development and Transportation has been reviewing tourist information, including hotel occupancy rates and spending by cruise ship operators and passengers. The review includes our tourism products and services. The department is aiming to issue a report and to host a tourism summit in April to build toward a new tourism strategy. In preparation, Economic Development and Transportation has developed a mentorship program to help tourism operators set service standards and prepare them for the increasing interest and demand in Nunavut. Moving

into next year, the department will develop training services to help local businesses to market their goods and services.

>>Applause

Sivummuaqpalliajjutivut

Our third *Turaaqtavut* priority is *Sivummuaqpalliajjutivut*. We will help Nunavummiut to build better and happier families and communities. This means quality education for our children and more advanced skills and training for adults who need it to move ahead.

We continue to improve our school system to provide education that aligns with Nunavut's specific needs. Our greatest challenge is to inspire young Nunavummiut to attend school full time and to succeed all the way to graduation. Our government will invest \$171 million next year in schools from kindergarten to grade 12.

>>Applause

We will promote better literacy and more consistency in quality education.

As well, we need to help adults get into college and university and to advance in their careers. In the coming year, we will invest an additional \$561,000 to promote Nunavut Arctic College, connect prospective learners with courses, and smooth the path for high school graduates entering the college.

Nunavut Arctic College will also improve distance learning and increase educational opportunities throughout Nunavut, and it will finalize a partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland. This important partnership will enable the college to expand its learning programs and build its capacity over the next decade.

Continued investments in the programs offered by the college are critical, including investments in trades and technology education. By fostering, developing, and supporting the skills and abilities of Nunavummiut, the college plays an important role in our territory's economic development and in reducing our dependence on imported labour.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker and members, we want to support Nunavummiut to succeed in their education. That's why we are also focusing on the need to provide affordable child care that enables parents to pursue training and develop their careers.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

>>Applause

Hon. George Hickes: In the coming year, the government will survey the child care situation across the territory, so that we can set priorities for further child care improvements.

Inuunivut

Mr. Speaker and members, this brings me to the fourth *Turaaqtavut* priority, to strengthen our sense of who we are, to take our place in Canada and the world, and to protect our Inuit heritage, language, and culture. This is *Inuunivut*, our identity.

(interpretation) The heart of our identity resides in our unique governance, our perspective on arctic issues and opportunities, and of course our Inuit language and culture.

>>Applause

(interpretation ends) Our government remains dedicated to strengthening the use of Inuktitut among our employees. Guided by the recently updated plan, *Uqausivut 2.0*, we are taking action to strengthen the use of Inuktitut in our territory, particularly in areas of language learning, language of work, language of services, and language revitalization. In the coming year, we will provide an additional \$1 million to the government's Translation Bureau.

>>Applause

We will update our translation policy so we can improve our government's use of the official languages. We will also set clear standards for all departments and public agencies to communicate internally and with the public in the official languages.

As well, the government will begin work next year to showcase our collection of museum pieces and artefacts in the territory. There are some 175,000 items in safe storage in the Ottawa region. Mr. Speaker and members, the Department of Culture and Heritage plans to inventory them next year and work with partners in the territory to showcase the collection.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker and members, this collection spans more than 4,000 years of our history. It will provide all Nunavummiut with an excellent opportunity to learn from our ancestors.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

>>Applause

Hon. George Hickes: Our culture includes excellence in sports, as our minister just returned from a fantastic nationwide competition. Team Nunavut will compete in the

Arctic Winter Games next year. We will send some 300 athletes and team members to the games in Whitehorse. The Department of Community and Government Services will provide the team with \$1.6 million in support.

>>Applause

Katujjiqatigiinnivut

Finally, let me speak to *Katujjiqatigiinnivut* and our plans to strengthen our human resource capacity and increase Inuit employment.

No government can meet its goals without a public service that is skilled, committed, and motivated. Our employees meet that standard, but we are still a long way from finding all the people we need. The numbers by now are familiar to all Members of this Assembly.

In broad terms, for every three jobs in our government, one job is held by an Inuk, the second job is not, and the third job is vacant. As we fill vacancies, we take seriously our obligation to provide a government that represents the people it serves. However, most government jobs require our employees to have graduated from high school. A degree from a college or university would be even better. Education and skills development are the answer and, as I have said, we're improving those services both in our schools and in our workforce training.

Mr. Speaker and members, on April 1 our government will launch the new Department of Human Resources. Its primary challenge will be to finalize a long-term Master Inuit Employment Plan and to renew the government's Human Resources Strategy, both of which aim to increase Inuit employment, build capacity, and strengthen our people management across the entire government.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker and members, the government has drafted a master Inuit employment plan to guide us through to 2023. Each department and public agency will have drafted specific targets and a detailed action plan in the short, medium and long term. Data provided by the 2018 Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis is helping us understand the historical trends and current Inuit labour force availability in our territory and at the community level. This data will assist us in finalizing our Inuit employment goals and action plans to 2023. Meeting our goals is a priority.

Mr. Speaker and members, the actual number of Inuit working for the government and our corporations reached 1,770 positions last December. That number is worth celebrating because our Inuit employment since 1999 has doubled. It's worth repeating. Twice as many Inuit work for the Government of Nunavut today compared to 20 years ago.

>>Applause

Of course we all know that this progress takes us only partway to our goal. For seven years now, even as the number of Inuit employees has risen, Inuit representation in the public service has remained at approximately 50 percent. That share in public service employment needs to rise substantially so that we can represent the people we serve.

As well, the human resources department will focus on promoting wellness and alternative dispute resolution methods to improve the government workplace. The department commits to designing a respectful workplace program rooted in Inuit societal values. We will develop the program in the coming year and put it into place as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, there you have it. You have seen how the government is taking practical, responsible, prudent steps toward our *Turaaqtavut* goals. As we said in *Turaaqtavut*, we will invest in the self-reliance and well-being of Nunavummiut. We will grow the economy, strengthen Nunavut, and celebrate all that makes us unique, and we will work with our partners to reach these goals.

These commitments require us to overcome many challenges and many of those challenges will not be easy to resolve, but we Nunavummiut have shown that we can thrive by coming together as partners and as a people. In this House we have a great team elected by Nunavummiut to move us all forward together.

Now as we prepare to celebrate 20 years of Nunavut, we look ahead to the next 20 years and beyond with anticipation, hope, motivation, and great respect to the people, traditions, and innovation that have brought us to this point.

When I was first elected in this Assembly, a reporter had asked my father, George Hickey Sr., a former speaker of the Manitoba legislature, whether he was proud of me for following in his footsteps. He replied that he would rather I leave my own footprints and that they had better be in work boots.

>>*Applause*

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I've got my work boots on today. We are ready to get to work, we are committed, and we are taking the steps forward on our path to success. Thank you for the opportunity to present our government's 2019-2020 budget today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Hickey. Let's proceed with the orders of the day. Ministers' Statements. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 4: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 229 – 5(2): Happy Birthday to Husband

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the people of Rankin Inlet North and Chesterfield Inlet.

My husband, Harry Towtongie, is a musher and has participated in international mushing. He is celebrating his birthday today. A very happy birthday, honey.

I was in Chesterfield Inlet and when I went on the radio, an elder asked me why the ministers of this government do not visit Chesterfield Inlet.

I can tell you that Chesterfield Inlet has had a church for 100 years that is still being utilized today. We also have Naja Isabelle, which is a place for mentally challenged children. It is still being used today.

Ministers of Education, Health, and Mr. Premier, you are welcome to come and visit Chesterfield Inlet anytime. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Member's Statement 230 – 5(2): Domestic and Family Violence in Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to bring up another pressing social issue: the high rates of domestic and family violence in Nunavut. I appreciate the Minister of Finance including the item in the Budget Address and I do look forward to hearing more about it.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many articles on the rate of domestic violence in the territory stating how Nunavut's rate of domestic violence is 13 times the national average or how Iqaluit ranks second on the national listing of cities with high rates of violence against women.

We must show empathy for these women and children, many of whom live with chronic domestic violence, women who suffer from abusive partners who control every aspect of their lives, who are regularly subjected to a variety of emotional, mental and physical abuse. We must try to imagine what it must be like to live in fear for your children's safety, to know that you should leave, but you don't have anywhere to go.

Mr. Speaker, the effects of chronic domestic violence can lead women to suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome or develop symptoms of rape trauma syndrome.

Studies have shown that there's a strong correlation between poverty and domestic violence. Unfortunately women suffering both domestic violence and poverty maybe feel that there's no housing or financial support to help them move on with their lives. In many cases intimate partners will return to the abusive relationship as they don't see another way out.

We must ensure that there's a safe home in every community as a short-term solution for these families before flying to a shelter. We must ensure that there's a long-term plan in place for women and children. There must be transition homes as well as second-stage housing available to these families after leaving the shelter.

Our government must do what it can to assist these women that may feel forced to return to their abusive partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Member's Statement 231 – 5(2): Pangnirtung Participants at Canada Winter Games

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, members and I say good day to my fellow community members.

I rise today to recognize two women who are on their way to Ms. Red Deer, Alberta. They were chosen to go there to play for Badminton. Megan Tauja Kilabuk and Jane Nakashuk are the two young individuals from Pangnirtung, and I wanted to mention their names here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Member's Statement 232 – 5(2): Providing Adequate Supports to Foster Parents

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) First of all, good afternoon and good afternoon to the people of Gjoa Haven, including the youth to the elders. Have a good day.

I would also like to mention two elders from Taloyoak, Alex Alik and Alice Alik. I wanted to mention them. They are my relatives. (interpretation ends) Mr. Alex Alik has a condition that elders should not get but they do, and hopefully not anyone of us gets it. Mr. Speaker, if I may add, that is why we need a specific facility in a specific community that I have been asking for.

>> *Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring forward a concern that has been raised by my constituents with respect to the amount of support provided to foster parents across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to those individuals and families who open their homes to vulnerable children and youth who for their own safety and wellbeing cannot stay with their own immediate families sometimes for extended periods of time.

Mr. Speaker, on March 1, 2018, 123 children were in foster homes in Nunavut according to the recently tabled 2017-18 annual report by the Director of Child and Family Services. A basic per diem rate of \$43 to \$50 is provided to foster homes to cover a child's basic needs as well as any additional costs for such activities as recreation or special occasions.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the cost of living in Nunavut's more remote communities, such as Gjoa Haven, is extremely high. Food costs alone are very expensive....

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Akoak, please proceed.

Mr. Akoak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, members.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the cost of living in Nunavut's more remote communities, such as Gjoa Haven, is extremely high. Food costs alone are very expensive. To provide a safe and comfortable environment for a child, one must also make sure that one's household is well maintained and up to date with payments for utilities, electricity, telephone, clothing, and bedding.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the Department of Family Services has put out a call to meet the needs for more foster homes so that children and youth in need will not have to be sent out of territory or be placed in residential homes. However, if our foster care system takes advantage of the generosity of our foster homes and does not take into consideration the real and actual costs of providing a safe and comfortable home for a child, especially in our more expensive and remote communities, then we will lose the foster homes that we do have.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will have questions on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Mr. Quassa.

Member's Statement 233 – 5(2): Encouraging Members to Speak in Inuktitut

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good afternoon” to my fellow residents of Igloolik, as well as my colleagues.

First of all, I would like to honour and praise the Minister of Finance. I'm really glad he spoke Inuktitut.

>>Applause

Also, our language, Inuktitut, is something that I always mention here in the House. It has to do with the fact that there are more Inuit watching right now across the territory and we should speak Inuktitut where possible and when possible because we are Inuit, and there are more people who speak Inuktitut that are watching and who don't speak English. I want to thank those that speak Inuktitut here and I encourage my colleagues to speak Inuktitut. I really like that.

>>Applause

When we go to communities, that's what we hear, “we have to speak Inuktitut.” We represent Inuit and they are the reason why we're here. We have many Inuit relatives and friends who don't speak Inuktitut, but we want to encourage them and for them to pursue the language because we are Inuit.

