

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Gjoa Haven)

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(Quttiktuq)
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Economic Development and
Transportation; Minister of Energy*

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(Amittuq)

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

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Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

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(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)
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responsible for Indigenous Affairs;
Minister responsible for the Utility Rates
Review Council*

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(Rankin Inlet South)
*Minister of Finance, Chair of the
Financial Management Board;
Minister responsible for the
Nunavut Housing Corporation*

Hon. Joanna Quassa
(Aggu)
*Minister of Culture and
Heritage; Minister of
Languages; Minister responsible
for Seniors*

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
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Bobby Anavilok
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*Deputy Chair, Committee of the
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George Hickey
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*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the
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Minister responsible for
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Human Resources;
Minister responsible for the Status
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for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission*

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responsible for the Qulliq
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Hon. David Joanasie
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Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	1
Ministers' Statements	1
Members' Statements	5
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	7
Oral Questions.....	8
Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters.....	32
Tabling of Documents.....	33
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters	34
Report of the Committee of the Whole	67
Orders of the Day	68

A.

Daily References

Tuesday, May 31, 2022 1

B.

Ministers' Statements

022 – 6(2): Nunavut Mining Symposium 2022 (Akeegok) 1
023 – 6(2): Youth Mentorship Film Project (Nakashuk) 2
024 – 6(2): Inuusivut Men's Group Tour (Main) 2
025 – 6(2): CPRA Emerging Leader Award (Joanasie) 3
026 – 6(2): School-based Positive Mental Health Supports and Services (Gross)..... 4

C.

Members' Statements

039 – 6(2): 2022 High School Graduates of Naujaat (Malliki) 5
040 – 6(2): Aarluk Snowmobile Racing in Pangnirtung (Nakashuk)..... 5
041 – 6(2): Grise Fiord Fishing Derby (Akeegok, D) 6
042 – 6(2): 2021-2022 High School Graduates of Sanirajak (Kaernerker)..... 6

D.

Oral Questions

061 – 6(2): Vacant Staff and Public Housing (Hickes) 8
062 – 6(2): Green Housing Initiatives (Lightstone) 10
063 – 6(2): Airport Infrastructure (Quqqiaq) 12
064 – 6(2): Firearms Safety (Brewster)..... 14
065 – 6(2): Mandatory Wearing of Masks (Savikataaq) 16
066 – 6(2): Liquor Plebiscites (Anavilok)..... 18
067 – 6(2): Concerns with Kivalliq Inuit Centre (Malliki) 20

068 – 6(2): School Bus Needs in Sanikiluaq (Qavvik)	21
069 – 6(2): Program for Small Housing Units (Kaerner).....	23
070 – 6(2): Public Housing Rent Arrears (Killiktee)	25
071 – 6(2): Transportation for Medical Clients (Anavilok)	27
072 – 6(2): Construction Costs for Housing (Hickes).....	29

E.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 001 – 6(2): Report on the Review of the 2021 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut (Hickes)	32
--	----

F.

Tabling of Documents

018 – 6(2): 2014 Annual Report of the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Tribunal (Nakashuk). 33	
019 – 6(2): 2019 Annual Report of the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Tribunal (Nakashuk). 33	
020 – 6(2): 2020 Annual Report of the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Tribunal (Nakashuk). 33	
021 – 6(2): 2021 Annual Report of the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Tribunal (Nakashuk). 33	

G.

Bills

Bill 01 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2022-2023 – Health – Consideration in Committee.....	34
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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Hon. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:29*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Let us pray.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good day, my colleagues and Nunavummiut who are watching the proceedings.

(interpretation ends) Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 022 – 6(2): Nunavut Mining Symposium 2022

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After two years without a formal Nunavut Mining Symposium, the Nunavut Mining Symposium Society was able to successfully hold a return to the in-person conference and trade show from May 9 to 12, 2022. The event was moved from its usual early April date due to the public health order restrictions of large gatherings.

(interpretation ends) I am pleased to report that over 300 delegates from across Nunavut and Canada attended this year's event at the Aqsarniit Hotel in Iqaluit. Participants learned about the results of new exploration projects and company updates on activities now that Inuit employees have been fully reintegrated back into work at project sites again. Panels with representatives from industry, regulatory agencies, and institutions of public government enabled dialogue about current issues concerning the mineral exploration and mining sector. Topics included investor confidence, stakeholder engagement, and the regulatory and permitting processes.

Finally, the symposium contributed approximately \$500,000 in direct economic benefit to Iqaluit businesses involved in the coordination and hosting of the event. This is an important step in the city and territory's economic recovery in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The open dialogue and positive collaboration illustrated the values of working together for a common cause. It is encouraging to see that all involved parties have the best interest in mind for the future of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister for Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 023 – 6(2): Youth Mentorship Film Project

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this spring, Family Services provided \$70,000 in funding to the Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit Embrace Life Council to deliver a Youth Mentorship Film Project in partnership with Nunavut Marketing. The project targeted 15 youth in Iqaluit at the age of 13 to 18.

Participants learned how to operate cameras, lights, sound production, music videos, conduct interviews, and create social media videos, short films, and documentaries. They learned how to use film as an outlet of healthy and inclusive self-expression.

The workshop allowed youth to gain valuable life skills, including how to effectively express themselves, become role models and peer mentors, networking, collaboration skills, and how to appropriately manage their emotions. They developed a sense of pride, accomplishment, improved resiliency, increased self-esteem and confidence, and a sense of autonomy.

Mr. Speaker, the films created during the workshop touched on sensitive and relevant issues within Nunavut, based on the experiences of the youth. They examined youth suicide, housing insecurity, food insecurity, and drugs and alcohol abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of these youth for learning how to tell their stories in healthy ways, and I look forward to seeing more of what comes next. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 024 – 6(2): Inuusivut Men's Group Tour

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues, as well as the people of Arviat and Whale Cove.

Mr. Speaker, for the past year, the Department of Health's Inuusivut team has collaborated with the Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre to create a program dedicated to men's mental health. Under the direction of our senior advisor, Angutiit, the mental health and addictions team, has worked with men across the Kivalliq to develop and launch the men's healing and wellness program.

The 'Atii Angutiit' Tour saw facilitators travel to every Kivalliq community for men's workshops. The gatherings targeted men aged 17 to 35 and provided them opportunities to shape the future of men's programming for their community.

As a bonus and to encourage participation to draw men out to the events, there were motivational speaking and musical performances by musicians Hyper T, Agaaqtoq, and Nelson Tagoona. The performances and gatherings were well received, and photos from these events can be seen on the 'Atii Angutiit' Facebook page.

Unfortunately Coral Harbour's event was cancelled due to weather, and the Atii Angutiit Tour plans to make up for that in the next year. Following on the success in the Kivalliq, the tour will also head to the Kitikmeot in June and the Qikiqtaaluk region in the fall.

This program is a great example of Piliriqatigiinni/ikajuqtigiinni, with the men's programming being designed in partnership with those it will work to help. Thanks to this collaboration and the hard work of our Inuusivut team, we are building a stronger foundation to support men's community-level programming across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 025 – 6(2): CPRA Emerging Leader Award

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, members and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to recognize and congratulate Ms. Joanne Weedmark from my home community of Kinngait as the recipient of the 2022 Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) Emerging Leader Award. This national award recognizes the importance of supporting and celebrating young Canadians, as they are future leaders of the parks and recreation sector.

Mr. Speaker, the Recreation Parks Association of Nunavut nominated Ms. Weedmark for this prestigious award because of the leadership and dedication to recreation she has shown in her short time as the community recreation coordinator. Since taking on the role, Ms. Weedmark has developed a strong team of volunteers, youth leaders, and

community volunteers and has formed important partnerships, accessing funding and delivering community programs.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Ms. Weedmark continues her pathway as a leader by accessing professional development opportunities for herself to better serve her community. Ms. Weedmark has started her certificate course through Rec North and will be working with the Recreation Parks Association of Nunavut under a mentorship program, while maintaining her position with the Hamlet of Kinngait.

Mr. Speaker, this month, Ms. Weedmark, and six other young leaders from Kinngait will join recreation leaders from 14 other communities here in Iqaluit for leadership training so they can return home to their communities and deliver summer day camp programming.

In closing, Mr. Speaker I would like to recognize Ms. Weedmark and her colleagues throughout Nunavut for their role in delivering recreation programming in our communities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Minister's Statement 026 – 6(2): School-based Positive Mental Health Supports and Services

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Hello, colleagues and Nunavummiut and those in Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, we know when students struggling with mental health receive help and support needed, they are empowered to be themselves and subsequently lead healthy lives.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the Department of Education continues to take action to strengthen the mental health and well-being of our students. I am pleased to share with you that our department is expanding the support services available to students by rolling out school-based positive mental health support services.

Mr. Speaker, during the 2021-22 school year, 15 schools across Nunavut received a blend of in-person and remote services from mental health service providers who are experienced in working with children and youth in schools.

Our model is collaborative, recognizing that everyone has a role to play. Mental health service providers offer a range of services spanning mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention, and training, to ensure students connect with the right supports to meet their diverse needs. By working together with students, parents, ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijit, and school staff, positive mental health and well-being is fostered.

As we continue to expand these services across the territory, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the dedication and hard work of school staff who foster resiliency and create safe, caring and supportive learning environments for our students.
Quana, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 039 – 6(2): 2022 High School Graduates of Naujaat

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Naujaat and Coral Harbour.

I would like to recognize the students who graduated on May 10 in Naujaat, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the graduates. They are:

- Melina Qaunaq
- Sabrina Iyerak
- Selma Shaimaiyuk
- Heather Putulik
- Latisha Siusangnark
- Chrissie Kringayark

Those are the students who graduated and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. I have no more names. For Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Member's Statement 040 – 6(2): Aarluk Snowmobile Racing in Pangnirtung

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize an entity who initiated several events over the winter in Pangnirtung.

The Aarluk races began on February 6, and particularly in light of the COVID pandemic measures, as everyone was impacted and many people were not allowed to gather outside in groups, so this was strategized here in Pangnirtung. They organized outdoor events as the light and good weather was coming back this winter.

In the snowmobile races, there were 10 participants on the weekends and in the following months, it grew to 20 participants. In trying to support the community, funds were offered as prizes. Even though it wasn't monumental, it still ran well this spring during

Toonik Tyme. They sponsored a team at Toonik Tyme and they also won a few prizes in the Kimmirut race. The youth and the young people enjoyed the activities.

I want to recognize Charlie Komoartok, who was the founder, Noah Mosesee, and Roger Alivaktuk. I wanted to recognize them for their work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 041 – 6(2): Grise Fiord Fishing Derby

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in Grise Fiord, there was a celebratory gathering locally, and it is good to see people coming together once again, as there were activities initiated in the community hall, and also had a communal fishing derby last week and the prizes were given out yesterday, while having games and other activities.

It seemed quite alluring, and if things are fine, I anticipate going up on Friday to see if I can see my constituents in person. I will be trying to go up, so this is serving as notice to my constituents of that.

I want to thank Tivai Kiguktak, Christine Watsko, Susie Kiguktak, and the birthday girl, Ann Akeeagok. They worked as a committee to run the activities. I am thankful for that and for all those who participated and won as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernek.

Member's Statement 042 – 6(2): 2021-2022 High School Graduates of Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, members, Nunavummiut, and the residents of Amittuq.

Today I rise to voice our shared honour of celebrating and naming the graduates who completed their studies last year during the COVID pandemic. There was no opportunity to give out their award presentations at the time.

The 2020-21 graduates are:

- Haily Arnaqjuaq
- Harry Gibbons
- Matthew Morgan
- Eugene Gibbons
- Iris Qanatsiak

- Dawson Pikuyak

These students graduated last year from Sanirajak and this year's graduates in Sanirajak are:

- Dominica Halleran
- Calvin Gibbons
- Colby Apak
- Rose Pikuyak
- Kailey Naulaq
- Ena Ireqittuq
- Cassidy Evalak
- Evie Nartok
- Mike Jr. Malliki

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the grade 12 graduates. We are very proud of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. I have no more names. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Brewster, Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize our guests, Rachel Pereira, my friend Jenny Ipirq, and Tiu Tiu, Seané d'Argencourt-Printup. I want to say welcome home, Bubba. It's so good to see you here.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about standing for Ukraine, I think about my friend, Daniel Legacy, who is of Ukrainian and Métis descent and we are standing with you, your family, and your country. Daniel makes some of the best pierogis that I have ever tasted and, if anybody wants to challenge me on that, I am really happy to try your pierogis. Welcome. Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Lightstone, Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been about two years since I have been able to stand up in this House and recognize visitors in the gallery, and I'm glad that Ms. Brewster beat me to the punch because I have to admit, I have yet to try Mr. Legacy's pierogis, although I do make some very good pierogis myself.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, of course it is an honour to recognize Mr. Daniel Legacy as well as Jenny Ipirq in this Assembly, but it's also a great honour to recognize my long-time friend and Inuksuk High School graduate, Ms. Seané d'Argencourt-Printup.