I wanted to bring this up, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to at every opportunity speak in Inuktitut in consideration of our audience because they are the ones listening out there in the communities. They are watching and listening intensely to what we're doing here. We should honour our language. This year is the International Year of Indigenous Languages and we should be proud of it and we should use it as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Ehaloak.

Member's Statement 234 – 5(2): 2019 Kitikmeot Trade Show

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Last week I attended the 2019 Kitikmeot Trade Show which was their 20th anniversary. At that Trade Show the group held a silent auction and dinner one night and at that auction they raised \$45,943.

>> *Applause*

And 50 percent of that money will go to the 3004 Nanook Squad of Cambridge Bay, and 50 percent of that will go to the youth groups in the Kitikmeot region.

I'd also like to congratulate the recipients of the Willie Laserich Citizenship Award. These were the founders of the Kitikmeot Trade Show, which one day they sat together 20 years ago and said, "We need to showcase our economics and our communities." I'd like to congratulate the members. They are: Marg Epp, Brenda Mercer, Charlie Lyall, Charlie Evalik, Wilfred Wilcox, and Dan Kane. I'm also proud to say that this government provided financial support so that this Kitikmeot Trade Show could happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Moving on with our orders of the day. Returns to Oral Questions. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize individuals here from my community. First of all, if you don't know Timiusi Kuniliusie, more people will know his older brother, Alan Kuniliusie. That is his younger brother. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Please feel welcome in your Legislative Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to recognize my husband who is here, Andrew Nakashuk. He is my right-hand man and I'm glad he's here. I also thank him for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Andrew, please feel welcome in your Legislative Assembly. For those who aren't here in Iqaluit, when you come to Iqaluit, we appreciate you and you are also welcome here. Come and visit us when you're in town during our meetings.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Going back to the orders of the day, Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Item 7: Oral Questions

Question 297 – 5(2): Domestic and Family Violence

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

I would like to continue on the theme of domestic violence in Nunavut and would like to start off by asking: what sort of strategy is there in place, whether it be short-term or long-term to address the high rates of domestic violence in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): I apologize. Thank you. Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As Minister responsible, we know even in this House the shortage, the high needs of our territory.

Through the Budget Address, one of the announcements was increase. Qullit Status of Women is one employee trying to address issues of women for the whole territory; one person. It has been a real challenge to try and increase. There is going to be one staff increase, but another way of reaching out has been to share information that Qullit gets in different strategies by different groups, interest groups. Our own government, violence touches on several departments, so they're sharing information, how to better share and communicate, realizing as a one-person operation, they can't reach everyone. Those are the kinds of steps Qullit has done to address violence. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned during my member's statement, there is a high correlation between poverty and domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, provinces throughout Canada are current going through a transition period in implementing domestic violence leave into their *Public Service Act* or the *Labour Standards Act*.

Mr. Speaker, there is a significant difference between the two. The *Public Service Act*, if implemented, give leave employees affected by domestic violence, whereas the *Labour Standards Act* would not just apply to public servants, but every individual in that jurisdiction.

My next question to the minister is if she believes that domestic violence leave should be incorporated into Nunavut's *Labour Standards Act* to protect all employees across the territory that need to take time off work in order to flee from domestic violence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you for that question. Violence is dear to my heart. Dear to our hearts because we've been impacted. I said there is a crossover when it comes to violence, and I can say that there are several departments. I can't get into detail and I know Justice is working something on the question you asked. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that response. I will be looking forward to raising up the issue with the other department, from the other minister.

With regard to domestic violence, the Legislative Assembly passed the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* in 2008, and its intent was to provide Nunavummiut with the tools to logistically intervene and to prevent abuse by focussing on the immediate need for safety with simple and efficient processes that are consistent with Inuit societal values.

I would like to ask the minister if she believes that the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* has been properly implemented to assist individuals that are currently facing domestic violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik, some of that has to do with the Department of Justice, but you have the floor. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Family abuse is extremely important. When our workers try to follow the law, sometimes it's inadequate. Even though the Act is not within my department about violence, we've interviewed people who have been affected by family violence. The money for that purpose has been increased a little bit, so there will be more help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Question 298 – 5(2): Marine Infrastructure

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

As the minister is aware, the people of Qikiqtarjuaq have been requesting a deep sea port for a long time now. This is a priority for the community because it's a priority to support economic growth and create job opportunities, especially in the fishing industry. In 2017 the Government of Nunavut submitted a proposal to the federal government for consideration under the National Trade Corridors Fund for a new deep sea port in Qikiqtarjuaq. Unfortunately, the federal government did not approve funding for the project.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government recently issued a new call for proposals under the National Trade Corridors Fund. The deadline for submissions is March 29, 2019.

Can the minister confirm if the Qikiqtarjuaq deep sea port proposal was resubmitted to the federal government and, if it was, will he commit to providing copies of the submission to both the Municipal Council of Qikiqtarjuaq and myself as the community's Member of the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleague for asking that question. Yes, Qikiqtarjuaq is part of the proposal. It opened in January when the government issued the call for proposals for major projects. We spoke with Inuit organizations and along with the other ministers, we reviewed this. This is one of the priorities and we have submitted that to the federal government, and they have told us that before the end of March, that we fill out some more documents and send them down to them. So that is where that is right now. We are providing what we need to and speaking with Inuit organizations.

The Inuit organizations will lead it, and the Government of Nunavut will support it. That's how it will be done; before the end of March we have to send a comprehensive proposal. We will want to give copies to every affected organization or person. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the very clear response. He already responded to the other question I had.

Information published by the federal government concerning the National Trade Corridors Fund indicates that it may "... give preference to projects that are requesting less than \$50 million from the fund." Can the minister confirm the estimated cost of Qikiqtarjuaq's proposed new deep sea port? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As to the actual costs, we are trying to put that together before the end of March as we are working on the proposal right now, but I can't divulge that information because we may have to change it a little bit in the interim, but I can say that it is over \$50 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Question 299 – 5(2): 2019-2020 Budget Address and Decentralization

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance. After he did the Budget Address for 2019-2020, there are many words that can be said but they seem to be lacking in from my perspective.

In the 20 years since Nunavut was created, one of the biggest things at the creation of Nunavut was decentralization, where government jobs and operations would be spread out to make sure that not all the jobs are in one community. This has really benefited the people of Nunavut. People have gotten jobs out of it in different communities and many more Inuit are now working in the decentralized offices. Inuit are a majority in these decentralized offices.

The Nunavut government can be seen right off the bat there. It states right here that they want to hire more Inuit and Nunavummiut need more jobs through education and training, and all that. Now, why isn't there anything said about decentralization? Does the minister still support it or not? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about decentralization as a model, the Government of Nunavut established that policy upon inception of having 60 percent of the jobs outside of the capital city. We're very close to that limit right now.

I know from my health hat, I've had discussions with the department on how we can make sure that when we're either replacing positions in communities or looking at enhancing services in communities, we look at employment opportunities outside the capital. There are some positions that just through the nature of their work have to be near the capital city.

As all of us here, whenever we look at positions outside of Iqaluit, we all believe that there are community-led initiatives through positions, through the work providing the services to all Nunavummiut need to start at the community level. Out of those positions that we're looking at training and developing for, they're not all here in Iqaluit. That's a territory-wide initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. It's good to hear that the government is committed to providing employment across the whole territory, but like I mentioned, it appears to be an omission that is not mentioned in this Budget Address. Unfortunately it seems that decentralization is an idea that has been forgotten like a five-gallon can that fell off the back of a qamutik. It has been left on the trail back in 1999. It's a checked box, "Okay, we're decentralized. We're good."

Personally I would like to see decentralization as an evolving thing, something that is continually being invested into in terms of increasing the number of jobs, opening new government offices in communities that don't have government offices, communities that were left out of decentralization in 1999 because they were too small.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Main: In terms of the Master Inuit Employment Plan, the Budget Address on page 12 mentions this Master Inuit Employment Plan which is currently in a draft form and the new Department of Human Resources will finalize it. Would the minister be able to clarify whether this Master Inuit Employment Plan includes considerations in terms of expanding or reinvesting in decentralization? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickee.

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the Inuit Employment Plan, it's to create employment all across the territory from all departments and agencies that the government is in charge of. As a government, we want to see positions in the communities. It has been raised in this House numerous times. The Speaker himself has raised it numerous times in the past on empty housing units in communities. We need to fill these positions.

Through the desire of the House and through the decisions that were made here, we have created a stand-alone Department of Human Resources. One of their first priorities is Inuit employment across the territory. As a cabinet, it's always in the back of our minds. Whenever a new position is created where it's here in Iqaluit, you wouldn't believe some of the discussions that go on. "Does that position really need to be here in Iqaluit?" This is a focus of numerous conversations that I have with my colleagues. I wouldn't be able to list them all, Mr. Speaker.

It is on the top priority to make sure that there are employment opportunities in our communities. The more self-reliance we can build within our communities, the stronger Nunavut is. That is one part of the Budget Address that I did say, and I stand by. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to know that decentralizing jobs on a job by job basis is considered, but what I'm asking about would be a larger more systemic initiative. As the minister knows, back in 1999, the early years in Nunavut, decentralization was a massive headache for the government of the day, but they got it done. They put a lot of time and energy into it. There was a lot of debate about it here in the House.

I would like to just quote from the Budget Address here it says on page 12, "For seven years now, even as the number of Inuit employees has risen, Inuit representation in the

public service has remained at approximately 50 per cent.” That’s seven years. The past governments has thrown all kinds of money into training and development.

I feel quite strongly that it’s time for a fresh new idea, and that would be re-investing into decentralization: “Decentralization 2.0” if you want to call it that. Given that in April responsibility for Human Resources will transfer over to the new department, I would just like a confirmation from the Minister of Finance that this type of large project type investment into decentralization is on the table when that transition happens to Human Resources on April 1. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I talk about those numbers of that 50 percent Inuit employment, with the amount of positions that were created in the last seven years, I don’t have the exact amount, but it’s in the hundreds, has shown that at least right now we are developing Inuit employment. Is it where we want to be? Absolutely not. One of the priorities of the new Department of Human Resources is the Inuit employment side of things.

We want to make sure that we’re building that capacity, building that expertise in territory to be able to take on more positions within the government, increasing opportunities at the community level. With regard to a specific connotation to the decentralization aspect of things, that’s something I can talk with my colleague about and we can discuss. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Question 300 – 5(2): Providing Adequate Supports for Foster Parents

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, in my statement earlier today I addressed the need for our government to provide greater financial support to Nunavut’s foster parents, especially those in our more remote and more expensive communities.

Can the minister clarify how her department determines the per diem rates for foster homes across Nunavut’s communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As Minister of Family Services I can say strongly we recognize, I strongly recognize, our department strongly recognizes that foster parents are a great asset to our department and

our territory. There is a rate by community for per diems. As a department and under the Division of Foster Care, we have lots of asks and we don't get everything.

We are certainly doing it in stages to ensure that there is support for our foster care. With this budget address, we are actually receiving three foster care coordinators to assist foster parents, and I certainly noted in my briefing that it's been since 2011 that there was an increase. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the most recent Nunavut Food Price Survey for 2018 shows that the cost of a basic food basket in the community of Gjoa Haven is among the highest in Nunavut.

In this survey in 2018, the average basket for the Kitikmeot was \$181.15.

Can the minister clarify how the basic costs of feeding children and youth is taken into account when determining foster parent rates? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are three types of foster care; there are the extended family placements, the provisional foster homes, and then the regular foster homes. There is actually a rate that I can certainly provide on how each community has the per diems. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that foster parents provide caring and support, security and safety, as well as meeting the basic needs for food, clothing and comfort to vulnerable children and youth. It is important that foster parents do not suffer financial hardship as a result of them doing a good deed for the government.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to reviewing the per diem amounts paid to foster parents to ensure that the amounts provided are adequate to meet the costs of buying food and ensuring a comfortable home in the community they live in? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, actually, I'm very committed because I have talked about this and have it on our planning stages for discussion. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Question 301 – 5(2): Public Housing Rent Scale

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the current public housing rent scale came into effect on February 1, 2014, and has been in place for over half a decade.

A key goal of changing the rent scale was to remove disincentives to employment. A one-bedroom unit is \$1140, a two bedroom is \$1466 per month, and it increases the more bedrooms you have, up to a five-bedroom being \$2,443.

Now, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation how the corporation establishes the rental scale, and if the rental scale has allowed people to seek employment and are there any policies pertaining to a rent-to-own program for tenants looking to own their units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven't seen the report that she is referring to, nevertheless if the tenant renting the unit from the NHC commences employment in June, it wouldn't be reflected in the rent until the taxation year has ended and the paperwork outlining their annual income, income taxes paid and the rest is sent to employees as a T-4 then the rent is set for the upcoming year with increases if required. And, this income level is used to set the rent for four years which I hope my colleague will understand, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In what I was reading, Action No. 12 in the Nunavut Housing Corporation *Blueprint for Action on Housing - Implementation Plan for the Government of Nunavut Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* indicates that the Nunavut Housing Corporation will “review best practices related to various models of subsidized housing as alternatives to rent-geared to income.” Can the minister tell us what specific steps the housing corporation has taken to implement Action No. 12? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, with respect to that Action No. 12 that my colleague is referencing, my officials are listening in on these proceedings and if that information is available, it shall be forthcoming. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Although Nunavut suffers from a shortage of housing, we have no shortage of people living in poverty. To me, it is unacceptable that high income earners are eligible for public housing.

Mr. Speaker, Action 12 in the *Blueprint for Action on Housing* also indicates that the Nunavut Housing Corporation will “review the possible development of a fixed-rent subsidized housing model targeting high-income public housing tenants; particularly those currently paying maximum rent in public housing.” Can the minister tell us today what specific steps the Nunavut Housing Corporation has taken to implement this action? It’s in the *Blueprint for Action on Housing*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Currently we’re doing a review on the rental housing policy and we hope to have that review done within this fiscal year and it will be brought forward to the cabinet for decision. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Mr. Quassa.

Question 302 – 5(2): Local Housing Organizations

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

As the minister is aware, the Nunavut Housing Corporation has formal management agreements in place with local housing organizations in all 25 of our territory’s communities.

In October of 2018, the NHC’s management agreement with Igloolik’s local housing organization was suspended as a consequence of problems the association had encountered in electing a new board of directors.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Igloolik local housing organization has been making progress in addressing these issues and recently elected a new board of directors.

I would like to proudly announce that the board of directors are all women.

>> *Applause*

I think that is the first time of its kind and it was on February 14 that they became elected. I would like to say their names before I go to my question; Mary Kunuk, Rhoda Qanatsiaq, Natasha Anilirq, Ruthie Angutiqjuaq, Betty Angutok, Sarah Kalluk, and Ragilee Ammaq. Those are the new board of directors.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: can the minister confirm whether or not the management agreement has been put back into place with the local housing organization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate the newly elected board.

They will be here for another year, so I would like to urge the new members to try again once there is up. With the management agreement, it I don't know if it has been put back into place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Paul Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to remain in good standing under the *Societies Act*, local housing associations in the communities are required to submit a number of annual reports and financial statements. Can the minister confirm whether or not the Igloolik local housing organization is now up-to-date with respect to its financial reporting requirements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The housing manager is responsible for that and I can't give you an update with respect to its financial reporting requirements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have a personal conversation with the member.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. I look forward to a detailed response from the minister, because the housing organizations have to be in good standing, not only in Igloolik, but also in all the communities.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation's recent business plans indicate that one of its priorities has been to develop a new "master management agreement" that will be used as a template for all 25 Nunavut communities. What is the status of this work, and will the minister commit to tabling a copy of the new master management agreement in the Legislative Assembly before the end of our current winter sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you. We are currently working on the new master management agreement. Once it's completed, and after review by the cabinet, we'll table it in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Ms. Angnakak.

Question 303 – 5(2): Employee and Family Assistance Program

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance.

The Employee and Family Assistance Program is intended to provide professional counselling for personal and workplace issues faced by the Government of Nunavut employees and their families.

Can the minister clarify how his department measures and evaluate the effectiveness of these counselling services and determines the level of employee satisfaction with the results? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickee.

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the employee assistance program there is always a fine line between making sure that we're adhering to privacy legislation. We do do some tracking in the type of issues that are raised, but it's at a very high observation point, so we don't get into a lot of details. I don't have the information right in front of me right now of specific numbers and the issues that are raised, but they do track the information. That's where we get some of the resources or ideas that we get for employee assistance type programs.

If there are any issues that are common, we look at public service announcements to make sure that people are aware that there are lines and openings for them to discuss their issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the Government of Nunavut's Procurement Activity Report 2016-17, \$374,000 was paid to the Homeward Health for providing the Employee and Family Assistance Program service to the Government of Nunavut employees. The Government of Nunavut's *Public Service Annual Report 2016-17* indicates that 204.5 services were provided to employees from July 2016 to March 1, 2017. If we do some basic math, which the Finance Minister is really good at doing, that works out to; can you guess? \$1800 per session.

Can the minister explain how the fees for this service are determined and who decides whether GN employees are receiving good service for the money spent on their behalf? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Before you answer Minister Hickeys, I am cognizant of the fact that there are two questions in the same breath. Minister Hickeys.

Hon. George Hickeys: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that process goes out by RFP, so the contract conditions or the details of the contract; I don't have that level of detail with me today. I will add that the member brings out a cost per session. Sometimes those sessions are repeated. It's maybe the same employee contacting, so when you're looking at a cost per session, I think it's fair to say that there could be numerous sessions. There could be ten different sessions from one employee for that cost, if you want to put it to a cost. At the same time there's a cost of not doing anything. To make sure that our employees have knowledge of what services are available, what directions they can take, and what options are available to them, to me, that's more important. The health and mental health well-being of our employees are a very important component of this contracted service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final and one supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

>> *Laughter*

Ms. Angnakak: Well, the other two went together.

>> *Laughter*

Yes, I do agree with the minister's response in that it is important that we have services that staff can access, but we want good services. We don't want just any service.

I've had more than one individual describe to me their experience with the Employee and Family Assistance Program, and it was very clear that those who spoke with me did not think that they received good service. In fact at least two of them have told me that they have never called the service back.

Can the minister clarify whether any feedback on the Employee and Family Assistance Program is collected and evaluated, and will he commit to collecting the feedback and evaluating the program, if he doesn't do it already, to ensure that the Government of Nunavut employees can receive the level of service that they need and deserve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) And I said one question; one answer, please. Minister Hickeys.

>> *Laughter*

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we're looking at quality improvement of any program, it's feedback that we need to hear. I have often said on numerous different issues that if I don't know it's broken, how can I fix it? When we're looking at getting feedback from people, again, we have to tread very carefully with privacy legislation with how we follow up with employees who have raised concerns.

I would strongly encourage the member that if there are people who feel that they're not getting service properly, let me know about it so that I can work with our service providers and my staff can work with the contractor to make sure that they're meeting the conditions of the contract parameters on the level of service that we expect them to provide to our employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Mr. Kaernek, do you have your hand up? Okay. Please raise your hand clearly. Thank you.

>>*Laughter*

Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernek.

Question 304 – 5(2): Residential Power Cut-off

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

One of my constituents has a concern, especially in the winter season, about their power being cut off. Can the minister briefly give us an overview of when their electricity is cut off? I would like the minister to respond to my question so that we will know, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Kaernek, for your question. There are many reasons why a person's power could be cut off, and if you know who the member is, have them contact our office and we can give them details as to why their power is cut off. I can't help individuals if I don't know the individual case itself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I worry as we talk about health issues. The children are affected. If they don't have parents in the community, where does everyone go? I won't tell you who it is. My question is: how many Nunavummiut are currently on partial power? Can the minister tell us how many homes are affected across the territory due to their debt? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I don't have that level of detail of information that the member is asking for, but I can assure you and reiterate that during the winter months we don't actually shut-off people's power because of health and safety reason. I can get the list for the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, though we may know they don't cut people off during the winter, a person did get their electricity cut off completely.

My question is, and I asked earlier: at what point do you define or determine that you need to cut a person's power off or give them partial power? Is it at \$50, is it at \$20? What's the amount for which the power is to be disconnected? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Again, I don't have that level of information but I can assure you that people who have power bills are excess of \$100 or \$1000.

The QEC tries to work with individuals who own homes or are in homes who owe QEC a lot of money for their power bills. We try to come up with a payment, we assist them, we have staff that work with them to ensure that at least their power... I know for a fact that in the winter months, people are not totally cut off with their power, but we do try to assist them in ensuring that the health and safety of the family in the home is first priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Question 305 – 5(2): 2019-2020 Budget Address

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for recognizing me. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance. It would be a good day to ask him questions in terms of his Budget Address today. Let me read it.

(interpretation ends) This is from page 5 of the Budget Address. "Our revenues are set to rise more slowly than the cost of providing public services. This compels us to take very firm action on cost control while, at the same time, raising new revenue through economic growth."

I would like to ask the minister to maybe provide a bit more information in terms of what those words mean, “very firm action on cost control.” (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickee.

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Gladly, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of different ways. When we’re looking at controlling our costs, we want to make sure that the programs and services we have that are in place are working efficiently. I know it has been talked about many times from members in this House and today, speaking how making sure that the programs we have are efficient, accountable to Nunavummiut, and accountable to our budget process.

That being said, there are a number of different initiatives that come forward from all of our departments, business cases that are put forward to either enhance programming or create new programs, and we can’t approve all those business case. We have to take a very strong stance sometimes that we have to work with what we have. We don’t have an endless pot of money that we can tap into.

I was very clear in my Budget Address today that using credit to provide O&M dollars is not a fiscally prudent way to move forward. We want to make sure that the dollars we have are being used for the intended purposes. There have been discussions with my officials on even just how departments do up their budget to make sure that they’re using actuals from year to year, that there’s some thought put into the budget process that if a program isn’t fully expending its dollars, yourself included, the member included, when he brought up the fuel tax rebate program.

This government is very flexible in making sure that we want to utilize the funds that we’ve got and utilize them for its intended purpose. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) In terms of unpacking those words, there is very firm action on cost control. I was hoping to hear more specific actions, but maybe those will be coming further down the line.

I would like some reassurance from the minister that although efforts are being made to reduce costs and make things more efficient, I would like some reassurance that essential services, such as health care, education, and housing, will not be negatively impacted by any of the government’s efforts to control costs going forward. I’m just requesting a commitment or clarification that essential services will not be impacted. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickee.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our budget states that, investing \$9 million to the Nunavut Housing Corporation for operations and maintenance of the housing stock we have now to make sure that there are appropriate places for people to live; increasing the budget for the Department of Health to deal with out-of-territory care, to deal with medical travel; a number of different investments into addictions and treatment. These are core needs that Nunavummiut expect from our government and by increasing the investments in those does put pressure on other avenues and does put pressure on some of the business cases that come forward, but these are core services that we have determined need our interest and our focus. That's what this budget is telling everybody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) This is on the same vein, but I'm asking on the revenue side of things and I hope the Speaker will allow it because it is all under the same budget.

The minister was quoted in *Hansard* yesterday in response to my colleague's questioning regarding taxes. In terms of looking at different options for increasing revenue, the minister mentioned the dialogue is very open right now, that we need to take a serious look on reducing our expenditures and increasing our revenue.

I understand that there is no clear direction in terms of how to increase the revenue, but if the minister could maybe clarify in terms of what are the options that are available to the government right now to bring in more revenue. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. There was a comment made earlier today to me during the "Drop the Pop" campaign upcoming that we should a sugar tax. That's why I was laughing.

There are a number of different initiatives, Mr. Speaker. I can't go into detail here. There are going to be option papers brought forward to cabinet. Just to give the member some examples, corporate taxes was brought up yesterday with another member. Are we charging enough? In some respects we're higher there. Income tax; are we charging enough, and to who? There are different revenue generation. We're looking at down the road through devolution opportunities of mineral royalties.