Ms. d'Argencourt-Printup is an exceptional, competent young individual whose capabilities are absolutely astounding. She is absolutely one of the young women to watch in Nunavut and I'm sure she will do amazing things and make substantial contributions to Nunavut, and I would not be surprised if there is a minister in the near future who will be standing up in this Assembly in recognizing her as a future emerging leader.

Thank you all for joining us here in the Assembly and welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 061 – 6(2): Vacant Staff and Public Housing

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, last March we were informed in this House that there were approximately 150 staff housing units that are currently unusable and at least 60 of those which are here in Iqaluit. With the identified staff housing need, when can we expect these units to be put back into usable inventory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of staff housing units across the territory that are currently not usable, as the member said.

Our department is working with the appropriate contractors or within our department to try to solve those problems. Some of them are very simple that once the building is vacated or the house is vacated, they repair a couple of light switches or something minor like that. Some of them involve a lot more work than that where they have to repair Gyproc and/or carpeting or flooring. They're all at different stages of being repaired, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know if we will ever see the day where they are all in working condition, but our goal is to try to turn around units that demand a little more than just clean and move into,

those that require work. We're trying to turn those around within anywhere from 15 to 90 days, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response, and I'm sure I will be following up in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, when I brought forward this issue in March, it was because of how many empty units I came across when campaigning last fall, and it surprised me in the housing crunch. Along those same lines, how many public housing units are uninhabitable across the territory and how many of those are located here in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I continually have trouble trying to untangle my headphones.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of houses across Nunavut that are in disrepair. I can't think of a community where there are no housing units that are in disrepair, Mr. Speaker. The local housing associations are constantly struggling to try to improve those units and those communities where the units need to be repaired, oftentimes a majority of the communities don't have supply readily available to replace Gyproc and/or insulation or what have you and sometimes they need to wait for the sealift season.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a detailed number of how many units are in disrepair in the city of Iqaluit and how long they will take to have them replaced and repaired and habitable again. I would sure be glad to provide it with my colleague and Members of this House when I get those detailed numbers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to seeing those firm numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of us have been in households that are in substantial damage and that type of damage doesn't occur in one year, when the LHOs have to provide their annual inspection. Hopefully the minister will push the LHOs across the territory to make sure that they complete those inspections on an annual basis so that they don't get into such a serious need of disrepair that they are uninhabitable.

Mr. Speaker, with the update that we received of new housing tenders that have been cancelled or deferred, what is the plan for the monies appropriated if not for new housing construction, or will those amounts be submitted for carryover in the future budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: I really appreciate the opportunity to update in terms of the cancelled tenders for this year, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that the Nunavut Housing Corporation had to go down that route, especially when our mandate that we discussed all together in this House was that we need to prioritize housing. Unfortunately it's not at any cost. I know what we're doing right now is to make a change for the better; it's to be able to bring houses to Nunavummiut at a more deliverable cost so that we could build more with the money we do have.

I have no intention of letting the money go back and we do nothing with it. We will have to see still, as we still have time to catch the last barge or a barge or ship of getting material into communities. We are still working on that front to see what we can still do for this building season. It may not be available for those communities that we pulled from, but at any rate, it doesn't mean that those communities where we cancelled the projects that they're not getting houses anymore. They will be, Mr. Speaker.

They might need to wait a year, but we are working on that. We will not give up on that. We are still planning to see what we could do in terms of providing houses for this year in communities where we may be able to still be doing that. If it means we have to carryover and build that many more in the next building season, we are actually continuing to work on that. We are determined to build more houses into Nunavut communities and we will continue down that path, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 062 – 6(2): Green Housing Initiatives

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are also for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation and are in relation to green housing initiatives.

As the minister is very much aware, I am a strong supporter of initiatives to decarbonize our economy and I am a vocal proponent of initiatives to green our housing.

During last Friday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I was pleased to hear the Minister of Environment update the House on the status of the Renewable Energy Support Program. In his statement the minister indicated that close to 100 applications were received from Nunavummiut during the 2021-22 fiscal year.

As the minister is aware, this program is jointly offered by the Department of Environment and the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Under this program, homeowners can receive a one-time, non-repayable grant to "help offset the cost of installing a renewable energy system."

I would like to ask: can the minister clarify how many applications were approved for Iqaluit homeowners during the 2021-22 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I knew my time sitting down yesterday was going to be short-lived. I appreciate the question.

I remember it wasn't that long ago, Mr. Speaker, my parents, the biggest carbon footprint they used to have was at the end of the wick of a *qulliq* and here we are today talking about going back to reducing our carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, the homeowners that applied for the renewable energy program in Iqaluit, all three of them, were approved for this program. I would like to advise my colleague and people out there that we are still accepting applicants for this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for that response. I also support the minister's encouragement to inform homeowners of the program as well as applying for this.

Mr. Speaker, green housing initiatives are an important element of our public housing program. As the minister will recall, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's most recently tabled annual report indicated that "We are also reaping the benefits of Low Carbon Energy Funding. It is being used to install more than 1,200 windows and 400 doors in 2020-21. Energy efficiency is key to ensuring that we can afford the operating costs on our housing units as our supply increases, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

I would like to ask: can the minister indicate how many public housing units in Iqaluit benefitted from this initiative during the 2021-22 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Again I thank my colleague for the question. Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we work on the low-carbon energy footprint in all housing association and public housing also.

In Iqaluit there were three targets. We had target 1, target 2, and target 3. If there was a target 4, I'm sure we would have called it "target 4." Anyway, in target 1, it was window and door replacements where in Iqaluit there were 118 units that fit in that category or that window. On target 2, which is hot water tank replacements, two units were dealt with through that, and in target 3, it was in water, boiler and furnace replacements and there were two units that went through that program, Mr. Speaker.

Some of that work is continuing and we are hoping to see it end in the near future, that the work on those will be complete. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I would like to thank the minister for that response, and I would just like to give the minister some advance notice that I will be following up on that topic of the hot water tank and boiler and furnace replacements at a more appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to my final question, as the minister will also recall, he participated in a recent federal announcement on April 13 that took place here in Iqaluit concerning new federal investments in housing. The announcement indicated that the 2022 federal budget “proposes \$300.0 million over five years to co-develop and launch an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy.” It also indicated that an additional \$150.0 million will be used to “develop the Canada Green Buildings Strategy.”

I would like to ask the minister if he can indicate how the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be involved in developing these strategies so that they contribute to our goal of supporting green housing initiatives that strengthen our climate change resiliency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any work towards developing a housing strategy, whether it be indigenous or provincial or territorial government-led, I applaud because we need all the housing strategy and houses we need regardless of who drives them and who delivers them, Mr. Speaker.

In this particular model that my colleague is talking about, this is driven by the aboriginal organizations and indigenous organizations. Mr. Speaker, having said that, our department will be closely monitoring the progress of this and we will, wherever possible and whenever possible, have input into it or see where we could have input into it. We will keep our ear to the ground on this.

Mr. Speaker, in the latter part of June, I will be participating in a meeting with my provincial, federal and territorial counterparts on housing, and at that meeting I will have a side meeting with my territorial counterparts. I’m sure a discussion around this will happen and we will work collectively to see what kind of input we could have and which path would be the best for us to have that input, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 063 – 6(2): Airport Infrastructure

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, in August 2021 the federal government announced \$30.0 million in funding under the National Trade Corridors Fund for the construction of new mobile equipment shelters at seven Nunavut airports, including the Kugaaruk and Taloyoak airports.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Legislative Assembly approved capital funding towards these projects and I was proud to have supported this project.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm the timeline for issuing and awarding the tenders for the new mobile equipment shelters in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still working on the agreement and we haven't set any dates yet for the seven planned projects, but the planning is proceeding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister clarify what the Inuit labour content will be for the tenders for the construction of the new mobile equipment shelters in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once it's tender-ready, when it's at that stage, then the determination of what the Inuit content will be will be calculated into those for both the communities. It's until the end and then we will have the Inuit content because it all depends on how many projects are taking place in the community, not just government but all throughout because then they calculate the Inuit labour market within those communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government's announcement indicated that the new equipment shelters will be "leased to private sector carriers and operators in these communities." Mr. Speaker, can the minister update the House today on the status of his department's lease negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's premature right now. What we need to do is get the designs and the planning done. That is what is going to allow how big the area is going to be for leasing, and once we can get to that, then we will approach

the private sector such as the airlines to see for lease opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Question 064 – 6(2): Firearms Safety

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my turn to congratulate and to ask some questions to the new Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, my questions today concern the issue of firearms safety.

As the minister will recall, his department announced a new "Firearms Safety Nunavut" campaign in December of last year. The stated purpose of the campaign is to "decrease firearms-related incidents in the territory while encouraging safe firearms handling, storage and use."

Mr. Speaker, although I love being on the land, I have to admit that I prefer using nets over guns, so I'm not an expert in gun use. However, I very much appreciate and respect the importance of ensuring that our hunters and other residents can access support in this area.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of his department's firearms safety campaign? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member her question on firearms safety. Firearms safety is always of utmost importance. It should be at the very top of our minds. At the moment, I apologize, I'm not up to date on the campaign of where they are actually at, but I do know they are working on some new initiatives that I'm hoping to announce this fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to hearing back from you on that question, minister.

As the minister is aware, harvesters and residents who wish to legally purchase hunting rifles or ammunition need to be certified in order to obtain their firearms licences.

It is my understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the delivery of firearms certification courses throughout Nunavut.

Can the minister update the House today on how his department is working with the RCMP and other stakeholders to deliver courses in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member again for her question. We are in the process of bringing in a new commanding officer for the territory. That is one of the subjects we will actually be discussing going forward because we have to have a shared statement on what we want to see and what the new commanding officer would like to prioritize, maybe. There is some work we have to do on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, the federal government introduced Bill C-21 in the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker, as you know, there have been far too many gun-related tragedies in Nunavut over the years.

Although the headlines in the news have focused on occurrences in places like Quebec City and the United States, we must not lose sight of the fact that Nunavut is not immune to the scourge of gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21 includes measures “addressing intimate partner violence, gender-based violence and self-harm involving firearms by creating a new ‘red flag’ law that would enable courts to require that individuals considered a danger to themselves or others surrender their firearms to law enforcement, while protecting the safety of the individual applying to the red flag process, including by protecting their identity.”

Mr. Speaker, as a Nunavut MLA and a Canadian citizen, I strongly support measures such as this.

For the record, what is the Minister of Justice’s official position concerning the proposed federal legislation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the bill being so new, we haven’t had time to fully review it. I myself haven’t fully reviewed it at all, but I am in favour of anything we can do to help save people. I do support it. Intimate partner violence should never, ever happen. I am in favour of whatever we can do to try to protect our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 065 – 6(2): Mandatory Wearing of Masks

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say “good day” to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask some questions to the Minister of Health on mask requirements, and for the record, I wear my mask. I’m not anti-mask. I’m fully vaccinated against COVID and boosted, as the minister said before, so I’m boosted too.

Mr. Speaker, on April 11 the public health emergency order was lifted. Since masks are no longer mandatory for the public, private businesses may continue because it’s their premises and they can make what rules they want. The Government of Nunavut will require masks at all GN offices. Masks are mandatory at all health facilities, elders facilities, Akausisarvik, outpatient clinics, Iqaluit Public Health, and my understanding is, in schools.

Now, for the record, Mr. Speaker, under what authority are the current masking requirements being made? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for the question. (interpretation ends) In terms of responding to the question, I can speak to the health facilities. In terms of the other facilities that were mentioned, schools, I would suggest those questions would be best directed to the Minister of Education and for GN workplaces as well, it would be to another minister.

For the health facilities, the authority we are using is a communicable disease order, and that is under the *Public Health Act*. That is where we are requiring that health facilities operated by the Department of Health, continuing care and long-term care facilities, that masks are required. Mr. Speaker, just to add, the reason for us continuing to require this is pretty simple: it’s that masks work. Masks are very easy. They are a very simple public health tool and they are very effective.

Mr. Speaker, I think that masks are part of our lives for the foreseeable future and I would encourage anyone in Nunavut who is either experiencing, it could be a cold, it could be you are feeling uncomfortable in terms of the amount of risk that you are facing, in terms of an indoor gathering, feel free to wear your mask any time that you would like. To those who are not wearing masks, I would encourage them to respect others’ decisions to wear masks because we are living in the new normal under COVID-19. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason I asked about the government offices and all the other stuff is because this news release came from the Department of Health. It was the Department of Health's news release about wearing masks is still mandatory.

The minister alluded back to this a bit, but the chief public health officer, the good doctor, Dr. Patterson did state earlier this spring that COVID is here to stay. It's a fact of our lives now. Thankfully most Nunavummiut are vaccinated now, and that is why the emergency health order was able to be lifted and we know more about COVID-19 now, but I ask the minister: are Nunavummiut going to be mandated to wear masks in these facilities indefinitely? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As it is, in terms of the health facilities that I can speak to, the authority comes from the *Public Health Act* and so it would be under the guidance of the chief public health officer. I'm not aware of any plans to do away with the masking requirement in terms of the health facilities. For the foreseeable future, masks will be part of the regime that is in place.

I would like to emphasize that masks are not necessarily about personal freedom; masks are about personal responsibility. If you are visiting with elders in the case of a long-term care facility, it's about the responsibility that you have as a visitor in terms of protecting the individuals and the employees in that facility and making sure that they are experiencing as low of a risk as possible.

It's unfortunate that in Canada, much like vaccines, masks have become quite divisive. They have been politicized and, from where I sit as the Minister of Health, I don't think they should be a political issue. I see it as a very powerful public health tool and again, I'll encourage people to wear masks whenever they feel they want to. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry if the minister gets the wrong message from me. I'm not trying to politicize masks or vaccines. Nunavummiut deserve to know what is being expected of them for the coming days, months, or years. It is not to politicize masks. Like I said, I wear mine. It's just so Nunavummiut have to be informed so that they can know what to expect, so Nunavummiut will say, "Well, for the coming years to come, I will be required to wear a mask and I will make that adjustment." It's not to politicize it. It is to inform Nunavummiut and the House of what is expected. That is just a comment I have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. That just being a comment. Oral Questions. The man in black, member from Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

>>Laughter

Question 066 – 6(2): Liquor Plebiscites

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Good day, Kuglukturmiut, Nunavummiut, and fellow colleagues.

(interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Finance and they concern the issue of plebiscites held under the territorial *Liquor Act*.

Earlier this month, residents of Kugluktuk voted in favour of changing the community's status under the *Liquor Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my constituents for making their voices heard. In his recent announcement concerning the results of the plebiscite, the minister stated that "To accommodate the plebiscite result, the Government of Nunavut will move forward with making the necessary regulatory changes."

Can the minister clarify when the new regulations will be approved by cabinet and come into force? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from my colleague, the man in black.

>>Laughter

Mr. Speaker, it was good to see a healthy turnout in the plebiscite in Kugluktuk. This is the first time a plebiscite has been done in that manner in terms of detailing out what kind of alcohol that individuals would be able to order in and in what specific amounts.

Mr. Speaker, that being said, with this new system and new details in that plebiscite, our department is working very carefully to ensure that things run smoothly through that. Once we have a good draft regulation given to our cabinet to review, I anticipate that we should be able to come up with a timeline of coming into force sometime in the month of August of this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you for the response. The minister's recent announcement also stated that "If residents of the community wish to revisit the matter in the future, a petition requesting a new plebiscite can be sent to the Minister of Finance."

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Netsilik also raised this issue last week.

Can the minister clarify the circumstances under which he would order a new plebiscite to be held in Kugluktuk? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my previous response to the member that my colleague is referring to, I believe the guidelines for requesting a plebiscite requires 20 signatures with a clear indication of what the plebiscite question would be imposed on that. That is what would be required for us to look at coming with a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you for that reply. (interpretation ends) The residents of Kugluktuk have chosen to move to a restricted quantities system for the community. Can the minister describe how his department will work with the Municipality of Kugluktuk to evaluate the impact of this change on the community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point we will bring forward the changes to reflect the wishes of the community in terms of how they want to control alcohol and its purchase in their community.

What I did not mention, though, in terms of the plebiscite, if I may go back to that, is there is no set term in terms of when they should have another plebiscite once one is done. Having said that, it takes a lot of effort, a lot of work and financial implications when one is running a plebiscite, so our department has agreed that we will entertain one at least no sooner than three years before another plebiscite is done. We use that as a guideline.

Having said that, we will work with the municipality, we will keep our ear to the ground, and I'm sure my colleague and members of Kugluktuk, as they have done in this case where they went from being a dry community to having no restrictions and now asking for restrictions, the community is the best people to monitor where their community is going in this particular case in terms of alcohol. We will keep our ear to the ground and monitor the situation in that community and work with the community if they so wish, at an appropriate time, to re-establish or do another plebiscite with a different question. We will work with them at that time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 067 – 6(2): Concerns with Kivalliq Inuit Centre

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, concerns have been raised by a number of my constituents regarding the services at the Kivalliq Inuit Centre in Winnipeg.

(interpretation ends) *Uqaqtittijii*, can the minister provide an update on which entity currently holds the contract to operate the Kivalliq Inuit Centre and when the contract will expire? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. With respect to the question, the Kivalliq Development Corporation holds the contract and it will expire on March 31, 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It has been brought to my attention that the services standards at the Kivalliq Inuit Centre are not at an acceptable level. My constituents have noted that the facility is not very welcoming and they are having negative experiences.

Can the minister describe what specific steps are taken by his staff to address concerns that are raised regarding services provided at the Kivalliq Inuit Centre? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the management teams involved with the corporation are who we have met with and discussed the common concerns, or when we are apprised of the matter, we incorporate it into our discussions and look for ways to resolve the issues in partnership with them. We last had a meeting recently on April 19 last month with the Kivalliq Development Corporation.

If there are concerns or if there was any dissatisfaction, you can go through the (interpretation ends) Office of Patient Relations (interpretation) who represent our department on this level. The toll-free number is 855-438-3003. They are very good at addressing matters of concern.

Last year in 2021, the Office of Patient Relations helped 393 patients who were dissatisfied with the services that they were provided, so this highlights the level of assistance this office does provide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, other Members of this House have raised concerns with respect to contracted services provided at boarding homes, not just for the Baffin region residents but also residents in the Kitikmeot.

I recognize that the minister and his staff work with the contractors to address the concerns when they arise. However, it often seems that after a short period of improvement, service standards start to drop again.

Will the minister commit to working with the contractors on a regular basis, and not just in response to complaints and concerns, to ensure that the services provided at the regional boarding homes meet the standards specified in their contracts at all times? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I'm not going to commit to that at this point, the reason being that the commitment would be meaningless because what the member has asked me to commit to is already standard operating practice for the department. We do meet regularly with the contractors. We do address issues when they do arise.

We have the Office of Patient Relations, which doesn't just look at individual issues and fix individual issues; they're also collecting data about what types of issues are getting raised by medical travellers or by other individuals. The Office of Patient Relations will take, if they notice a trend, they will report that trend up the chain, so to speak, to the management committees that we have within the department. There is a mechanism in place where people can flag complaints. We have regular updates with the boarding home operators.

I would just encourage the member and medical travellers out there that if you do have an issue, please raise it directly with the operator and, if that's not satisfactory to you, please bring it to the department through the Office of Patient Relations and we will look into it. We want them to have a good and healthy medical travel experience. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Question 068 – 6(2): School Bus Needs in Sanikiluaq

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of Sanikiluaq.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, there are two schools in Sanikiluaq, an elementary school and a high school. However, there is only one school bus.

Can the minister clearly explain how her department determines school busing needs in Nunavut's communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to our colleague for the question. The provision of school bus services is outlined in the *Education Act* and the power is distributed through the district education authority, so in our colleague's case, through the district education authority in Sanikiluaq. The department reviews all of the accesses to busing requirements and it's based on the School Busing Allocation Policy. The department reviews and assesses vehicle requirements on an ongoing basis. In Sanikiluaq's case, having one school bus and if a second bus is required, we take requests on an ongoing basis and we review those requests annually and determine through a ranking order system how and which communities will receive new buses.

The number of factors that are required on our scales for busing depends on the number of students and the community requiring the bus services as a proportion to the number of bus seats available. We also go on the presence of wildlife in the community and that's a factor if it poses a risk to our students. The amount of daylight experienced by the community is also another factor. As we know, many of our communities have twilight for a number of months and that increases for the community, but we also have average temperature as another factor and the presence of uneven terrain in the community which is difficult for students to travel across on foot, and the final one is the age of the school bus and that is another factor and the final factor that is evaluated for our school busing needs and how we assess which communities receive new buses. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the explanations on how busing services are determined. There is one limiting factor that I would like to personally note about the amount of daylight I experience here, in our community we get dark every night, and I have been having a hard time getting to sleep here in Iqaluit because it is very light.

Mr. Speaker, given the growing number of students in Sanikiluaq, it would seem quite clear that two buses are required. Having elementary school students and high school students sharing the same bus is not ideal.

Can the minister tell us what factors are taken into consideration when the department evaluates school busing needs in a community and, specifically, what policies are in place to ensure that elementary school students and high school students have equal access to busing services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. We would hope to have all of our students' needs met. However, we do require that information to be shared with the Department of Education. If your community or any of our other communities do require buses, we have an ongoing list of our communities and our buses, and hopefully we are meeting all of our communities' needs. However, we do know our communities are growing and we are happy to accept proposals and through a letter or email from the DEA or other members in this House explaining, maybe using a motion from the DEA, that their community would like a new bus as they're outgrowing their needs. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the answers. Mr. Speaker, the Sanikiluaq school bus has a limited number of seats. To transport students during lunch hour and after school, it has to make at least two trips back and forth to the elementary school and at least one trip to the high school. As students tend to wait for the second or third trip, their lunch hour is delayed and classes risk being disrupted.

Will the minister commit to working with the Sanikiluaq District Education Authority to get a second school bus for the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to our colleague for the question. I will commit to working with our department and Sanikiluaq and any other community that also requires the services. I can't guarantee that Sanikiluaq will be a recipient of a new school bus this fiscal or in the next time. I'm not the one to decide; it's the ranking scale that I outlined in the first answer in response to how the requirements are for the selection of how community needs are met and in which order they go based on points.

I can assure the member that I will be sure to work with the member on busing or additional busing for his community. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Question 069 – 6(2): Program for Small Housing Units

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services.

Now, an example of small houses was shown or made publicly available for viewing this winter, I believe. Was this one of the events impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? I would like to understand if the minister can elaborate on this, whether this was just a one-time blip or will this continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. This question you raised has come up on occasion and the program has been well received by the communities, as this winter the Department of Family Services reintroduced this program as it was provided previously in the past.

We worked with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and held meetings to discuss the needs and requisitions from the communities in coming up with that funding. The fund totals \$640,000 which was accessed this fiscal year and there are 16 communities that received funds to build cabins or tiny homes.

Following the popularity of this program, we are looking at it again and to see how we can provide those types of services to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think she peeked at my questions listing; just kidding.

Now, the \$640,000 that was available, I believe she indicated that there were 16 communities that accessed this very popular program. I would like to ask if any requests arrived from communities in the Amittuq region, namely, Sanirajak or Igloodik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that follow-up question. Out of the 16 communities that I referenced, there are some communities who resubmitted further requests in the previous fiscal year, so prior to the reintroduction, we looked at the level of interest, and when this funding was made available, there were some that had different local programs apply towards this funding.

In looking at the breakdown of the budget items, there are different funds used for cabin or small home construction examples, community food security assistance programs, since we provided funding assistance for clients under income support as both the Department of Family Services and other departments had funds for this, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We provided food vouchers and in Sanirajak there were monies available to access food during the COVID pandemic. I can check into the actual amounts and respond to that in further detail later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, since the minister stated that this program is running quite successfully, and that it wasn't just for cabins, but also for tangible benefits such as food vouchers, this is probably why they are searching for more funding.