What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize if I'm kind of rambling here is that there is nothing that's off the table. My officials with Finance, along with my cabinet colleagues, are going to have a number of different options available to us in the near future on how we're going to move forward, even just so far as how we're going to allocate the carbon tax back to Nunavummiut to make sure that it's impacting the people that it's affecting the most. I know that one member brought up the Yukon model where it was just a blanket cheque gets sent out to every resident of their territory, and there are

mixed feelings on that. Some people feel that it's not targeting the people who are spending on the impact of carbon tax.

There are a number of different options that we're looking at, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the member that I'm not going to get into specifics because there are ramifications. I can make a comment here today with a certain option that we're looking at that we may never proceed with. It's still could put some scare into certain industries or anything of that sort, so I can't get into specifics. I do look forward to dialogue in this House when we come forward with options on a real conversation with members on what the impact that it's going to have across the territory. I look forward to the member's input. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members, please be aware that Question Period has come to an end. We will return to the orders of the day. Written Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Item 8: Written Questions

Written Question 018 – 5(2): GN Education Leave Utilization 2018-19

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have multiple written questions. The first written question is for the Minister responsible for the *Public Service Act*, and it's on the Government of Nunavut's education leave utilization for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, as Inuit employment has remained stagnant at 50 percent, there appears to be a barrier preventing Inuit from entering specialized and management level positions. It is clear that qualifications are the key to achieving the required Inuit employment levels, as stipulated in Article 23 of the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*.

Mr. Speaker, on March 21, 2018 I submitted a written question on the utilization of the GN's education leave for the 2017-18 fiscal year. In response I received to my written question identified that only 15 of the 42 employees on education leave were Inuit, representing only 35 percent. Over the last year I have been pressing the department to encourage more Inuit participation in the Education Leave program.

With the new year comes the beginning of another academic semester. I would like to request updated information from the Government of Nunavut's education leave utilization in the hopes of seeing improved results.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are detailed and I request to have them entered into the *Hansard* as read.

1. As of January 30, 2019, broken down by employment entity (department, Crown agency, and territorial corporation), category of position (executive, senior management, middle management, professional, paraprofessional, and administrative support), how many employees are currently participating in the Government of Nunavut's education leave policy?

2. How many individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were Nunavut Inuit?
3. How many individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were not Nunavut Inuit?
4. How many of the individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were granted education leave without financial assistance and, if so, why?
5. How many individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were granted education leave with financial assistance and received basic assistance?
6. Provide a breakdown of each entity referred to in question 1, how much is each entity providing education leave basic assistance by:
 - a. Tuition
 - b. One-time travel return expenses
 - c. Removal of personal effects
 - d. Books and other materials
 - e. Laboratory fees
 - f. Registration fees
 - g. Other expenses
7. How many individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were granted education leave with financial assistance and receive partial allowance in lieu of salary at 50 percent, 60 percent, 70 percent, and 80 percent respectively?
8. How many individuals referred to each entity and category of position in question 1 were granted education leave with financial assistance and received full allowance in lieu of salary and why?
9. Provide a breakdown of each entity referred to in question 1, how much is each entity providing education leave allowance in lieu of salary?
10. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 were enrolled in a certificate program?
11. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 were enrolled in a diploma program?

12. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 were enrolled in an undergraduate degree program?
13. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 were enrolled in a graduate degree program?
14. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 were enrolled in a doctorate degree program?
15. How many of the individuals referred to in question 1 will complete?
16. Provide a breakdown of the individuals referred to in question 1 as to what year of study they are currently in, and how many years are in the program?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking consent to enter his written questions into the *Hansard* as read. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your written questions are now entered as read. Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

Written Question 019 – 5(2): Department of Health Budget and Expenditures

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and the subject is the Department of Health's budget and expenditures.

I do appreciate the Budget Address raising the concerns of the expenditures in the rate that they do increase, but I would like to point out that it's clear from the Department of Health's increasing annual requirement for supplementary appropriations, there is a serious issue.

I would like to request a detailed breakdown of the department's budget as well as actual expenditures to identify key areas in which the department and the government can address.

Once again, my questions are quite detailed. I would like to request that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

1. What is the breakdown of the Department of Health's operations and maintenance (Vote 1) budget as approved in the main estimates by branch, and how was each branch budget allocated by division and section in the FreeBalance accounting

software budget load for the fiscal years 2018-19, 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15?

2. What is the allocation of the Department of Health's operations and maintenance (Vote 1) supplementary appropriation budget by branch, and how was each branch budget allocated by division and section as represented in Schedule B.1 of the Public Accounts for the fiscal year 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15?
3. What are the details of the Department of Health's operations and maintenance (Vote 1) budget transfers by branch, and how was each branch budget allocated by division and section as represented in Schedule B.1 of the Public Accounts for the fiscal years 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15?
4. What is the allocation of the Department of Health's operations and maintenance (Vote 1) revised budget by branch, and how was each branch budget allocated by division and section as represented in Schedule B.1 of the Public Accounts for the fiscal years 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15?
5. What are the details of the Department of Health's operations and maintenance (Vote 1) actual expenditures by branch, and how was each branch budget allocated by division and section as represented in Schedule B.1 of the Public Accounts for the fiscal years 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, and 2014-15? For simplicity, provide each section's actual expenditures as in FreeBalance for each fiscal year and add the department's year-end adjusting entries not entered into FreeBalance as a lump sum to the department total to match the Public Accounts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to have his questions entered into the record as read. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. They will be entered into the record as read.

Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

Written Question 020 – 5(2): Recommendations of Domestic Violence Death Review

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next written question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Justice and the subject is the recommendations of the Domestic Violence Review Committee.

Mr. Speaker, as the Office of the Chief Coroner of Nunavut has indicated, domestic violence is a continuing problem in Nunavut that leads to preventable loss of life.

The Office of the Coroner of Nunavut, in collaboration with the Domestic Violence Review Committee of Ontario, reviewed the case of my sister and made recommendations to enhance risk assessment, safety and planning, and prevention of future deaths related to domestic violence through appropriate interventions by the criminal justice system and health care partners.

In response to my initial written question, the Minister of Justice indicated, “My department is working with the Department of Family Services to specifically address recommendations A through D and our departments are liaising on a high level on initiatives to meet these recommendations.”

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek additional information on how these recommendations have been carried out since the completion of the report in 2016. I would also like to see a timeline of events as to what was done to meet these recommendations and when.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are quite highly detailed and I would like to request that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

1. **Public education on safe separation:**

- A. There needs to be broader public awareness directed at potential victims about the safe separation from an abusive partner and the risks in maintaining ongoing relationships that can jeopardize the safety of women and children.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 to enhance public awareness to victims, potential victims, and family members. Please include a timeline of events.

- B. Public awareness campaigns are needed that highlight how to recognize and respond appropriately when a strained relationship is becoming a potentially lethal one. Important additional risk factors are high-stress situations like extreme financial pressure, drug and alcohol addictions, and imminent family breakdown.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 in relation to public awareness campaigns that highlight how to recognize and respond appropriately when a strained relationship is becoming a potentially lethal one. Please include a timeline of events.

- C. Community agencies, in partnership with government, should explore the creation of an easily accessible, non-threatening mechanism for friends and family to get information and consult with a trained individual regarding situations where they have concerns that a woman is at risk from her intimate partner. This resource could provide direction where they are not sure how to intervene and/or how to help protect the victim’s safety.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 to explore the creation of an easily accessible, non-threatening mechanism for friends and family to get information and consult with a trained individual regarding situations where they have concerns that a woman is at risk from her intimate partner. Please include a timeline of events.

- D. We recommend that community justice workers and victim service specialists should receive specialized training in the dynamics of domestic violence. This training should include recognizing the signs and symptoms of domestic violence and how to effectively respond in the event they suspect a client is being abused. It is important that the training focuses on all aspects of domestic violence, including the psychological/emotional/verbal abuse that many victims experience, recognizing high-risk cases such as when there is recent or pending separation between couples and mental health illness, drug and alcohol addictions on the part of the perpetrator.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice has implemented since 2016 to provide specialized training in the dynamics of domestic violence, whether or not the training included recognizing the signs and symptoms of domestic violence, and how to effectively respond in the event they suspect a client is being abused. Alternatively, if the training focuses on all aspects of domestic violence, including the psychological/emotional/verbal abuse that many victims experience, recognizing high-risk cases such as when there is recent or pending separation between couples and mental health illness, drug and alcohol addictions on the part of the perpetrator. Please include a timeline of events.

- E. We also recommend that cross-cultural and cultural competency training should be a mandatory component of all training programs for frontline workers, such as policy, health care workers, and family violence specialists/assistance social workers.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 to provide a cross-cultural and cultural competency training component to all training programs for frontline workers, including police. Please include a timeline of events.

2. **Law Enforcement Services**

- K. We recommend that police services should receive ongoing training for police on the most effective response to domestic violence cases, especially where there is a history of homicidal and suicidal threats, separation, drug and alcohol addiction, and obsession with the victim.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 to provide ongoing training for police on the most effective response to domestic violence cases, especially where there is a history of homicidal and suicidal threats, separation, drug and alcohol addiction, and obsession with the victim. Please include a timeline of events.

- L. We continue to encourage that the police service should review various interactions with the victim and perpetrator, with a view to ensure that all appropriate policies, procedures, and directives were followed in order to learn and improve the systemic ways.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Justice and the RCMP have implemented since 2016 to review various interactions with the victim and perpetrator to ensure that all appropriate policies, procedures, and directives were followed in order to learn and improve the systemic ways. Please include a timeline of events.

3. I would like to request what resources and supports are offered to individuals in cases where they have concerns about a family member's safety.
4. Additionally, I would like to request what resources and supports are available to victims of domestic violence who may not recognize the dangers posed by the ex-partners to themselves and their children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to have his questions entered into the record as read. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. They will be entered into the record as read.

Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

Written Question 021 – 5(2): Recommendations of Domestic Violence Death Review

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final written question today is to the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and it is also in relation to the recommendations made by the Domestic Violence Review Committee, and specifically how appropriate interventions by health care practitioners have been implemented since the recommendations were first put forward in 2016.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, my questions are quite detailed and I request that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

1. Public education on safe separation:

- E. We also recommend that cross-cultural and cultural competency training should be a mandatory component of all training programs for frontline workers, such as police, health care workers, family violence specialists/assistant and social workers.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to provide cross-cultural and cultural competency training opportunities to all health care professionals. Please include a timeline of events.

- F. It is recommended to provide training opportunities to all health care professionals to ensure that domestic violence risk assessment, safety planning, and risk management are mandated part of their training programs and certification process. Safety is a top priority, therefore it must be ensured that training all levels obtained competency in risk assessment and risk management techniques.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to provide training opportunities to all health care professionals to ensure that domestic violence risk assessment, safety planning, and risk management are mandated part of their training programs and certification process. Please include a timeline of events.

- G. It is recommended that continuing education of all medical professionals include an emphasis on the importance of understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and the risk factors of lethality so that they can adequately assess and support clients with relationship programs.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to provide training opportunities to all health care professionals to ensure that domestic violence risk assessment, safety planning, and risk management are mandated part of their training programs and certification process. Please include a timeline of events.

- H. Training for all mental health professionals should include assessment and intervention strategies dealing with male depression and the link between depression, suicidal ideation, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to provide training to all mental health professionals on the assessment and intervention strategies dealing with male depression and the link between depression, suicidal ideation, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence. Please include a timeline of events.

- I. Health care providers should be taught to be aware of the dynamics of domestic violence and the potential lethality, especially when working with patients who have a history of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, particularly when there is high conflict in their marriage and a history of separation.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to provide training to all health care providers to be aware of the dynamics of domestic violence and the potential lethality, especially when working with patients who have a history of drug and alcohol abuse, depression, anxiety, and

suicidal ideation, particularly when there is high conflict in their marriage and a history of separation. Please include a timeline of events.

- J. We recommend and support to continue to offer grief counselling services to individuals who are directly or indirectly witnesses of suicides in their families, intergenerational trauma on families with the consequence of high rates of mental health issues, childhood trauma, and drug and alcohol addiction.