I urge the minister to provide a satisfactory response. During this process, can this funding be made available further to Nunavummiut so they don't get "cabin fever"?

>> *Laughter*

Literal translation is a cabin getting a fever.

However, with this program, I wonder if the minister can agree to propose this once again in this House. This spring due to the long days already, people are out, elders are out, and people will migrate to their cabins. Can the minister agree to have this program again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. Now, for those communities that have not applied for this small cabin project program, there will be more communication efforts to determine interest.

We urge all communities to contact our departmental offices, and particularly in light of my earlier comment about this type of program funding being popular, it is undergoing further study to determine how to make it more accessible for the communities, so that it meets community needs. It's still under review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 070 – 6(2): Public Housing Rent Arrears

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): That's great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those who are in the Visitors' Gallery, please feel welcome.

My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, and they concern the issue of public housing rent arrears.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation's most recent annual report indicates that the local housing organizations in Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River are owed a total of approximately \$5.7 million in rent arrears. This revenue is important for the housing associations in the communities.

Can the minister indicate how the Nunavut Housing Corporation is supporting local housing organizations in collecting outstanding rent arrears? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague is correct that some arrears in communities are large and also hard to collect and pay. We have to decide on whether we are going to eat or we are going to pay the rent, and the time that we have gone through, the rent arrears have grown with the housing associations in the communities.

When they require assistance in dealing with these, we have regional housing staff that support the housing associations in trying to come up with some ways to minimize the rent arrears. It's not a large amount, but a small amount that you chip away at the large bill. They work with clients in the communities to minimize the rental arrears before they go too far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems the debt piles really fast. We know the constraints on funding. The money is slow to come in and the spending is out the door. I'm glad you feel the situation and to deal with it.

There are many residents...I stand here today. The long-term debts that have been accumulated with the rental of the units and the children start to get housing and the debt becomes smaller or the debt grows with them and they have a hard time getting units. With overcrowding, sometimes there are 12 people in one- or two-bedroom units. We are aware of these situations. We know them.

Where the debts are not going to be cleaned off, I feel for the tenants, for my constituents. They have to have a safe home, no matter what.

(interpretation ends) In 2021 the Nunavut Housing Corporation commissioned a review of the public housing rent scale. (interpretation) Any options or any thoughts coming out of that review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful that you're mentioning this. We don't like throwing tenants out for those who aren't paying rent. On March 31, 2021 the total debt is \$41.27 million and no doubt it's a higher amount now. We are looking at options and trying to figure out ways between lack of housing and those who can pay rent or don't have a house and those who can't pay rent have a house.

The corporation and the local housing association boards are looking to work with communities to deal with the rental arrears. We will keep looking for options when we are rolling out the construction of units and we wonder how we can improve and minimize this. It's still work in progress. Thank you for bringing this up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I totally agree. As you are aware, as members of communities that we represent, the people struggle with very little means and people are embarrassed at the size of their debt. You don't want that to be public information.

In English, (interpretation ends) the Nunavut Housing Corporation's business plan indicates that one of its priorities has been to "Continue to monitor and review impact of collections policy and procedures to reduce Local Housing Organization arrears and continue to develop and implement Local Housing Organization deficit recovery plans."

(interpretation) Due to that reason, can the minister confirm which local housing organizations are currently in deficit and whether more avenues could be opened in communication with the communities? We should look at this as a social issue where people have debts for their housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult subject of rental arrears. Even when you owe somebody money, it becomes a displeasure to see them and that's the way this works. When you know when you have debt arrears, this too is the same way. We are aware and we remind them that they do have a housing debt and whether they can make small payments of \$10 or \$20 over and above the minimum rent required, we do offer that option.

Some local housing associations have brought in housing corporation staff to assist in collecting. Sometimes it's better to get an outside voice from the housing corporation to assist them in trying to reduce the debts and to work with communities. Sometimes when you're related to too many people in the community, you need an outside voice to work with the clients to try to reduce these debts and how we can deal with them. We do look at options with the LHOs, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 071 – 6(2): Transportation for Medical Clients

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Transportation and medical clients, Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on a question asked by my colleague from Amittuq on the issue of transportation for medical clients. I was pleased to hear the minister commit to doing a review of his department's medical transportation policy.

Can the minister provide an update on what types of transportation are provided to medical clients in our communities, whether it is to their airport for medical travel or from their home to the health centre? If there is no such transportation, can he explain why it is not provided? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. (interpretation ends) *Uqaqtitsijii*, the Department of Health, as I mentioned previously, does not provide non-emergency medical ground transportation in communities, but we do provide emergency ground transportation from health centres to a medevac plane and to admitting hospitals once the medevac has reached its destination. This is covered either under Non-Insured Health Benefits or under employer insurance plans. In some instance, for that service, the coverage is provided by the Department of Health and we work with local carriers to provide this service. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I recognize the importance of having emergency vehicles to provide ambulance services in our communities. The Hamlet of Kugluktuk has an ambulance for this purpose. However, the ambulance is often not used as there are not many emergencies.

I want to share something with you, if I may. An incident happened in Kugluktuk a couple of weeks ago. About two weeks ago, it took nurses more than 10 minutes to get to a home. I thought that was a fair amount of time to save a person's life, I think.

Can the minister verify whether it would be possible to tender out a new contract with the Hamlet of Kugluktuk to provide transportation services, especially for those with mobility issues, so that the ambulance could also be used to transport medical clients to and from their appointments at the health centre? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. It would, in theory, be possible to tender that out, but we currently don't have any plans to do so. If I understand the member's first question correctly, he is asking about emergency situations and also non-emergent.

Back in 2009, Health formally had requested from the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch that the non-emergent ground transportation be included as a benefit for Nunavut Inuit. That request was denied back in 2009 and so right now non-emergencies basically are not funded. As Health, if this was something we were going to do, we would need to first find the money to fund that and currently we don't have any money in the budget to allocate it specifically for that purpose, but on the issue of emergency transportation, it's

a service that is funded and the relationship is between, in this case, the hamlet and the federal authorities, Indigenous Services Canada, and Health does work in a supporting role in terms of billing to ensure that the service provider and the funder can meet in the middle and that that relationship is working properly. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, not everyone has a vehicle and not every family has the means to help transport an elderly person or a disabled individual to the health centre for their appointments and medical care. A paramedic in all the communities should be something to look into. It's something that our government, I'm sure, can bring up to work with the federal government.

Will the minister commit to reviewing his department's policies and contracts to also provide local transportation for those who need help to get to the health centre and not just to provide transportation to and from the airport? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. As I stated yesterday during question period, I will be looking into this matter to see if we can include in-community transportation for elders and disabled people. I believe we can go with that, but we would have to look into that further to see what kind of decision we can make about that in the Department of Health. I can't say right now. After we look at it and review it, we can get back to the two MLAs that are asking about this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Question 072 – 6(2): Construction Costs for Housing

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation appreciates being very busy, so I'm going to continue along that vein.

Mr. Speaker, in a previous response, the minister had mentioned that he has had or staff have had discussions with the private sector and my question is: what is their interpretation on why costs have increased so quickly in the construction of new housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the golden answer to everything over the last two years has been COVID. I believe, in discussions I've had with the private sector in terms of building houses, the biggest cost factors are transportation to and from the south and of people and material.

The cost of material up here was very expensive and then there are the manufacturers down south where a lot of the infrastructure we have here in terms of pipes and steel beams and trusses and those very necessary material for construction had a slowdown in their production and the cost of them went up quite significantly, as companies down south too were experiencing COVID and they were short-staffed and they had to shut their manufacturing plants.

The supply and demand, just in short, really increased the cost of doing business and up here we were no exception to that. We have such a short window of opportunity to bring in materials to build houses and infrastructure that if the manufacturers would not have those materials completed and ready for the shipping date, then we couldn't get them up here. In order to have them at the appropriate time, the cost would go up by supply and demand, a few or many, I'm sure, were cost-driving factors, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that response and it's across industry concern, but there have been a couple of other issues that have been raised to me personally with regard to changing in designs and over-building in some of the plans. I would encourage the minister to look into some of those concerns as well.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the mandate of targeting a thousand new units and we look at the discussions that have been around this room for the past few months and with the questions being asked today, Mr. Speaker, it shows how important housing is to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I note that in the recent budget, the Minister of Finance has announced some increases in spending for public housing as well as for staff housing, yet with the challenge that we've had with having tenders being approved and awarded, are there any substantial increases anticipated for housing budgets in the near future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In that same budget, I said that we are anticipating maybe an increase in our budget and dipping into some of our previous years' surpluses of previous governments in order to reach the 1,000 doors, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to make it clear that these 1,000 doors are not necessarily all public and government houses; it includes private sector. We are working to see what we could do as a corporation in terms of helping people through their homeownership, down-payment assistance, affordable housing, and so on. We will continue down that path to do that. It

will mean we may need to dip into a previous year's surpluses in order to be able to accomplish this and it will mean talking to the private sector to see if we can't find a better way and a better alternative to the current process that we do have.

Right now, as my colleague is well aware, we go and we say that we want to build an X number of houses in these given communities, given the budget we have, and then the next year we go through the same process again. Is that the best way to do it or should we be talking about maybe two-, three-year, or four-year terms with a construction corporation to say that "Okay, we will work with you over this number of years"? Given that certainty, will that drive the cost factors down? Those kinds of discussions are happening, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response from the minister. I encourage the minister and his staff to have those discussions sooner rather than later, as he had mentioned in an earlier response where we are limited in our importation of materials and we're looming very near that critical deadline, even for this year's building season.

Mr. Speaker, a question was asked yesterday to the Minister responsible for Community and Government Services on ITK's access to \$845 million in housing over the next seven years. It works out to a little bit less than \$121 million a year for the entire Inuit Nunangat. Obviously, that's a lot of money over a period of years, yet when you look at the needs across those regions, it's not as simple as just to put a formula in place to see who is going to get what, when, and how.

As again it was spoken to earlier how hard it is sometimes to get announced monies into play, and I guess my question for the minister on that topic is: how are these monies going to be accessed? The monies have been announced already. How much is Nunavut planning to access and what's the process? How are we going to be able to get these dollars working for us sooner rather than later so that we don't have to play catch-up at the tail-end of a seven-year program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: As my colleague is aware, having sat in the finance portfolio in the previous government, it is one thing for the government to make an announcement and then it is quite something else to what finally rolls out of that announcement. In this particular topic that my friend is talking about in terms of the funding that will be funnelled through ITK and birthright corporations, it's the way it's going to go, Mr. Speaker. The way I look at it, any housing, it doesn't matter who is pushing the envelope, as long as some of that envelope ensures that we have more housing for Nunavummiut, I will support that completely.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: And I think this government is the same way. It doesn't matter who is pushing the envelope. In this case, it's ITK and NTI and the birthright corporations. I support that fully and we have made it clear that our housing corporation is eager to have input if we should be asked in terms of how we could go towards this. We are more than happy to help out and give a hand where it's needed and questions and we will work closely and monitor the situation as it arises, Mr. Speaker. We will keep our door completely open. It's not necessary to shut doors because of where the money is given. I say let's open more doors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members, be aware that the time allotted for question period is now over. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Responses to Petitions. Item 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Item 13: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 001 – 6(2): Report on the Review of the 2021 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present the Report of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts on the Review of the 2021 *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut*.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on this report from April 26 to 27, 2022. The standing committee's hearing was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly and was televised live across the territory. The hearing was open to the public and news media to observe from the Visitors' Gallery, and was live-streamed on the Legislative Assembly's website. Mr. Speaker and members, the transcripts from the standing committee's hearing are available from the Legislative Assembly's website. Witnesses appearing before the standing committee included the Deputy Auditor General of Canada and senior officials of the Government of Nunavut's Department of Justice. The standing committee notes its appreciation to the witnesses

Mr. Speaker, the standing committee's report contains ten sets of formal recommendations, which cover a number of thematic areas, including:

- Action Plans and Annual Reports;
- Corrections Legislation;
- Recidivism Rates;
- Violence in Correctional Facilities;

- Land Camps and Rehabilitation Programming; and
- Employee Staffing and Training.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to note for the record that the standing committee is requesting that the government provide a comprehensive response to this report, pursuant to Rule 91(5) of the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut*.

With that, I move that the report of the standing committee be received by the House and, unless the members want to hear me talk for the next hour, to be entered into the record as read. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Laughter*

Speaker: The member has moved that the report of the standing committee be received by the House and entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is an agreement.

Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 018 – 6(2): 2014 Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal

Tabled Document 019 – 6(2): 2019 Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal

Tabled Document 020 – 6(2): 2020 Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal

Tabled Document 021 – 6(2): 2021 Annual Report of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the 2014, 2019, 2020, and 2021 annual reports of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Item 15. Notices of Motions. Item 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17. Motions. Item 18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 1 and 2 with Mr. Savikataaq in the Chair.

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

*See Appendix for full text of Committee Report 1 – 6(2).

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:21 and Committee resumed at 15:49*

Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Thank you, everyone, for coming back here. I would like to call the committee meeting back to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bill 1 and Bill 2. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of the 2022-23 main estimates and the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Malliki. Are we in agreement that we deal with Bill 1?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 01 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2022-2023 – Health – Consideration in Committee

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

Hon. John Main: Yes, *Iksivautaaq*. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: For the record, Minister Main, please introduce your officials.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have with me Director of Corporate Services, Greg Babstock, and Director of Policy and Planning, Linnea Ingebrigtsen. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Yesterday we finished off with the opening comments for this department. Now, do any members have general comments on the minister's opening comments? Not questions, we'll save those for when we get down to the directorates. Any general comments? I hear none. Therefore go to page H-4. Under Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$65,000. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Minister Main and your officials.

I would like to congratulate the minister and the department on, once again, securing another year's worth of Non-Insured Health Benefits funding through the federal government. I know those discussions have been ongoing for a number of years, and a number of ministers of health. They all deserve recognition for that but I just wanted to congratulate you on that.

For my first question, I would like to ask if you'd be able to provide the Assembly with a little of an update on the progress made throughout those discussions?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the member. (interpretation ends) The negotiations, currently we're working towards a long-term agreement on Non-Insured Health Benefits. Currently, it's year to year.

In terms of from where health sits, we can work best when we have that longer term commitment. It allows us to plan better, allows to just have some certainty around the availability of funding when it comes to budgeting.

And so, things are proceeding well at the negotiating table. We do expect a long-term agreement to be in place for 2023-24. As you mentioned, the credit goes to the previous ministers of health who steered this initiative forward. It's really exciting in terms of the additional resources that health has secured.

Looking forward, we are considering some additional investments with the \$25 million that's yet unallocated, as mentioned in the opening comments, for future fiscal years. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response, minister. I wish you and your officials the best of luck in continuing those discussions in securing longer term multi-year funding.

I would like to move on to my next line of questioning and it's in relations to the Inuit employment status in the Department of Health.

Over the last number of years I've been raising some concern over the significant amount of casuals within the Department of Health. I would like to recognize that the Department of Health has seen some improvement over the last number of years.

In your most recent Inuit employment statistics report, the Department of Health had 365 casuals which is far lower than the 400 average that we've seen in previous years, so I would like to give credit where credit is due. I will be following up with the minister on this specific matter in the coming years.

I'm not against casuals. I think that it is an extremely important method of achieving our Inuit employment goals and specifically giving Nunavummiut experience necessary where qualifications don't exist, but I would like to ask if the minister and the Department of Health has made it a goal to continue to reduce the reliance on casual staffing actions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of casuals versus indeterminate employees, we do prefer to have indeterminate employees on staff, but when they're not available that's when casuals come into the picture.

As of March 31 of this year, we have 176 Nunavut Inuit employees who are casuals, 60 of which have been within Health in their current role for more than two years. We do intend to continue putting through direct appointments of those individuals. We do have plans to continue that.

In terms of casuals versus indeterminate staff, we continue to struggle with the staffing process. We have hundreds of positions currently within the staffing process, and obviously when we're talking about indeterminate employment, we're talking job postings, working with the Department of Human Resources in most cases, and so those are parallel processes that we're working on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the minister again for that response, and I wish you again the best of luck in working towards that.

I know that Department of Health has also been quite successful in the last number of years in targeted Inuit employment initiatives, not just career laddering positions, but encouraging Inuit employees within the Department of Health to pursue further education opportunities.

So, for my next question I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide the Assembly with an update on the number of Inuit employees within the department who are currently utilizing education leave. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If you'll just bear with me I'm going to pull up that number here.

Matna. Currently, we have six Health employees on education leave. Three are on the Amaaqtaarniq program. All of those are Nunavut Inuit. Three are on health education leave, so they're attending a number of different programs from social services to Master

of Nursing type programs, so that's the current status. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. That's good to hear. I look forward to following up with you again next year on the number of Inuit employees on education leave.

Another area crucial to achieving a representative workforce is the utilization of transfer assignments, which is, as we know, very successful in allowing individuals, specifically Inuit employees, to gain experience to further their careers.

I am just wondering if the minister might be able to provide some information on the number of Inuit employees in transfer assignments and if there's a desire or intention to see those numbers increase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Unfortunately, I don't have those numbers in front of me, I can commit to getting back to the committee with those numbers at a later date.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to mention, just on this topic and in addition to my previous answer, is that the budget proposes a \$1.12 million increase under training and development. Some of that funding will go towards the four human resource assistant positions that we're proposing to create.

Another portion of that funding will go towards financial resources to support Health-sponsored individuals on long-term education leave. Stuff like salary cost, tuition, book, and travel.

We share the member's enthusiasm for developing our human resources within the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the minister for committing to provide that information.

My next line of questioning will be on the Inuit employment section within the business plans. On page 148, under the 2021-22 priorities the department had indicated that one of the priorities is to continue the nursing mentorship program and under the status it indicates that health HR with the Chief Nursing Officer's office is working on generalizing job descriptions to have student nurses assist with on-the-job training. And again, I must give credit where credit is due. That is a very beneficial endeavour. I would

like to ask if the minister might be able to provide an update on the status of that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That item in there is centered around nursing, which is one of our biggest challenges as a department. Our nurses are just so, so valuable to the department. They are on the front lines every day.

We have challenges currently related to the global pressures around that skill set. We are looking for ways that we can do things differently, that we can improve processes as a department so that we can get more nurses, ideally on indeterminate employment.

In terms of that specific item of employing nursing students, we currently have 12 who are current students who are interested with the department. If you'll allow, I would like to ask Ms. Ingebrigtsen to add some additional information. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Ingebrigtsen.

Ms. Ingebrigtsen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Nursing students are required to pass a national exam before they can be in the residency program. Four of them have passed from the previous graduating class of 2020. Two of them are working as nurses in the residency program. One of them had previous experience as a licensed practical nurse, so they're not in the program.

Another has not applied. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Ingebrigtsen, for that information.

Moving on to another priority, under the Inuit employment plan, the first priority under 2022-23 is to "Continue dialogue with Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Education to discuss educational requirements for post-secondary courses for health positions and identify areas to assist promoting the subject for future careers in health." Again, it was really great to see.

Whenever I'm chatting our high school students here Inukshuk High School, I always ask what their career of choice would be and of course quite often the most popular career is pilot but high up there is always a number of students every that are interested in getting into healthcare professions and nursing.

I'm very happy to see this priority. Another program that was very successful, that the Department of Health had run in previous years was the Nunavut health careers camp, where students from across Nunavut would come together to learn more about health careers.

I was wondering if the minister would be able to touch a bit upon that program. I'm not sure when the last time it was run or as well as if there is intention to restart that program. Again, I think it is a very ideal method to promote health careers amongst our youth and very successful in steering our youth in that direction. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the question. It's really important, I think, to plant the seed with youth in terms of getting to them when they're young enough to start thinking about or old enough to start thinking about work but young enough that they can still make decisions in terms of their academic path.

So we just had a health careers camp that happened. Unfortunately, I wasn't in Iqaluit at the time and wasn't able to attend. But in terms of, we have the health careers camp, it's one way of maybe building that interest but we also participate in other things such as career fairs.

It's really important, especially when we are talking about things like nursing, for young Nunavummiut to be able to see themselves within our healthcare system. I think of my home community of Arviat, where we have a number of successful Inuit nurses, who have been long-term employees, just the way that you see young kids or students look at them and kind of appreciate them as somebody who is from the community and is now working as a nurse.

I think that is kind of what we are kind of striving for and I think that it would be kind of a positive snowball effect if we could have more local people working within Health, I think it would build success kind of thing and that's what we'll keep working towards. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the minister and his officials.

(interpretation ends) Over the past 22 years, the Department of Health has consistently overspent it's budget. Medical travel costs were most frequently a factor in cost-overruns. The department is budgeting significantly less for travel and transportation costs in 2022-23 than in previous years.

How have the negotiations with the federal government for Non-Insured Health Benefits funding impacted medical travel? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I mentioned earlier to Mr. Lightstone that the negotiations with our federal partners have been going well and we look forward to securing a long-term agreement on Non-Insured Health Benefits funding.

In terms of the financial pieces, I would like to let Mr. Babstock respond, with your permission (interpretation) Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the member for the question.

The reason for that decline in the budget has to do with the fact that we are replacing that vote 1 budget with vote 4/5 resources from the federal government. That's the \$58 million that you're seeing the reduction, that's been replaced by vote 4/5 revenue that we are then applying against those expenses.

So, we're not seeing a reduction in medical travel budgets, we're just seeing a difference in where the money is coming from between vote 1 and vote 4. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you for your response.

(interpretation ends) Federal funding for health services across the north is crucial to the department's ability to provide quality health care in remote areas. What is the current status of federal initiatives as Nunavut Wellness Agreement in mental health funding? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just bear with me for a second, I am just bringing up the information.

In terms of the Nunavut Wellness Agreement, that's an agreement that is 10 years. It is currently planned to run until March 31, 2027.

We do have, listed in the business plan, a review of the how the funding has been rolled out to date, and that's based around the five year mark. That will inform further activities funded under the Nunavut Wellness Agreement.

It's a really important program, it allows us to support activities such as school food programs, wellness programming, so at the community level much of the programming that we see happening in these areas is funded through the Nunavut Wellness Agreement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you minister. (interpretation ends) Your department's plan add a significant numbers of new PYs in 2022-23, despite the ongoing difficulties in filling the positions that already exist. It appears that a number of new PYs will be added to the Directorate branch. What new positions are you adding? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the directorate branch, yes we are adding the human resources assistant positions, which are four. We're adding seven positions to the Health Information Unit and also one position to the *Mental Health Act* implementation.

The medical travel staffing positions are also included under Directorate, although most of those will be located at the community level, spread across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you minister.

(interpretation ends) In regards to the medical travel PY, would that improve the medical travel issues that Nunavut face? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We certainly hope so. We are facing year-over-year growth in the volume of medical travel. Basically, as I understand it, it has a lot to do with the growth in services, and growth in population. We've reached the point where we felt that it was wise to put forward a request for these positions.

When we hear about issues around medical travellers not knowing about their travel until a day or two before, unfortunately in some cases hours before, those are the types of issues that we are hoping to improve.

We are also, you know on the medical travel, there are other things other than just staffing that we need to work around medical travel on the policy side. But, absolutely,

these medical travel clerks will provide that single point of contact for travel issues and that it will improve the client experience. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response.

Some people go out on medical and they have no appointments set up already. I have gone through that same experience. That's just a comment.

(interpretation ends) My question is: Almost every division within the department's Directorate branch is projected to receive additional funding in 2022-23. What specific new activities and programming initiatives will be undertaken in 2022-23 to account for an additional \$6.5 million in funding for this branch? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: *Mutna.* Okay, so to summarize the Directorate branch: Under the ADM, Programs and Standards, the increase there is related to residential care for seniors, contracted services.

Under Corporate Services, the increase there is on the medical travel clerks, and that's the 31 positions that we've been talking about.

Under Human Resources it's the training and development, which is both for additional staff as well funding for operations and maintenance.

Finally, under the Health Information Unit, we're looking to add seven positions which will help us to manage how the department uses, stores, and integrates our health data for the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the minister.

(interpretation ends) To what extent does the department's proposed 2022-26 budget take into account costs related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in being prepared to address any sudden change in Nunavut's pandemic response? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That's a good question. Unfortunately, COVID is not going anywhere, and when you look towards the fall time or the end of the summer period there is some concerning

possibilities for another wave of COVID to hit the country, we can't really say at this point.

We do have some capacity, or financial resources, still allocated. That's under the ADM, Operations line item. It's scheduled to sunset at the end of this fiscal year, which is why we see a decrease in the budget. But, if we do have requirements if there are extraordinary measures needed, we are prepared to come for a supplementary appropriation.