Please specify in detail what initiatives the Department of Health has implemented since 2016 to offer grief counselling services to individuals who are directly or indirectly witnesses to suicides in their families, intergenerational trauma on families with the consequence of high rates of mental health issues, childhood trauma, and drug and alcohol addiction. Please include a timeline of events.

2. I would like to request what resources and supports are offered to individuals in cases where they have concerns about a family member's safety.
3. Additionally, I would like to request what resources and supports are available to victims of domestic violence who may not recognize the dangers posed by the ex-partners to themselves and their children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to have his questions entered into the record as read. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. They will be entered into the record as read.

Written Questions. Returns to Written Questions. Replies to Opening Address. Replies to Budget Address. Petitions. Responses to Petitions. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Arviat North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Main.

**Item 14: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
Committee Report 007 – 5(2): Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wish to report that Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation, and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 68(6) and have Bill 19 immediately moved into Committee of the Whole. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation is requesting unanimous consent to have Bill 19 immediately referred to the Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There is a nay. No just kidding.

>>*Laughter*

There are no nays and Bill 19 is referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Tabling of Documents. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 15: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 119 – 5(2): Globe and Mail Article on Caribou

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table an article that was published in the *Globe and Mail* for all of Canada about the state of caribou in Canada. This is a very important thing for all the MLAs here and the ministers, I think.

I would like everyone to read it. Caribou were in danger in the past. In the Keewatin there were a million of them, but right now there are 225,000 left and the numbers are always dropping and are in too rapid a decline. Please make sure everyone reads it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Tabling of Documents. I have one.

Tabled Document 120 – 5(2): 2019-2022 Business Plan of the Office of the Legislative Assembly

Thank you, members. I wish to table the *2019-2022 Business Plan of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*, which I encourage all members to review with care. Thank you.

Notices of Motions. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Item 17: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

Bill 16 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2018-2019 – Notice

Bill 17 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2019-2020 – Notice

Bill 18 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2018-2019 – Notice**Bill 21 – An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act – Notice**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have four.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, 2019, that Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No.3, 2018-2019*, Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2019-2020*, Bill 18, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2018-2019*, and finally, Bill 21, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasié.

Bill 20 – Interim Language of Instruction Act – Notice

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, that Bill 20, *Interim Language of Instruction Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Motions. First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Item 19: First Reading of Bills**Bill 15 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020 – First Reading**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 15, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour, please raise your hand. Opposed. The motion is carried.

First Reading of Bills. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Item 20: Second Reading of Bills**Bill 15 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020 – Second Reading**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 15, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of Nunavut to make operations and maintenance expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion, raise your hand. Thank you. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 15 is ready for the Committee of the Whole.

Second Reading of Bills. Consideration in the Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 15 and 19 with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chairman.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break. Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:42 and Committee resumed at 16:10*

Item 21: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon. Welcome back, members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bill 19 and Bill 15. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to deal with Bill 19, followed with the review of Bill 15 and the 2019-2020 main estimates, commencing with the Department of Health. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 19?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 19 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would now like to ask Minister Hickes: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that the witnesses enter the witness table?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. For the record, Minister Hickes, if you could please introduce your witnesses and then proceed into your opening comments. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. With me is Mr. Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance, and Dan Carlson, Assistant Deputy Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I am here to present Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*. Nunavut, like other provinces and territories, has a longstanding agreement with the Government of Canada to keep our territorial income tax system in line with the federal income tax system.

From time to time over the years, the federal government points out to provinces and territories what we can do to keep our systems consistent. Agreeing to keep our systems consistent is what allows the Canada Revenue Agency to administer taxes across the country.

Last June of 2018 the federal government amended its *Income Tax Act*. The bill before you today proposes to amend Nunavut's *Income Tax Act* to align it with these federal changes. As an example, we would like to update portions of our Act that refer directly to the federal Act so the two pieces of legislation stay in line. Based on our internal review and discussions with the Canada Revenue Agency, we expect our amendments will have very little impact on Nunavut taxpayers.

We are also proposing several housekeeping revisions, changes that will simplify or clarify the Act. For example, we are proposing to remove a number of sections relating to old tax years that are no longer needed or relevant going forward.

Mr. Chairman and members, this concludes my opening comments and I would be pleased to take any questions. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Does the chair of the standing committee have any opening comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some very brief opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*.

The standing committee recognizes the technical nature of the bill, which the sponsoring minister described clearly in his opening comments.

As far as I can tell, this bill does not contain any reference to deferred prosecution agreements, so that is also very good.

With that being said, the standing committee recommends the passage of Bill 19 to all members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Are there any questions on the opening comments? If not, we will move on clause by clause in your white binders, I do believe, down under your desk under tab 19.

We're on Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 8. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 9. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 10. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members to Bill 19 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that Bill 19 can be placed on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes, do you have any closing comments? Please go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Just very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I thank the committee members for their diligence on this. I know a lot of people watching may wonder why this goes through so quickly, but there is a lot of work done behind the scenes. With the collaboration with the Committee on Legislation, I would like to thank the Department of Finance staff for putting this legislative proposal and these amendments forward and thank members for the approval of them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. That concludes our review of Bill 19. I will now ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he can please escort the witnesses out. Minister Hickes, considering your department is up next, you can remain where you are seated.

Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out.

Bill 15 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2019-2020 – Health – Consideration in Committee

Thank you. We will now proceed to Bill 15, and we will be starting with the Department of Health. I would now like to ask Minister Hickes: do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that the witnesses appear before the committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. For the record, Minister Hickes, please introduce your officials, and then continue on into your opening comments. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will introduce them in my first paragraph.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members. I am pleased to present the Department of Health's main estimates for the fiscal year 2019-2020. With me today are Acting Deputy Minister, Linnea Ingebrigtsen, and Executive Director of Corporate Services, Greg Babstock.

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Department of Health proposes a budget of \$431 million. This represents an increase of \$38.34 million, or 9.8 percent, from last fiscal year and includes the creation of 13 new positions.

Mr. Chairman, and members, the main estimates and business plan outline how we will continue to provide quality clinical expertise and enhanced health care services and facilities to all Nunavummiut.

Our budget proposal includes the Government of Nunavut's first steps toward an in-territory approach to addictions and trauma treatment, increases frontline staff at Iqaluit Health Services, enhances nutrition care to Nunavummiut by expanding the chronic disease care team, promotes additional approaches to the provision of mental health services, and commits us to continuing the work towards the elimination of tuberculosis within the territory.

Mr. Chairman, and members, many communities, families, and individuals struggle daily to deal with the adverse impacts of problematic substance use and personal trauma. While helping assistances is available through the department, Nunavummiut who require a more intensive treatment regimen are required to leave the territory to be referred to various in-patient facilities where appropriate services are provided.

To lead the effort and begin the planning process to provide some of these services within Nunavut, Health is requesting an appropriation of \$4.61 million in fiscal year 2019-2020 to support the delivery of programming described in the feasibility study *Addictions and Trauma Treatment in Nunavut*, tabled in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly on November 8, 2018.

Mr. Chairman and members, a large group of stakeholders came together to complete a feasibility study to develop a way forward for in-territory addictions and trauma treatment programming.

The proposed approach is based on the creation of a development team and three pillars:

- enhancing Community-Based Services
- establishing a Nunavut Recovery Centre
- implementing Inuit Workforce Development programming

The current budget request seeks \$3.61 million to provide a focus on community based services, and expanded funding for community and on-the-land addictions programming in each of the three regions. On-the-land programming will be further leveraged in 2019-20 by \$500,000 in funding received from the Government of Canada.

The department is also requesting \$750,000 to fund one five-year term position to lead the development process in establishing the Nunavut Recovery Centre, as well as hire supporting contractual resources to facilitate the development of addictions and trauma treatment programming within the territory.

By focussing on Inuit employment and mental health and increasing addictions treatment in Nunavut, the programming described in the Addictions and Trauma Treatment in Nunavut feasibility study supports several *Turaaqtavut* priorities and actions outlined in *Inuusivut Anninaqtuq*.

For the fiscal year 2019-20, Health is requesting support for the following health care initiatives:

Tuberculosis Elimination in Nunavut

Nunavut continues to have the highest incidence of tuberculosis in Canada, despite continued TB control efforts by the Department of Health. The government has been actively working to address and mitigate the spread of the disease. During the fall of 2018, Health conducted its second successful territory-wide screening in Whale Cove, with 90 percent of the community screened for active and latent TB.

Mr. Chairman and members, building off of best practices learned from both Whale Cove and Qikiqtarjuaq, Health and our partnering organizations will be conducting the third community-wide screening in Cape Dorset in February 2019, the largest such endeavour, to date.

Health requests \$683,000 in the fiscal year 2019-2020 to fund the staffing of six additional community-based PYs, a mix of public health nurses, and public health assistants across the territory. A further six PYs to be added in the fiscal year 2020-2021, again, a mix of public health nurses and assistants to continue to build TB clinical capacity at the community level.

Mr. Chairman and members, the department will continue to work with the Government of Canada and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to accelerate our plans using federal resources. However, the elimination of TB in Nunavut will require continuing long-term investments from all levels of government.

The other area is Iqaluit Health Services forced growth.

Mr. Chairman and members, the demand for health services in the Qikiqtaaluk region and within Iqaluit as a regional territorial centre has continued to increase. The Department of Health has proposed a strategic program and capacity enhancement to five existing programs delivered by Health, with the addition of 10 new PYs over the next three fiscal years for Iqaluit Health Services. These program areas include: emergency services, operating room services, public health, diagnostic imaging, and environmental services.

Health is requesting \$570,000 in the fiscal year 2019-2020 to fund two new PYs at the Iqaluit Health Service, including one nurse practitioner, and one public health nurse. An additional four new PYs will be requested in each of the next two subsequent fiscal years.

Adding 10 additional staff over three years is necessary to meet increased health care service demands, reduce waitlists, and wait times for health services. Increased staff retention and reduce overtime costs provides support to prevention and screening programs and enhance the provision of safe, efficient, and effective health care within the territory.

Mr. Chairman and members, the other area is mental health transitional housing. The government has made significant investments in mental health programming in recent years. As the department continues to explore new and innovative solutions and expand the continuum of mental health care available to individuals, health is requesting \$532,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020 to support the establishment of community mental health transitional housing programming in both Iqaluit and Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Chairman, and members, the proposed Community Transitional Housing Program is a three year pilot project that would lease a four-bedroom accommodation in Iqaluit and Cambridge Bay to provide specific support for those who either do not require admission to an in-patient care setting or for those who are transitioning from in-patient care and have developed some of the necessary skills for independent living but still require some additional daily support.

This initiative will support client community reintegration, reduce the probability of highly expensive in-patient readmission, limit the need to send individuals out of territory for treatment, prevent individuals from being separated from their culture, and equip clients with the necessary skills and tools to live independently.

In other areas; the midwifery and ultrasonography outreach in the Kitikmeot region, Health is requesting \$129,000 to provide enhanced in-community access to midwifery and ultrasonography services within the Kitikmeot region. This funding will be used to ensure that midwives travel to each Kitikmeot community a minimum of four times annually. During these community clinics, they will meet with all prenatal women, assist the nurses in identifying and intervening in high risk prenatal situations, and provide onsite education and emergency skills workshops to community health nurses.

Also, in lieu of sending all Kitikmeot prenatal clients to either Cambridge Bay or Yellowknife for routine ultrasounds, Health is proposing to send an ultrasonographer to each community to provide these services locally. This will effectively reduce the time, expense, and risks associated with medical travel for prenatal clients.

The area is: chronic disease care team dietitian capacity. Mr. Chairman, and members, Health is seeking \$390,000 to fund the creation of two new regional dietitian positions as well as the territorial chronic disease care team. This is funding intended to replace the

territorial health investment fund; resources for dietitian services that were fully spent in 2018. One dietitian position will be located in each of the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions.

The current compliment of two territorial dietitians; one for the Qikiqtani General Hospital and one for the Qikiqtaaluk region is not sufficient to ensure that Nunavut is meeting Canadian standards for the provision of nutrition care to individuals requiring frontline chronic disease management.