In terms of COVID, the activities to date, this government and previous governments have shown a willingness to take care of the health of Nunavummiut first and take on the additional expense if it's required because this is unprecedented times we're living in, so we want to be prepared. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for the response. (interpretation ends) A COVID Pandemic Secretariat was established under the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. A number of new health positions were established as part of the secretariat; their term expires in 2023. With the easing of the pandemic, are these positions still necessary and, if not, will these staff be reassigned to other positions with the Department of Health? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Looking at the positions, there are a number of them that are filled by casual staffing action, so for those ones, they would be reassigned elsewhere. There are also some positions that are filled by internal transfer assignment and so with those individuals, they would return to their original point of hire. That's the plan for those ones. We do want to have those positions in place until the end of this fiscal year in the event that they are needed to respond. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The 2022-23 draft business plan for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs indicates on page 1 that EIA will take a lead on the development of a comprehensive elder and senior care strategy. The Department of Health's business plan on page 134 indicates that Health will also be undertaking this task. Will the departments be coordinating with the activities in this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We have a little bit of a mix-up with the page numbers; it might be between...oh, here we go. Thank you. My copy has different page numbers; my apologies.

We are listed under that senior care strategy action item in a supporting role. The member is correct that EIA would be taking the lead for that item, but what is being listed in the business plan is showing which departments will be acting in a supporting role and as Health, we do have a role to play there.

From where I sit, it's a really exciting project that we're embarking on. It's right front and centre in our mandate and I really look forward to working with my fellow ministers and look forward to hearing from Nunavummiut on this really important topic. Something that's really exciting around this with EIA in the lead is that Health can plug in and we can offer the health perspective on these issues, but we also have Culture and Heritage and the Minister responsible for Seniors plugging into that process. It's really exciting to think about what do Inuit want in terms of elder care and not just elder care but elders' housing and elder services. We have a perspective as the Department of Health, but we recognize that there are other experts in other areas that can also contribute. Thank you for the question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that clear explanation and it sounds good. This will be my last question.

(interpretation ends) The Department of Health's 2022-26 draft business plan notes ongoing investments in virtual care programs. What specific virtual care programs are being considered, and will any new technology be required to deliver this program? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The virtual care has really grown in leaps and bounds as a result of COVID-19. I mean, there were already some telehealth services that have been available in Nunavut for quite a while. Out of necessity across the country and in other countries, virtual care has really been expanding.

We have a virtual nurse practitioner program that we implemented in 2021-22 and through that program, we provided over 450 chronic care clinic days to 254 patients in nine communities. The member asked about the equipment side of things. All existing telehealth systems were upgraded and replaced in 2021-22 with a consistent set of equipment in each community, and some of that was done with the support from our federal partners and we really appreciate that support.

I was in Clyde River recently and I saw the set-up that they have at the health centre there and hear from the staff that it has been very beneficial. In terms of our federal partners to the ground in communities like Clyde River, it is making a difference and it's something we're increasingly looking to in terms of what else we can do with this service.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to talk a little bit more about virtual care programs. Has there been an evaluation of the efficacy of the virtual visits so far? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Not as of yet. With regard to the virtual nurse practitioner program, it's fairly new in terms of the efficacy. We are working with Health Canada on this and also with Canada Health Infoway, which is an independent, federally funded, not-for-profit organization that has been tasked with kind of leading digital health solutions in Canada.

In terms of the virtual care work to come, we are doing initial planning work on a Nunavut patient portal and this would be a system to give residents better access to their own health information and their own medical records. That's funded under the bilateral agreement we have with Health Canada under virtual care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you tell us how those virtual care providers are oriented, not just to our patients and the social determinants of health and the historical trauma that people bring to their health care experience, but also how are these virtual care providers oriented to our Nunavut health care system when it comes to local human and other resources, our infrastructure, referral patterns? Yes, I'll stop there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That's a really good question and it's one that I'm not actually able to answer right now. I can commit to looking into that orientation piece specifically. I can say that in some cases, the virtual care or the virtual care avenue or portal is being used to connect patients in Nunavut with practitioners who are in Nunavut. In that case, the health care professional would be oriented in understanding of the realities of Nunavut, but for those who are not based in Nunavut, I can commit to getting back to the member on that and get back to the committee. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response. How do these virtual health care providers follow up with their patients? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That is a little bit difficult to answer just because of the range of different services that are being provided under the virtual care program. We're talking about things like physician services, specialty consultations, so pediatric or surgical consultations. It could be post-care case management, rehabilitation and follow-up appointments. It could be nutritional counselling or also mental health consultation type services.

Just to answer it from a general perspective, we use iScheduler, is the name of the software, that is currently being rolled out across the territory and it is a tool that allows the service provider and the staff who are responsible for connecting directly with the clients to collaborate and helps us to avoid things like missed appointments. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not clear on whether or not those service providers are actually doing the follow-up. To be clear, that was what my question is. Do they follow up on their own patients or do local, whether they're locum or indeterminate team members follow up with patients on behalf of those virtual care providers and how does that work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It would depend. My understanding is that there are a number of different scenarios that could happen. You could have an appointment via virtual care, which is a one-off, a consult, or it could be something that is regularly scheduled where if it's looking at chronic care, for example, where regular check-ins are required or it could be at the tail-end of a surgical procedure, in which case it could be just a check-in is needed and then there is no further appointment.

I'm not trying to avoid the question; I'm just trying to answer it in a way that makes sense where it really depends on the individual's needs. In some cases, you could have a patient who receives an appointment through virtual care and the next step is medical travel out of territory if that is required. There are a number of different scenarios and it all comes back to the individual need for the client. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concern is that is about that individual client and the impact of a virtual health care provider who doesn't have the orientation to the reality of the lived experience of Nunavut Inuit who are patients and the impact of a health care provider saying, "I don't know" or "I'll refer you to this place," but not knowing that the reality is there is a certain amount of wait time for different referrals. If you've got a health care provider who is giving dietary advice to a patient, not knowing that the reality is that that patient may not only be food insecure, but also may live for brief periods of time in a food desert where there just isn't access to the nutritional food that the practitioner is recommending.

Those are the concerns I have and I would just like to be better assured that taking a massive step in that direction, that that orientation process is thorough and also that we don't further impact the daily work and lived experience of our Nunavummiut who are living in our communities and providing that care because they're the people that patients will follow up with and maybe mistrust more or they are the people that will have to be accountable for any missteps or advice that just isn't right for the patient. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I didn't hear a question, but just a comment. If the minister wants to comment on that to give some clarification, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for sharing her concerns around that.

The providers who access clients through virtual means do have local support staff who are a part of that. In terms of perhaps the example that was provided, if there is a disconnect between what the care provider is expecting versus the reality in the community, the fact-checking or the guidance would come from our local staff.

That is part of this overall project is training our local staff so that they are able to a) technically deal with any issues on the delivering of the virtual care services, and b) that they are able to schedule and manage the flow of patients in and out of the health centre where they do access virtual services. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you just give us an idea of how standards of practice and professional practice are ensured with a project like this? How are these care providers registered, where are they registered, and what is the difference between them being registered to work physically in Nunavut and remotely? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the registration or licensing requirements, that's a really good question. To my knowledge, some of the care providers are already experienced and have worked in Nunavut previously, and so that would suggest to me that they either are licensed or were previously licensed to work in Nunavut. That would be an issue that I'm willing to look into further so that I can get the accurate information back to the committee in terms of the registration and licensing piece as it applies to virtual care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that response. I think it's really important that we are assured that those health care practitioners can be held accountable should an issue of concern arise and also for their protection as well should any issue arise.

I would just like to go back to the question about the new PYs under this unit. You mentioned 31 medical travel clerks, and I'm wondering, in my limited experience with medical travel and with patient relations, whether or not it might be wise to focus not just on bringing in medical travel clerks, but also just based on today's questions in the House, some patient navigators that can help patients navigate our medical system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The medical travel clerks were identified as the need. It is going to allow better focus for our staff in terms of staff will no longer be required to be both medical travel clerk and interpreter. That is something that we do, as I mentioned to Mr. Malliki, is going to improve the medical travel experience.

In terms of navigators, that is something that we can certainly take under consideration. When it comes to Non-Insured Health Benefits in particular, I believe Nunavut Tunngavik employs a navigator specifically on that program in assisting Nunavut Inuit to access benefits through that. I thank the member for the suggestion. As I mentioned, we have some unallocated funding or funding that we have an earmark on for coming fiscal years and we're currently trying to decide how we could use that funding best. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. I highly recommend focusing on that because I think that patient navigators could go a long way in helping to educate our clients about the health care system and just helping to ease their experience within the health care system.

Just to be clear, those 31 new clerk positions that are coming under this budget, are they going to be reporting directly to travel programs within headquarters or will they be reporting at the community level to the health centres? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is my understanding that they would be reporting locally to the supervisor of health programs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, what would be the orientation and just ongoing training process for those medical travel clerks if they are not reporting directly to a medical travel team? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That's a very detailed question. I mean, we have over a thousand employees in the department and in terms of the orientation process for the different types of clerks, I can't speak to that level in detail, but I can look into it and try to get back with some information in terms of what type of onboarding processes are followed with these positions. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I would just like to move on to the discussion about the creation of this Health Information Unit. Population health surveillance is a really important component of public health. I'm just wondering if you could share with me and just help me understand what this Health Information Unit is in relation to public health surveillance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks for the question. The Health Information Unit does have that responsibility in terms of the population health assessment. The department has been in the process of creating and building up this centralized function so that we can manage our data properly and utilize it properly.

We're talking about things like vital statistics, disease surveillance, population health, as the member asked, and supporting our decision-making and also understanding the service provider needs, looking at the data from a community, let's say for example, Naujaat and looking at the data that is coming out of that community and telling us, okay,

what are the needs around nurses, what are the needs around mental health, just so we can take a more systematic view of this.

On the population health side, the Health Information Unit will be supporting the chief public health officer in terms of developing and sharing reports on public health issues and they are currently working a cancer-related report, I'm told. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I remember spending hours and hours on a cancer report years and years ago.

When we consider this new Health Information Unit, can you talk about health information and privacy? I'm assuming, as you said, electronic health records will be stored; like you said, things like immunization records. You had mentioned this Nunavut patient portal. Can you talk to us a little bit about how we will be able to protect patient data or individuals' data? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That is an excellent question and it kind of goes to one of the reasons why the department wanted to create this unit, is so that this data which is very sensitive, can be very detailed, and so that it's being managed properly within the department so that it's not spread out and being managed in different ways in different locations.

The list of the different types of data that we hold, everything from medical travel data to well-baby clinic information, to reportable communicable diseases, there's a tremendous amount of data that we currently hold and it's a huge responsibility because, at the end of the day, that actually doesn't belong to us in terms of individual patients; that's their information and they're trusting us to take care of it and it's a responsibility that I don't take lightly. The department takes it very seriously.

We know that we have a need on the legislation side for health-specific privacy legislation. The Health Information Unit is leading the development of the legislation in that regard. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you reassure us that there will be some patient education that comes with the access to their own information in terms of protecting their own privacy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Yes, that will be definitely considered. The Nunavut patient portal is in the early stages and so we're in the process of starting to flesh out those different issues. There are some obvious benefits to providing or giving better access to personal health information, but there are risks and so that will be part of the consultation process around our legislation development that will include educating Nunavummiut in terms of the risks associated with their private health information. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. I see that my time is running out here and I've got so many questions.

I would like to go back to your reference to the wellness agreement earlier. I had kind of thought I would speak to this in the next section, but since you mentioned school food programs in an earlier response, one of the things that... Let's take Iqaluit for example. Children go home at lunchtime in Iqaluit and independent parents who don't have a vehicle have to take a taxi to go and meet their children at lunchtime and then they have to take a taxi back to work and often it takes more than an hour. Nowadays it's nearly \$20 for that.

As Inuit, we eat together and I have always wondered why we don't just feed the entire family when it comes to school lunch and breakfast programs. I know that I personally have observed and have been told as well about children actually not eating the food that they're getting at school and actually hiding it away to bring home to younger siblings and the impact of the grief that comes with the guilt of being able to eat something when you know that your family is at home and not eating.

These school food programs are actually an opportunity to provide nutrition education to parents and families, to connect culturally. They can bring families closer together and actually play a role in normalizing going into schools, normalizing the education system for parents and family members who may carry trauma due to the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. I wonder if there are thoughts or if there can be a commitment to look into feeding the whole child in those school food programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks for the question. There are obvious benefits to school food programs in terms of a health perspective. A child's development, their brain function, it's all measurably beneficial to have that access to nutritional food.

In terms of the school food programs and the idea of including families, it would be the Department of Education's ball to carry. We're the funder of these programs through the Nunavut Wellness Agreement. We do work with the Department of Education. In the

past we have talked about ways we could change the arrangement, but currently we receive the funding, we're the agreement holder, and then we flow it out to in-support, but thank you for the suggestion in terms of the family considerations and the Minister of Education is here today and listening. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Due to time restraints, I'll go to the next person on my list. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just pick up where my neighbour to my right left off with the personal health information and the minister mentioned a need for education. I know that some of us, if not most of us, around this room have had constituents approach us with concerns on extended family members posting things on social media, including pictures of people in very vulnerable positions.

I would like to get a commitment from the minister, actually, to do like a true campaign. It's not just the government that's responsible for patient confidentiality; it's also the patients themselves and their family members. I think it would be a very worthwhile exercise to actually have a communication campaign around patient safety and patient health information awareness. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of those privacy type concerns, I thank the member for the suggestion. I can say that our communications team, over the past few months, has pumped out more communications information mostly related to COVID in the earlier months of this year, far beyond normal volumes.

In terms of our communication, the campaigns that we are working on, we're settling back into the normal, I'll call it the new normal, routine while also dealing with issues that are coming up like avian influenza and the surge in respiratory issues that we're having in the territory.

In terms of the privacy issue, though, I do appreciate that comment and I can take it back to my staff for consideration. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take that commitment. Thank you and I appreciate the minister's response to that. It jogged my memory on it when my colleague was bringing up the issue on how too frequent of an issue that is.

I would like to stay a little bit with the health-specific privacy as well. This fiscal year, next fiscal year, and it's not until the fiscal year after where it talks to actually developing health-specific privacy legislation and it does talk about a consultation period. I guess my

first question on that is: what will consultations look like for getting feedback on health-specific privacy legislation?

The topic has been around for a number of years. I know that in my previous role, I have been a strong advocate for getting the work started. I know it has been in more than one annual report from the access to information and privacy commissioner, and I would just like to get a bit more clarity on what that consultation is going to look like to maintain the time frame or even speed up the time frame that's laid out in the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The consultation plan is currently under development, so in terms of saying what the consultation is going to look like, I can't speak to the specifics. We're earmarking roughly \$350,000 for that consultation process. The exact number is going to depend on how many communities are visited and how much travel is required. Some of that will be funded internally, but it all depends on the extent of how wide we want to cast the net, so to speak. Our target in terms of legislation is to have our consultations completed and have a new legislative proposal submitted in the fiscal year 2023-24, next fiscal year. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be following that closely.

One of the things that have also been covered in the media lately is the access to information and privacy commissioner calling for a review of the ATIPP legislation itself. I'm just wondering whether it might be a worthwhile exercise to coordinate these two pieces of privacy legislation at the same time. There are some health-specific privacy components of the Access to Information and Privacy Act itself.

However, there might be an opportunity to coordinate and make sure both bases are covered, I guess I might put it that way, Mr. Chairman, or to get two birds with one stone, as other people say. I'm just wondering if there has been any dialogue with Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, who I believe would have oversight of that legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, I appreciate the suggestion. We can look and see if there are any possibilities to catch multiple birds with one stone and hopefully they're healthy in terms of the risks associated.

We actually have two separate committees. We have the Health Information and Privacy Steering Committee, which is currently being formed and has terms of references set up, and then there is also a separate health-specific privacy committee and that committee is a parallel committee that deals with different areas, but the Department of EIA is on that committee and so we can share what we learn with EIA and we are keeping them updated on our work to date regarding the legislation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that. It just might be an added efficiency exercise.

My colleague, Mr. Malliki, brought up the fact that the Directorate Branch is increasing its budget this fiscal year and proposed about \$6.5 million and I appreciated the response in that, but I also noted in the next fiscal year, 2023-24, the actual budget goes down. Most notably in the ADM operations side, it goes down nearly \$2.5 million and a slight increase in the Corporate Services Division. Maybe just for the sake of clarity, if the minister can explain why it's jumping up and then bumping down a little bit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it's okay with you, I would like Mr. Babstock to respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The \$2.34 million decrease is the sun-setting of the Pandemic Secretariat funding that was procured through supplementary appropriations several years ago. With the pandemic winding down, that is winding down as per scheduled.

The slight increase in corporate services is the additional .25 of the PYs for the medical travel clerk. As a result of the timing of the budget this year, only .75 of those PYs is being appropriated. The remaining 25 percent is going to be appropriated in '23-24 to make the full PY appropriation complete. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that response from the minister and Mr. Babstock. I figured it was the COVID Secretariat funding, but it's good to know on the phasing in the hiring of those other positions. Hopefully that will help with the recruitment.

I would like to take a little bit in the business plan 2022-26, one of the priorities for this upcoming fiscal year is to review the health insurance legislation. My curiosity there is:

what types of changes are anticipated to be made? What types of health care services are under that insurance plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Sorry for the delay. Yes, in terms of the types of changes that are being considered, we are still scoping out that work. We are planning to begin a review of the *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act*, that's a mouthful, this fiscal year. The current Act hasn't received substantial amendment since the creation of Nunavut and so it needs attention and we're going to begin that process this year. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next line of questioning is regarding staffing, so it does fall under the Directorate, but it's also related to health care delivery, so I hope the Chair will bear with me for a moment here.

In the minister's opening comments on page 5, the second paragraph where it talks about an additional \$3.7 million for agency nurse procurement and another \$4 million for paramedic support services, notably, we all understand the challenges of hiring health staff these days across the globe, never mind just here in Nunavut. My curiosity factor kicked in a little bit there. What is the cost comparison of that \$7.7 million in contracting dollars to a full-time equivalent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That's a good question in terms of comparing the different employment methods. We can commit to get back to the member with that information. We appreciate the services that the agency nurses provide in Nunavut and they are valued members of our team, but as I mentioned earlier, if given a choice, we would prefer indeterminate employment because it allows us to provide that continuity which is so valuable in terms of the service provider and the client. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the minister a thousand percent, if that was possible.

The next question I have is also related to the minister's opening comments on page 6. It talks about managing the inventory of 48 transient units of housing to support transient staff and locums and whatnot, or our health professionals are passing through.

I'm not sure where the beeping is coming from. I don't think it's from me.

My first question there is: is usage tracked? Is there like a vacancy rate number that we can grab onto? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that our vacancy rate for those units is next to zero. Things are very tight in terms of the utilization. In terms of a formal vacancy rate, we are trying to increase our inventory in this area out of recognition of the demand because we don't want to be delaying clinics or turning away health care providers because we can't find somewhere for them to sleep at night. From this perspective, this year's budget is exciting for us because we are proposing to put into the budget adequate or greater funding for this purpose. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's response. With that, we've had discussions here on how difficult it is to access leased units here in Iqaluit specifically, that even members of cabinet are having trouble being accommodated.

I know Minister Gross would be familiar with this strategy of forced sharing. During my last campaign, I was at the door of a locum health care professional who doesn't reside in Nunavut, but I did have a chance to have a discussion with her where she was in a two-bedroom unit and she recognized the housing crunch that we are suffering here in Nunavut and felt she was over-housed.

I guess my question there would be or maybe a suggestion more than a question would be if the minister is interested in looking at making sure that units that are being leased are either one bedroom or if there are multiple bedrooms that they be utilized for staff in those multiple bedroom scenarios. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the suggestion, I thank the member for it. In terms of the different needs for a health professional who is a single person, maybe coming in and out on a contract versus somebody who is indeterminate and here with a family, most of the units that we have are under the transient inventory. They are one-bedroom units, so the smaller ones.

In terms of looking at our staff housing within the department and whether or not there are changes that we can make to better fit or meet the needs of our staff, I can look into that and try to get back to the committee with what we find out. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that coming from the minister. I'm going to go back into the business plan on page 134. One of the concerns that has come up over the last few days, and I know I have brought it forward a couple of times, is the new way that the business plans are laid out and there are links to other departments and other responsible departments.

When I look at the title of "Enabling Health and Healing" on page 134, the last section, "Reinvesting in Education," the first bullet talks about incorporating more life skills and career counselling into the K to 12 curriculum.

When was the last time the Department of Education reached out to the Department of Health to get life skills or career counselling information to add to their curriculum? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can't speak to when the last time; it would have been a staff level engagement, as I understand it, in terms of career counselling.

I personally think that the formatting of the business plan makes a lot of sense. With *Katujjiluta*, as I see it, we are trying to drive collaboration, not just in terms of government to non-government entities but also within the different departments. We can't have departments operating in silos. It doesn't make sense in my mind. We are a small territory, a relatively small government, and we need to be formalizing the linkages between departments. I can think of a dozen different issues that are very important but that are not just under the Department of Health, that there is a very clear link to another department or two.

In terms of the formatting, I am hopeful that this will drive, in the coming year and coming years, that kind of collaborative approach because we are all in this together in terms of government departments and we should be sharing issues and sharing successes, as I see it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is kind of my point is I'm not talking about it in a way that it's non-productive. I think those types of collaborations should always occur. Why isn't there anything with Family Services on career development? Why isn't there anything with the Housing? There are so many things that could be added in here, and I find when you put something in and you're leaving other things out, it muddies the waters, is the term I was using yesterday. It does create some confusion on who is ultimately responsible, what type of interactions are actually being done, not just listed in here, but what is being followed. I leave that as a comment to that point.

I just want to really emphasize that when you add something in, you're leaving something out and that leaving something out is just as important as education could be, as an example. I know we can't have business plans that are hundreds of pages long. It's just something that I think needs to be recognized that when you do put something into the business plan to say that you're going to be following, to say that you're going to be cooperating with a specific department on a specific topic, that that oversight is there, that you can describe when the last time the Department of Education contacted health staff to get input into curriculum development and things of that nature. If it's going to be put into the business plan, there need to be some type of measurables so that we can analyze the effectiveness of it. I'll leave that as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment on there. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I agree in terms of the measurables, the deliverables, and it is right there in our mandate in terms of the reporting requirements that have been established in there. Whether or not this new formatting helps to drive that collaboration, as I indicated that I'm hopeful it will, that will come out, I believe, through that reporting.

In terms of the education example, there are links that already exist with our Inuusivut and mental health and addictions staff. They do presentations in schools, they do share resources, our health staff share resources with Education. There are those linkages there already. I'm hopeful that this new formatting under *Katujjiluta* will be effective in terms of the deliverables. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As do I, Minister Main.

I'm sure I'll run out of time before I get to the end of this question and I think I'm done under this page anyway, but as we are all aware, very early on in this government's term, we had a protest and a number of students came forward, a number of youth came forward concerning the lack of mental health services here in the territory, especially for youth, yet the department's business plan says that work isn't going to be developed. A youth program will not begin until 2024-25. Why is this initiative not considered more urgent and an immediate priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The youth program, it is a few years down the road in terms of the business plan, but we do have existing resources and we do have existing funding pots that do go towards youth in terms of the community level programming. The Inuusivut and mental health and addictions team, right now they're focused on rolling out that men's programming that I mentioned earlier today as a minister's statement.

Absolutely if we had unlimited resources, yes, we could tackle all of these at once, but we have real constraints on the number of staff we can hire. At the community level, when it comes to mental health, our paraprofessional group, the two biggest constraints are access to office space and access to staff housing. Those are consistently barriers to us filling existing positions and it's something that I'm hoping we can make some progress on. It's very frustrating when you see the need for services and you have the positions there, but then there are things that are getting in the way of filling those.

Sorry for the tangent, but the current focus is on the men's programming that we are developing. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Hickee's time has run out. Next name on my list: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nunavut passed the new *Mental Health Act* during the Fifth Assembly. What role would the Inuusivut Branch have in implementing this legislation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: Just give me a second, *Iksivautaaq*. Sorry.

(interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Currently the new *Mental Health Act* isn't in force, so we are working on the regulations. Inuusivut and mental health and addictions will have a major role in terms of delivering the services that we provide to Nunavummiut. They will have a big part of operationalizing that *Mental Health Act*.