Mr. Chairman, and members, registered dietitians are allied health professionals who are integral members of primary care health teams in jurisdictions throughout Canada. They provide medical nutritional therapy for the treatment of nutrition related illnesses and secondary prevention of complications resulting from chronic diseases.

And that other area where we're looking for support, Mr. Chairman, and members, is pediatric service capacity enhancement planning. Nunavut has the fastest growing population in Canada with fertility rates significantly higher than the national average. Despite the high number of children in the territory, pediatric medical services offered in Nunavut are not fully in alignment with those offered to children in the rest of the country. Many children cannot receive the care they require unless they are sent to larger centres in the south.

The department is actively looking at measures to increase our capacity to provide more of these services within the territory. Health is requesting \$200,000 to plan the establishment of a dedicated pediatric unit at Qikiqtani General Hospital. This operational planning will run concurrently with an approved capital planning project to assess the capital needs of a pediatric ward at Qikiqtani General Hospital.

Mr. Chairman and members, with regard to administrative managers and health centres, there is a pilot project. Each supervisor of health program, or SHP as they're known as, is responsible for the supervision of health staff, management of health services, and general administration of their local community health centre. Due to increasing numbers of staff and human resource needs, consistently high and often irregular service volume pressures, and demanding administrative burdens, the department has identified a need for a supervisor of administrative services within community health centres to help alleviate some of this burden from local clinical management staff.

Building on the current administrative pilot in Kugluktuk, Health is seeking \$166,000 in the fiscal year 2019-2020, increasing to \$210,000 in 2020-21, to expand the pilot project and hire two additional supervisors of administrative services positions. One PY will be assigned to work in each of the Baker Lake Community Health Centre, and the Kivalliq Regional Health Centre in Rankin Inlet.

The department will assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the supervisors of administrative services within these three communities and consider a future business case to implement this approach to all community health centres across the territory. It is anticipated that these positions will reduce the SHP administrative workload and allow

clinicians to focus more on core clinical duties, reduce the need for administrative overtime at health centres, improve patient care and patient satisfaction, and promote efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

Mr. Chairman and members, the department has a number of programs in deficit as a result of increasing and uncontrollable health care delivery costs. These uncontrollable costs have resulted in repeated sizable annual supplementary appropriation requests. Despite efforts to restrict spending in other program areas to offset uncontrollable costs, the department requires additional funding to continue to provide these services.

Mr. Chairman, and members, to address this, Health is requesting an additional \$32.893 million for the following uncontrollable expense categories:

- Medical Travel - \$14.075 million
- Out of Territory Medical Treatment and Physician expenses - \$14.505 million
- Out of Territory Elders Care - \$4.313 million.

The cost of health care delivery is steadily increasing across Nunavut. In 2017, the Canadian Institute of Health Information reported that Nunavut was forecasted to spend \$14,936 per capita on health care, a 4.4 percent increase over 2016. The increased cost year-over-year stems from the continued additional costs associated with operating in remote and northern locations. Health care costs are expected to increase by roughly five percent nationally, and Health's budget needs to remain adequately funded to keep pace.

Mr. Chairman, and members, a continued priority for the Department of Health in the coming years and beyond is to promote and foster the well-being of all Nunavummiut and help to nurture healthy and vibrant communities. This means working on a variety of solutions for those who are at their most vulnerable and require treatment for their addictions, helping Nunavummiut who have varied mental health treatment requirements, being flexible and responsive to emergent medical needs, and ensuring that appropriate and efficient services are provided to all Nunavummiut by an increasingly strong and capable complement of health care professionals.

I invite members to consider the request put forward today as the Department of Health's efforts to continue building an efficient, well managed, collaborative health care system that is innovative and responsive to the needs of all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes my opening comments.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickey. Does the chairman of the standing committee have any opening comments? Ms. Nakashuk, please go ahead.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Members of the Committee on Social Wellness have reviewed the 2019-2020 Main Estimates and Business Plan of the Department of Health.

The standing committee notes that the proposed operations and maintenance budget for the Department of Health is approximately \$431 million which represents nearly one quarter of the Government of Nunavut's total operations and maintenance budget for 2019-2020.

The Department of Health will be receiving over \$38 million more than was allocated in its 2018-19 budget. The standing committee recognizes that the proposed increase in funding may not necessarily represent the actual yearly cost of delivering health care services to Nunavummiut. It has been noted on many occasions that the Department of Health brings forward supplementary appropriation requests on a regular basis to cover budget shortfalls in various different service areas. The 2018-19 fiscal year is no exception. Shortfalls regularly occur in the areas of medical travel, staffing and service contracts as well contracts for services that are delivered out of the territory. Members look forward to updates on initiatives that will focus on reducing expenditures in these key areas.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee appreciates that the minister and his officials work closely with their federal counterparts to access additional resources to address health care needs across the territory.

In particular, the standing committee notes that additional funding and resources from outside sources have been provided for tuberculosis screening programs, mental health services and planning for addictions and trauma treatment options within Nunavut. Specifically, members would be interested in receiving further clarification on how such entities as Inuit Tapirisaat Kanatami work with Nunavut's Department of Health to ensure that funding from the \$27.5 million allocated by Indigenous Services Canada to help eliminate tuberculosis across Inuit Nunangat is being accessed in a timely and effective manner to address the high rates of tuberculosis in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, there is a desperate need for substance abuse, addictions and mental health services all across Nunavut. Members would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the Government of Canada in working with the Government of Nunavut to develop a new approach to addictions and treatment within Nunavut. Members look forward to ongoing updates on the Department of Health's progress in enhancing community-based services, establishing a development team, developing a trained Inuit workforce, and the eventual establishment of a Nunavut recovery centre for treatment and rehabilitation.

During the minister's appearance before the standing committee to discuss his department's draft budget, members were given to understand that a number of new positions would be established in 2019-2020 to address staffing needs in these and other areas. While members recognize the requirement to establish dedicated positions for trained personnel to deliver specific services, it has been noted on many occasions that over 40 percent of the current staffing positions in the Department of Health remain consistently vacant. The ongoing vacancy rates lead to costly contracts, especially in the field of nursing. Greater efforts must be made to recruit and retain nursing staff across Nunavut's communities as well as in the regional centres. Concerns have been raised that

the heavy workloads of community health centre staff have resulted in some clinic closures and reductions in appointment times. The Department of Health is proposing to add administrative services positions in a number of health centres with a view to reducing the administrative and management tasks currently allocated to nurses and permitting them to focus more on patient care and delivery of services.

Members look forward to regular reports on this initiative which may be expanded to other community health centres if it is found to have a positive impact on workload distribution and patient satisfaction. Members further recognize that increasing demands for health services in the regional and territorial centre of Iqaluit has also resulted in the need for new positions in the community for 2019-2020.

Standing committee members encourage the minister and his staff to identify opportunities where Department of Health positions could be revised to more closely align with cultural practices and language needs. It was anticipated that the Department of Health's newly-developed Model of Care program, as discussed in previous years' business plans, would take into account community needs and aspirations. However, the current status of a new Model of Care for health services delivery across Nunavut remains unclear.

Members have further suggested that greater consideration be given to training and employing more Inuit within such fields as the continuum of mental health care services, counselling for specific health issues such as cancer, and in long term care and support positions. Members applaud the department's intent to develop an Inuit workforce to deliver in-territory addictions and trauma treatment programming and look forward to updates on this initiative. Members further support the department's plans to establish a new mental health transitional housing program to support individuals transitioning from inpatient care to independent living and urge the minister to work with his staff to ensure that support is provided in a culturally and linguistically relevant manner.

Mr. Chairman, while members appreciate that initiatives in the area of suicide prevention are most effective when they are community-driven and community-led, concerns have been expressed that many such projects funded through the Department of Health's Quality of Life Secretariat focus primarily on one-time activities for youth. It has been suggested that programming be expanded to reach more demographic groups and include fundamental and consistent suicide prevention messaging.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Health initiated a medical travel review some time ago. Members have raised many concerns relating to medical travel in such areas as escort policies, booking of travel and appointments, conditions and attitudes of staff at boarding homes and other issues. While members appreciate that the planning and coordination of medical travel is complex and multi-faceted, the results of the medical travel review have not yet been made public and it is unclear what efforts have been made to address specific problem areas identified to date.

Mr. Chairman, another topic which has been under review by the Department of Health is to consider the options for expanding long term care for our elders within Nunavut. The need for long-term care services across the territory has been discussed at some length in recent years. Members have been given to understand that a consultant's report on this issue will be completed in the near future. However, the standing committee urges the minister to ensure that opportunities for partnerships and contracts to provide this service are not lost in the interim. Members appreciate that some levels of care, especially with respect to dementia, require specialized supports and services and encourage the minister to work with Nunavut Arctic College to provide relevant training opportunities in this as well as other health care fields.

Mr. Chairman, the department's Office of Patient Relations has been identified as a contact point for individuals and families who wish to submit complaints and concerns regarding health service delivery to Nunavummiut and their families as well as requests for additional services and programming at the community level. The standing committee recommends that more information on the work and operations of the office be made publicly available.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I anticipate that individual members will also have questions and comments as we proceed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Nakashuk. Do any members have general comments before we do page by page? If not, we will now proceed to a page-by-page review of the department's estimates and we will start on page H-4 of the main estimates which is Directorate. Are there any questions? Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess when we talk about staffing; I want to get a better sense of where you're at in filling these vacant positions that you have. You have a DM, you have I think two ADMs, and I haven't seen any advertisement yet for them. Chief medical officer; I think you have an acting one. So as a minister, can you give you give us a better indication of where the department stands with all of these positions that are either vacant or you have people in acting positions such as Linnea. She's in an acting position for a DM. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickee.

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the positions are filled except for the DM position, which is anticipated in an announcement in the near future. So both ADM positions are filled and the chief medical officer is Dr. Patterson. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickee. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister just confirm they went through a regular advertised process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: All except for the chief medical officer. Dr. Patterson was the assistant and we made him the chief medical officer. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business plan did indicate that there are significant increases to funding for the ADM Programs and Standards division, so can the minister describe what additional programs and resources we'll be providing with this new funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one position I did neglect to comment on was the Associate Deputy Minister for Quality of Life, and Kimberly Masson has been placed into that role for that one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With regard to the ADM position of operations, there has been a fairly comprehensive change in the duties and reporting for that ADM position encompassing medical travel, the Continuing Care Division. I don't have the list of everything right now, but there has been a change in what's in there and included in that, there was a fairly substantial increase associated with, I believe... . Sorry, my apologies. I knew there was a substantial reason for the increase for the out-of-territory elder care. There was \$4.3 million that is part of this request for out-of-territory care. In addition to that, there was a small decrease in lease budgets, but the majority of new money in there is for out-of-territory elder care. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would like to ask: what are your biggest challenges that are you're currently facing when it comes to human resource development within the Department of Health? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: If you want to talk about some of the challenges, I think the first overall would be the competition for health care practitioners from across the country and globally in some cases. When we're looking at competing, you know, there's a nurse practitioner in a community where we've got a PY, it's a fairly elevated level of clinical background that a nurse practitioner has and they're very in demand across the country.

We've had a number of nurse practitioner positions that we've had a very difficult time in filling to provide that additional level of service of care in the communities. In addition to that, we are in the process of replacing our director of human resources. We have been relying a lot upon the Department of Finance's division of human resources in partnership to provide the level of service. That job is out to competition right now, so I'm looking very forward to getting that position filled on a permanent basis so that we can go ahead with a lot of our competitions.

As a regular member, one of the questions I often asked is, "There are all these vacancies. Where are all the job competitions?" As the member very well knows, when you get into this role, the level of complexity for putting the job to competition with the evaluation of the position and going through the whole staffing process can be onerous. We're looking at streamlining that process and I'm looking very much forward to working with my colleague, the new Minister of Human Resources, on ways to streamline those processes not only for the Department of Health but for all departments.

I think health is one of the most critical needs. When we're talking about providing care to our residents across the territory, health is a necessity. It's not a matter of wanting. We go through a lot of expense in bringing in contracted health care professionals in different capacities. I would really like to see a lot more indeterminate people fill in those positions and we need to give them the resources to be able to achieve those successes. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Thanks for your response. I agree it is a real necessity. When we talk about a position like a nurse practitioner, I know it seemed to be all around salaries that we couldn't compete with southern Canada, who provided a higher salary for nurse practitioners. Now you are the Minister of Finance. How are you dealing with that and how are you dealing with the problem of not being competitive enough, not having too low salaries, maybe, or the other challenges that come in when you want to hire somebody? We can't keep saying that and not really addressing it. We have been saying that a long time now. What is the next step in addressing that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, I was just looking over some updated notes.

With regard to that position specifically, it has been a concern noted to the evaluation when you're looking at a job evaluation and where it establishes the role of a nurse practitioner, as an example. One of the main challenges of filling those positions is, because of the level of clinical ability that they bring to the table, we have nurse practitioners that are in a supervisor of health position in a community health centre where there may be a nurse practitioner position in addition to the SHP position.

When we're talking specifically about what we are doing to go forward, and I know that's where the member is getting at, I don't want to say it is simple, and I don't want to say it's complicated. It has to follow through the process when we evaluate through job evaluation working with the Department of Human Resources to make sure that we're fairly costing out these positions so that we are competitive. In most cases, we are still quite competitive financially, including with our nursing bonus system. Where we're lacking is to make sure that the supports are there.

When people read in the media, or hear anecdotally of the amount of overtime that nurses work in the community, the recent coverage on closures, it can sometimes sway the decision of somebody looking at coming here, where if they could have an easier time in a more mature structure. We rely very heavily upon our community health nurses and all the clinical capacity within a health centre, but we also have to make sure that we make it inviting. We want to make sure that we support our employees. We do a very good job, in my opinion, of the recruitment side of things. We need to work on our retention. We need to make sure that we're not burning out our employees. We invariably run into, like it was covered recently again with the health centre closures. During the holiday season, summertime, we run into very challenging scenarios of trying to make sure our health centres are staffed adequately.

I'm not sure what else I can add to that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Thank you for your response. Burn out I think is something that's come up to my attention. I was speaking with someone from one of the communities, a beneficiary who was no longer the nurse there because of burn out, because of the ratios. So there was going to be some kind of review, I believe, on the number of nurses per community, and I think that has never been updated for many years. It hasn't kept up with the growth of communities.

Where is the department when it comes to staffing health centres; I guess all staff? There is a certain ratio that you need per community. There was going to be a review done. Where are you at with that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is referring to the model of care review. This came up during the committee meeting, as I spoke to it then, it's become a little bit more cumbersome than what was anticipated. One of the objectives, and it's just one of many objectives out of the model of care review, is to substantiate the amount of staff in a community health centre.

Currently and in the past, what's been done is: there is no real formula. When you take a community, the size and the availability of space of the health centre seems to dictate the staffing levels in some cases. We want to make sure that we have science information

based decisions on what level of staffing in the communities. The model of care review itself as a whole, there are so many different components to it. We are analyzing the report right now to take a look at what are achievable objectives, what are not, what are useful, what may not be as useful or impactful? There is quite a bit of analysis that's going on. As I sit here right now, I'm sure there are probably people working on it. I do know and I am looking forward to having some final summary of objectives to come out of that report and I look forward to sharing them in the House. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Thank you for your response. I think the retention part; you have a lot to do with, like you said, the conditions. The sooner you get to really know what numbers are needed the better it's going to be.

In talking about staffing, I would like to ask and I want to ask about third party investigations because the Department of Health has had a few. I would imagine that normally when you hire somebody like a deputy minister, they could go into doing their own investigation if there's a problem with the staff. The Government of Nunavut and I know for Health and probably something I'll ask the rest of the departments too is how many third party investigations have you done.

I know of investigators travelling back and forth between the south and here because they're a southern firm. How many third party investigations has the Department of Health had in terms of staffing issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't really answer that. It's all dependent upon the cases that come forward from employee relations to the level. In some cases the deputy minister couldn't make a decision or deal with certain levels of appeal. Once it goes through the full gamut of recourse for an employee if they're still not satisfied, it comes back to me as the minister responsible for public service.

That being said, there's no established budget *per se*, so I'm not sure the relevance *per se* to the O&M discussion today. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I think the reference is to staffing. It has been brought to my attention that sometimes this is the route. I'm just wondering why you would go this route and how many times you have gone this route and what is the cost to that. There is a cost to everything. It's part of the staffing budget. You have a budget to hire and you have a budget to fire or to do investigations. This is why I'm bringing it up because it's something I'm curious about and maybe it's something the minister can come back to us with or it could be a question for later on, but just heads up.

I also want to speak to a staffing issue again and make a reference to why I'm asking this question in regard to health closures. For example, in Cape Dorset this summer that health centre was put in a very vulnerable situation and it really did come close to close it down and that was due to the safety of nurses. I'm wondering: how is the department currently addressing the safety of our nurses throughout the territory, not just in Cape Dorset but in some of the other communities too?

I know you've had some contracts out for security services. Is this going to continue? Are you going to implement that in every single health centre? Is it provided 24 hours, seven days a week? That's what I would like to know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't want to single out any specific community. There has never been any public discussion on some of the options that the member was just speaking of, so I won't go into that.

When you're talking about general security of a health centre across the territory like the member mentioned, we have taken the steps of security personnel. It has made quite an impact. We have to work with the communities. When we do have a community with concerns that may be too high a level, as the member, there would be a need to go into the community, to have staff go in, or in an extreme case, maybe even myself would go in and speak to the mayor and council to discuss how serious of a nature that the circumstances are.

With regard to... We have contracted security here at QGH, we have contracted security I believe in 14 of our health centres right now, if I recall the number correctly. They are dealing with sometimes minor incidents, but sometimes very extreme. One of the things that people need to realize is that in general, when somebody is going through something in a health centre, it's the health of themselves or their loved one. It's a very passionate topic, but at the same time it doesn't excuse violent behaviour, and that is the message that needs to go.

You see these little signs in different offices across Canada; I've seen them all over the place where "this is a zero tolerance workplace for aggression or harassment" or things like that. I've gone to hamlet offices where those signs are up as well.

The biggest thing we need to do is enforce that and explain to people that acting out violently or aggressively isn't going to help the situation. If anyone feels that they're not getting the adequate care, I strongly suggest, as the chair of the committee mentioned, the Office of the Patient Relations, we've had great success in alleviating a lot of concerns that were brought forward.

My concern is the safety of our staff and the safety of our patients in all of our health care facilities. That is one of the things that our ADM of Operations is currently working on to

make sure that we are meeting the needs of our staff and the patients in the health centre. Again, it's something that the new ADM is looking at. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Thank you to the minister for his response. I remember in the summer that they were [doing] a radio show in Cape Dorset and there were people on facebook talking about this issue, so I don't think it's a secret or anything. I think lots of people know about it, and it is a concern of mine too, and how we're protecting nurses in all health centres.

So the ones that don't have security; is that because to date there hasn't been a need for it, or is this something that you're still trying to figure out? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How do I put this? We've taken health centres where we have the highest concerns and have put in place security personnel in those health centres. I'm not saying it doesn't happen in the health centres, but it's not as frequent of an occurrence or maybe the escalation warranted bringing security in. This is something we're closely taking a look at of the impacts of having security. To me, it's almost a shame that we have to spend resources and dollars that I'm looking in here to get approved on security in a health centre to protect the patients in our health centres and the staff in our health centres. To me, I don't even want to defend this type of a budget allocation that is unfortunately needed. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I have a few more minutes here. We're talking about health centres and I'm wondering; they're very dependent on the number of nurses staffing that are within a health centre at any given time to keep the health centre open and to provide full services.

You have contractual agreements with nurses. Do you think that is really meeting the needs right now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to commend especially the nurses in the health centres that you guys all deal with in your communities. I think not one of us in here would belittle or not recognize the impact that they have on your community with providing health care.

No, we don't have the resources. That's one of the reasons why we're looking at some pilot projects such as providing the assistance to the supervisor of health in a health centre to alleviate some of the administrative burden so they could focus more on the

clinical side of things. The way we're looking at other positions to help with more mental health to offset having to fly in specialists, or the contract services. We need more staff. I don't think anyone here could argue that.

Until we're staffed at our full capacity, it's hard for us to even measure what the impact would look like where our pros and cons are from the staffing level. I've said that from across the government, but it's especially true in health. Until we have all of our positions filled, we don't really even know where our strengths and weaknesses are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I'd like to change the gears, as the minister used to always say himself.

You recently wrote a letter to our chair of the standing committee and you provided us with some information that we were looking for. I just want to read from one that really stood out to me from this letter; just a portion of it where you're talking about mental health staffing, and I'm on page 2 of 9. You say, "With regard to mental health staffing, health ensures that coverage is provided to all communities, either by a mental health nurse, or mental health consultant. Currently mental health nurses, mental health consultants, paraprofessional staff such as outreach life skills, work together to deliver a broad comprehensive range of care that appropriately addresses the specific mental health needs of Nunavummiut." That's a pretty big statement to say in a territory where we're always crying that we don't have the resources to go to, and where we have so many numbers that are very, very negative in regard to suicide rates, or mental illness, and stuff like that.

What do you mean by that? Why would you say such a statement when I think there is a lot of suffering that is still going on? I think we have a lot of work to do in many areas such as after care, or tracking those that may be at risk. I'm just wondering what you have to say about that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last question.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In that response, as the member just quoted, it talks to making sure that there is coverage provided to all communities. We all recognize, and this budget recognizes the increased need to provide mental health services across the territory.

What that statement says is that there are mental health services available in each community. Some of them are even down to shared. In some of our smaller communities there occasionally is where the mental health worker may be responsible for two communities. Is it adequate resources? I'm not saying that in a statement, but I'm saying is that is a level of service that is being provided. We need to make sure that through this

budget process we're getting the positions we need to provide the increased level of service that we recognize.

Investing \$4.6 million towards addictions and trauma side of things brings in recognition of some of the issues that we're facing and that we want to address. With the Assembly's support, we can increase the level of services that we're providing in the communities. It takes into consideration mobile trauma. We've had some, unfortunately, a need to send out our mobile trauma teams to different communities to deal with hardships that the community is going through. I would like to see a point where we have enough resources in the community that the mobile trauma teams wouldn't have to be used as often for one, or maybe for as long.

You mentioned aftercare. One of the key components of mental health is one, not having to go through the same story because we have different people going into the community but a consistent approach to the aftercare so that people who are have dealt or are dealing with their trauma or addiction have support services in place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I was in Chesterfield Inlet about the boarding home in Winnipeg, they were in a boarding home in Winnipeg and then they brought in lice and they got infested with lice down there. I was told that the bed sheets are very stinky down there. That is a very big concern for patients from the Kivalliq.

(interpretation ends) Concerns have been raised consistently about the services provided under various contracts held by the Department of Health, such as medical boarding homes. What process does the department follow to ensure that services, conditions, and other obligations are being properly provided for by the different contractors? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. For the record, through translation, it came through as lice, but I think she's talking about bedbugs. Okay. Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's news to me. Whenever we have a facility outside the territory, using the Winnipeg one as an example, the Winnipeg environmental health officer performs regular inspections of that facility. I'm not aware of any insect infestation or anything like that. Nothing has been brought to my attention.

In a general circumstance when we're dealing with medical boarding homes, we have our staff meet with them quarterly to address any concerns. I can say pretty confidently that the number of complaints has gone down pretty much from all of our boarding homes. Some I hear very little from. There have been issues brought up with the Inuit centre in Winnipeg in the past. I'm not saying I don't get any complaints, but the numbers have diminished quite a bit.

One of the things that we have been actively doing when we meet with these contractors is holding their feet to the fire on the contract parameters. There may have been some...I'm trying to think of how to word this properly, Mr. Chairman. Maybe not as much focus on satisfaction on the level of service that we're contracting these places to provide, and I'm sure some members are familiar with recent circumstances here in Iqaluit where we continue to hold the contractor's feet to the fire to make sure that they are following the obligations of the contract that they signed with us. They're entrusted to take care of our residents and I take that very seriously. I know that there has been a lot of direction from the Department of Health to make sure that those contract parameters are being adhered to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one final question. One of the priorities for the draft business plan 2019-2020 indicates "The Department of Health will work with partner departments to determine options to invest in infrastructure for addictions treatment and elders' care." I'm wondering what specific options are currently being considered in these areas and when will they be made public. That's my final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish I could say more. With regard to addictions treatment, I'm sure members are aware that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated board of executives has recently written a letter of support to the program for the federal government to invest in a facility here in the territory, the last jurisdiction in the country that does not have an addictions and trauma treatment facility. As far as a timeline on that, I'm hoping that this federal budget would be a great time to announce it.

With regard to elder care, we are working with Partnerships BC on developing the elder model of care, where we want to make sure that we're addressing things a planned strategy. We want to make sure that we're providing the right quality of care with the size of the facilities in the right places.

I hate and I've always disliked when the minister responsible is like "we're working on it, we've got a report that we're waiting for, we're doing something about it" and there's not much meat behind it, but I can assure the member that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes with these reports so that I can action them as soon as I get some of the final product.

I hope that can alleviate the member's concerns. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Keyootak, you had a question? Please go ahead.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to make a correction before I start. When we're talking about lice and bed bugs here in Qikiqtaaluk, it's a bug. If it's not in somebody's hair, or when they're all over the place, we call them just "bugs" but if it's an animal or human hair, we call it lice. I just wanted to correct that terminology. We don't call them lice, we call them bugs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I had one question to ask. The minister mentioned earlier in opening statement the amount of \$4.3 million and for elders who are sent outside of Nunavut to facilities down south, are they only sent to Ottawa or are do they go to facilities in any of the other provinces from Nunavut? Are there any other facilities for elders? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To date our only provider right now for advanced care, especially dementia, is in Ottawa. I have, I believe right now, 28 residents of Nunavut that are in the Ottawa facility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Next, Mr. Quassa, you had a question?

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): I forgot where it was. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here. Here you state there are 13 or 14 new PY positions for 2019-2020. We know there are many positions that need to be filled that remain vacant. We are very aware of that. I simply wanted to get clarification of what new positions are being created. There are all of these other vacant positions. What is being done to fill all of those vacant positions? We continue to talk about vacant positions, so are you going to be doing something to better the situation in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Quassa. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I had mentioned it a little bit in an earlier response, but working with the new Department of Human Resources, getting a better capacity built from even within the Department of Health within our HR team is going to lead to more job competitions going out at all levels.

I know nursing we're looking at internally within our HR system on our nursing recruitment as well as physician contracting. We're looking very closely, especially with our nursing recruitment on what type of past activities have worked more than others where we've gone to certain schools or trade shows, or that type of thing, to look at expanding our presence for nursing competitions. I think to me, when we're looking at our Human Resource Division within the Department of Health, working with the Department of Human Resources, that's where we need to streamline our processes better.

We've made some improvement with having standardized job descriptions. It makes the process faster. You're not having to evaluate another job because it's the same as the one we just did two months ago. We have standardized some of our job descriptions which have made things a little bit faster.

If I understood correctly, with regard to the new positions, a lot of those are to provide either additional services within a community or to be able to alleviate workload in different positions, like the assistants like I was talking about earlier, so that supervisor of health programs in a community isn't spending half their day on administrative work, where we could get somebody from the community to be doing that work. To me, that's where efficiencies are going to come in. I hope that answered the member's question.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that. Recently you wrote a letter to our chairperson of the committee, Ms. Nakashuk, or to the committee, as MLAs you wrote us a letter. You identified which communities have (interpretation ends) mental health or addictions outreach positions. (interpretation) Those were the ones you gave us information on. I noticed that in Igloolik we don't have one. We know Igloolik has the largest population outside of Iqaluit in Baffin region. We don't have a mental health worker. I really noticed. What have you done about the situation? As of now, has that changed? I need some clarification from you. Like you said earlier, there are 13 or 14 new PYs in 2019-2020 will be filled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Quassa. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my understanding, the Igloolik position is actually accepting resumes right now. There is a CSA that's in there right now in Igloolik. My apologies; that just got scratched out.

Right now those positions are filled by CSA only. So when we look at the positions, the 13 mental health and addiction outreach position that the member was talking about, in addition to that, there are 28 mental health nurses and psychiatric nurses that provide coverage across the territory. As the need arises we can move people around to cover the needs. Igloolik is not a small community anymore, so I do look forward to providing additional indeterminate mental health services there. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Quassa.

Mr. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you well know, Igloolik has recently experienced some hardships, several people passed away in the community, and three or four individuals were buried around the same time. We really need mental health outreach workers. I just wanted to mention that because this is a really big urgent issue. That is more of a comment than a question. That is all I have to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Quassa. We will take that as a comment and we will move on to the next member for questions and it is Mr. Kaerner. Please go ahead.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and your officials.

(interpretation ends) So we're under Directorate. Okay. One of the areas falling under the mandate of the Directorate Branch is human resources development. What specific steps are being taken to employ more Inuit in frontline occupations? That's my first question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you. When you're talking frontline, to me, there are different aspects of that. When we're looking at TB elimination of having public health assistants, when you're looking at the community health assistant in the health centre to take on administrative work, those are local people that we want to make sure we hire.

From a professional standpoint, we also have a number of people in our health profession development program. I believe there are 12 people in that program right now that are studying at a post-secondary level to bring their own qualifications up, not necessarily nursing but more from different health professions. I believe we have eight people in our first year, if I recall correctly, and four people that are in their second year of that program.

I can't remember the name of the institution off the top of my head for the member, but I'm sure if he's really curious, he can come and see me after and I can give him the detailed information, but just to confirm the numbers, we've got 12 Inuit health employees enrolled in a certificate diploma program in community health promotion at a training college in Ontario. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the information. The reason why I asked is that under the Inuit Employment Plan on page 160 of your business plan, it refers to a number of broad objectives to train and hire more Inuit but does not identify any specific health careers that are being targeted except for nursing. Why is that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nursing is just one of them. When I spoke earlier about the 12 people who are being sent down, these are different like program leads, program officers, senior program officers, program analysts, program advisors. We've got from 2016 we had a number of students enrolled, 15 have completed the course.

When I look at positions that are also community health development coordinators, regional wellness program coordinators, community health representatives, community wellness coordinators, these are positions that lead the community in access to services. These are very important that we're targeting to have local people working in them.

The Nursing Program is great, but they're not graduating 20 nurses a year, right? We want to make sure that when we're taking a look at different education opportunities, your colleague to your left wrote a written question today about the education programming. We've got a beneficiary in a psychology program right now. We're taking a look at all positions, not just nursing.

When we talk as a government of what we're trying to provide for Inuit employment, these are positions that we need to have local people in that understand the demographics and understand the community and can help the clinicians who are working in the communities to make their functionality better, that they're integrated into the community, they know the dynamics, they can understand the issues, and can help the community understand the clinical side of things as well.

We've had people on CSAs that we have direct appointed to positions that have been there for a while. The door is wide open for anything and everything of anything that I can push to hire more people locally. It alleviates turnover. It alleviates pressures on staff housing. The more people we hire locally, the better Nunavut is going to achieve success. I am not going to stand in the way of any progress that way. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Inuit Employment Plan the reason why I asked that is not that I'm against the nurses. They're really helping in the communities. Under the department's Inuit Employment Plan, the Department of Health is the biggest one. I cannot recall the numbers, but I believe there are a whole lot of vacant positions throughout the territory, so I was just asking to follow up with the Inuit Employment Plan.

Will the department make it a priority to hire more Inuit as you have mentioned in your opening comments, the midwifery program, which is a pilot project in the Kitikmeot region? If that pilot project goes well under that plan, will you extend that program to other regions, like the Kivalliq and Qikiqtaaluk? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we can improve health outcomes and make a difference, and that is the whole purpose of the pilot program that we're looking at expanding right now; absolutely. If it's going to make more sense to provide that care in the community; absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Alright! It will definitely benefit our territory, employment-wise. As you have mentioned, our territory has the highest birth rate throughout the nation. So this would definitely benefit, not just one community, but the whole territory. If this would go on, children would not be left behind by their parents. They would stay in the community and deliver their baby. That would make more of an exciting thing. I've experienced that before, and it's a tremendously positive thing, rather than her going out and I wait with my seven-year-old boy. It would really decrease the worry of the parent and also the child that is left behind.

Let me move on to another matter. There was a report tabled on November 20 on addictions and trauma treatment, referred to as the Inuit workforce development component of this initiative, which will focus on providing Inuit with the skills delivery services related to addiction and trauma recovery. Will the department be focussing on Inuit specific training initiatives in any other areas of health services delivery? That will be my final question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Not exactly sure where the member is going with this. When we look at providing culturally appropriate care, it encompasses all the care that we work towards. That's what I said earlier, where I believe it was a question that I had yesterday, we're looking at providing more consistent orientation to health care staff coming into the community. Part of that is cultural competency training. We've only had two sessions to date. I believe there is another one coming up in the next month or two. I don't recall the exact time on that, but regardless I know there have been two to date because I spoke at the second one for a brief period, and the excitement nurses that are work in our communities.

Although it's outlined in the report specific to local workforce development, it encompasses all levels of health care. I would love to see Nunavut doctors, or more nurses, more psychiatrists. The list goes on and on. We need to develop those capacities within our territory to bring local knowledge into the clinical factor. Is that going to happen overnight? Heck no, but we need to continue work on it and continue to focus on it.

So it is questions like the member raises that continues to make sure that that is a priority within the department and I'm going to make sure it stays that way. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Against. Motion carried. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses out, and I will now rise to report progress. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Going back to the orders of the day. Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 22: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has considering Bill 19 and Bill 15 and would like to report that Bill 19 is immediately read for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. Is there a seconder? Thank you, Minister Sheutiapik. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion. Thank you. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Minister Hickes.

Item 23: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 19 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Third Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. All those opposed. Thank you. The motion is carried and Bill 19 is now ready for assent.

Before we proceed with the orders of the day to Item 24, Mr. Clerk, will you please ascertain if the Commissioner of Nunavut is ready to enter the Chamber to give assent to Bill 19.

Assent to Bills

Commissioner Nellie Kusugak (interpretation): Welcome. I'm glad to see you again. As the Commissioner of Nunavut, I am pleased to give assent to Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*.

Your work in this institution on behalf of all Nunavummiut is very important, and I am confident that your deliberations over the next few weeks will be productive. I look forward to your deliberations because your representation of Nunavut is very important.

I look forward to joining all of you again at the end of your sitting, and I'm sure that your constituents agree with me. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Going back to the orders of the day. Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go back to Item 6 in the *Orders of the Day*, Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to Item 6 in the *Orders of the Day*. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Item 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Kusugak.

Revert to Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It gives me great pleasure today to recognize a very good friend of mine and no stranger to the Assembly, Mr. Simeon Mikkungwak. Welcome to your House.

>>*Laughter*

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Mikkungwak, welcome to the gallery and always feel welcome.

>>*Laughter*

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our colleague was already recognized, but he wasn't here for the entire fall sitting, so I would also like to welcome the member (interpretation ends) from beautiful Baker Lake.

>>*Laughter*

An Hon. Member (interpretation): You're mistaken.

Hon. Patterk Netser: Oh, okay. (interpretation) I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) Mr. Mikkungwak, good to see you again.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names on my list. Going to Item 24. *Orders of the Day*. (interpretation ends) Mr. Clerk.

Item 24: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that there's now a meeting of the Regular Caucus at 9:30 tomorrow morning, followed by the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislation. Both meetings will take place in the Nanuq Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for February 21:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 17 – 5(2)
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 16
 - Bill 17

- Bill 18
- Bill 20
- Bill 21

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 15

21. Report of the Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 21, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:52*