The regulation work that we have to do is a priority that we have listed and once the regulations are ready to go, we will be bringing that Act into force. It's \$1.46 million that we proposed in this budget for the implementation of the Act. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to page 87 of the main estimates, approximately \$4.7 million is allocated in contribution funding for the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy. How are these funds distributed across Nunavut and what specific activities are conducted? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Those funds flow out to different organizations across Nunavut through grants and contributions, and so we're supporting a range of activities. It could be targeted to youth, it could be targeted to specific genders. There's a wide range of different activities.

In terms of providing the resources that these community groups need, we are currently working on a review of our grants and contributions policy, trying to look at ways we can improve it and examining whether there are ways we can lighten the load in terms of reporting requirements, in terms requiring audited financial statements. Also, ways that we can ensure that our money is getting the most benefit in terms of the mental health need across Nunavut. So, that's part of the review that we're targeting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to the Department of Health's 2022-26 Business Plan, the Upigivagitsi is a contribution program for community and wellness organizations. Let me reference the Upigivagitsi program on the business plan. It states that "This contribution program allows community and wellness organizations to operate healing groups, bereavement support groups, on-the-land healing programs, means restriction, after-school leadership programs and other community-led initiatives for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention, mental wellness and resiliency. It allows for suicide prevention planning, community-led research training, professional development, and self-care."

What specific initiatives were supported under this program in 2021-22 and how does the department evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: *Matna.* The Upigivagitsi program supported a range of different projects across Nunavut, I'll list a number of them, I won't list all of them: There's traditional suicide prevention project, there's a qajaq program, fitness society activities, children and youth music program, a safe and sober drop-in centre, and remote counselling services. There's all kinds of different initiatives that are funded under this, and there's been a high demand for this funding historically.

In terms of evaluating how much benefit is coming out of this funding, that's precisely the question we want to answer and that's why we're planning to review the grants and contributions policy. It's in our business plan that we want to do that.

Specifically, what we're looking for is opportunities to improve Inuit access to training and recognition of their provision of mental health and well-being programs and services, as well as looking for ways to engage elders and other community members as advisors and local counsellors.

One additional thing that we're looking at under the grants and contributions policy is how we can provide long-term core funding to support and expand effective models for community-led programs and services, that multi-year stability as we understand is something that's looked for. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How has the Health's Inuusivut Division been involved in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nunavummiut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) That's a good question, there was a heavy mental health toll regarding... . Or from the pandemic and associated restrictions. Inuusivut's main contribution was through providing remote counselling services and trying to set those up where there were some real physical barriers to delivering the services.

They were doing things like arranging radio shows, providing access to the Healing by Talking Program, which is a service available to Nunavummiut. Also flowing funding, Inuusivut was providing funding to community organizations who are also supporting mental health during COVID-19. So that was kind of the role they played. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although this topic is tough to talk about, suicide prevention, I'm a strong supporter of suicide prevention.

One of the 2022-23 priorities in the business plan indicates that the department will conduct consultations on the renewal of the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and begin implementation of a new action plan.

What successes has the strategy achieved to date and what changes are being considered to improve those areas which have not been successful? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of evaluating the previous strategy; where it succeeded and maybe where it didn't succeed. That work is almost completed. We're preparing a report that will be done in June, next month, shortly.

There will be a meeting for a workshop with the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy partners in June and we do plan on bringing that document forward for tabling in the Legislative in Fall 2022 because we want to be transparent and accountable in terms of what's worked and what hasn't worked with the suicide prevention strategy. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I need to thank the Premier for creating the portfolio on suicide prevention. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, to date, what initiatives have been initiated to recruit and train mental health counsellors, mental health workers and other community-based support people to provide mental health services to those in need? That will be my final question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The major initiative that we have is a paraprofessional project. It's around those positions that we are facing the challenges around staff housing and office space, unfortunately.

As of April, 2022, there are 22 paraprofessionals hired across Nunavut and 18 of those paraprofessionals are Inuit. So that is in addition to our existing professional professions, which are mental health nurses. They work side by side and the paraprofessional positions are designed to be accessible with as little academic barriers in place as possible and they're designed to be so that Nunavummiut can enter in at the lower level position. There are four different positions under the paraprofessional stream and it's designed so that they can work their way up if they so choose, eventually ending up as a supervisor position. It has a lot of promise and in terms of providing more service in Inuktitut, it's an exciting project for the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll go to the next person on the list: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Main and your officials.

In your opening comments from yesterday on page 2, paragraph 3, "Of the \$58 million in additional federal funding, Health is proposing to reinvest \$33 million in 2022-23 to support the establishment of 75 community-based health centre support positions, such as medical travel clerks, housekeepers, and registration clerks, and to increase budgets for agency nurses, health centre security, laboratory services, pharmacy services, and paramedic support services."

My question: of those fundings, will your department commit to hiring local Inuit to work as security guards for the local health centres at the communities they reside in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The question is around security contracts. It's a tough question to answer and to commit to hiring. The department generally, as with the rest of our departments, provides priority hiring for Inuit into all positions, including security.

We currently have a mix of how we provide our security services. In some communities it is Government of Nunavut staff; in other communities there are contracted service providers; and then in some other communities, the lucky ones in my opinion, they don't require any security or they haven't required it yet.

Even in the ones where we do have a contracted service, obviously with the service provider, the contractor, we emphasize the importance of employing Inuit and in terms of the service that they do provide, but when it's a contract relationship, we do have a bit less control over who gets the jobs at the end of the day. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response, Mr. Main. My question is another commitment. Will your department commit to providing Inuit with training to work and make a career as security guards at their local health centres? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of committing to that, I can commit to looking into it in terms of our service provider, I can look into that and see what can be done, if there are any potential benefits from training activities, but it would depend on the willingness of the service provider.

Now, just to maybe summarize things, we have eight communities that have no security services and we have 14 communities with contracted services, and then we have communities that have Government of Nunavut provided security. We have four plus one, so five and the reason why it's complicated there is that some communities have both contracted security and Government of Nunavut employees providing security, so that's why the numbers may not add up. The total number of communities with security services is 17. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response, Mr. Main. My next line of questioning is your department is one of the biggest departments that employ casual employees. Will your department again commit to hiring Inuit who work as casual relief workers, who have served the Department of Health for a span of more than five years into placing the employees to become indeterminate positions, especially to those who have years of experience for the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That will be my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Earlier the minister did respond to that, but minister, maybe if you can just reiterate what you said earlier. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, in terms of the casual employees that we have or casual Inuit employees, we do bring them forward into the direct appointment process when it's deemed appropriate. In 2020-21 we had a total of 38 direct appointments. That's something that we have planned to continue and do plan to follow the Inuit Employment Plan as well and the priorities that are listed there. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll go to the next person on the list: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have been hearing some very favourable news and good responses as well. I would like to ask, (interpretation ends) according to the draft 2022-26 business plan, the Mobile Trauma Response Program provides care, counselling, and healing to Inuit communities and Inuit language clients. How frequently does the mobile trauma response team travel to Nunavut communities and how long do they stay in each community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. (interpretation ends) The mobile trauma response teams...sorry, I'm just looking for the information here.

In the previous year, we're just getting back into the routine of providing in-person mobile trauma response visits. The support was largely virtual in the previous fiscal year due to COVID and we are currently looking at the effectiveness of the mobile trauma response teams and looking for ways that we can improve them.

In terms of how long they generally stay in a community, if you will just bear with me a minute, Mr. Chairman, I just have to bring that information up.

Matna; apologies. So, in 2020 they provided 114 response days in terms of responding to traumatic incidents and we don't have duration of visit listed here, but in terms of an average that's something we can crunch the numbers on and get back to the member with.

Typically, it would depend on the need in the community. These things are very sensitive, in some cases it could be a few days. In other cases it might be a week, depending on the number of individuals affected and the needs of the traumatized individuals. We can look into the average visit length and get back to the committee. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna*. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response.

I have more questions on this issue. Who makes the decision as to when the trauma will go to the community? The other question I have is do you make sure that there are Inuit trauma response specialists that go to the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we try to make it a priority to have Inuit from Nunavut help with counselling and healing. We work with Iisaaqivik in Clyde River, Pulaarvik Kablu in Rankin Inlet, and Ilagiittulirijiikkut in Cambridge Bay, and the Department of Healthy Living in Cambridge Bay. We work with them for mental and healing services whenever we need to send the mobile response team.

When there is a request from the communities, there has to be a request from the community or the family or someone from the health centre or service provider. Once we are notified that there needs to be a response, or something happened, it doesn't matter where the call comes from we try to set it up right away and get all the hotels and flights set up whenever people need help. Thank you.

Chairman: *Matna.* Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was very clear.

To further add to my question in English. (interpretation ends) One of the priorities listed in the business plan is to work towards enhanced addictions and trauma treatment for the territory. What is the current status of this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: *Matna.* The question I believe was on the addictions... Maybe I'll just get a clarification, Mr. Chairman, is the member interested particularly in the Nunavut Recovery Centre, or is the member asking about the addictions and trauma treatment system in Nunavut as a whole? I just want to answer correctly. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: *Matna.* Ms. Killiktee, if you can just make your question clearer for the minister?

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you. My apologies if I wasn't too clear. Here, under the business plan (interpretation ends) it states that "Towards enhanced addictions and trauma treatment for the territory." What is the current status of this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, I apologize for not understanding the first go around.

So, under the addiction and trauma treatment system for Nunavut there are three pillars that have been established: The first pillar is to enhance community-based on-the-land camp programming. That's something that's currently under development. We did have some delays to our land-based programming related to COVID-19.

There's three programs. There's one in the Qikiqtani region, one in the Kivalliq and one in the Kitikmeot.

So I can get into more detail on that if the member would like. We're in the process of establishing those camps and services.

The other pillar under the system is the Nunavut Recovery Centre. Which will be located here in Iqaluit. We are targeting for it to be opened in 2025. We're working with our partners at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated as well as Indigenous Services Canada on the detailed design work and planning for the operations of that centre.

The third pillar under the system is Inuit workforce development. We're in discussions with the Nunavut Arctic College to support the development of a Bachelor of Social Work that would prepare Nunavummiut to work in addictions and trauma treatment. We're looking to develop an Inuit workforce that can staff most of our positions and offer services in Inuktitut.

So that's kind of the three pillars in a nutshell. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's great. This is an area where we support very much and I will expect this to continue forward. To also remember that the Iislaqvik students learn a lot about living and caring for losing loved ones. Many of the approaches Inuit take are in counselling.

Last comment I want to make is, in looking at the many great positive things going on that you raise for Nunavut and listening to these, I think something that will be very positive and that will be available and what are already available will eventually become available, listening to these from the community perspective in Nunavut.

In one of my constituency communities, a resident has always longed for many of the programs and we have many communities that don't have community health representatives or in our community, perhaps because of no space or lack of space in the health centre. This individual had been waiting for a very long time.

Those communities don't have the care representatives and it's something that should be looked into further because, looking at the very positive things under the business plan

and priorities, looking at the communities that don't have community health representatives, who miss out a lot and you want to inform them as well.

This is just a comment; it's not a question, but to add to the discussions. (interpretation ends) This is more a comment that I'm sharing the importance of the needs of the community health representative in some communities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. It's just a comment, but the minister raises his hand, indicating he wants to comment. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our communications unit on community health representatives... . Over the past number of years, the COVID pandemic was prioritized, but they helped a lot in informing their community members where pandemic measures are, and I believe you are referring to your community of Qikiqtarjuaq. When I have the time, I will make a point of visiting Qikiqtarjuaq. The health centre there is one of the oldest health centres and it's one of the priorities to establish a new health centre. It's unfortunate that it's inadequate for the community and it would be great then to see a new community health centre coming that will have a lot more space available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would like to report progress. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is non-debatable. All in favour of the motion. All those opposed. You lose.

>>*Laughter*

Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the officials from the witness table.

Speaker: Item 19. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Your committee has been considering Bill 1 and would like to report progress, and I move that the report of your committee be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Qavvik. The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Third Reading of Bills. Item 21. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder that the MSB meets at 6:15 in the Tuktu Room and that tomorrow at nine o'clock there is a meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Orders of the Day for June 1:

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
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1

- Bill 2

21. Report of the Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 1, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:01*

Appendix – May 31, 2022



Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts

Report on the Review of the 2021 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut

**2nd Session of the 6th Legislative Assembly of Nunavut
Spring 2022 Sitting**

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George Hickes

Co-Chairperson

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Mary Killiktee
Adam Arreak Lightstone
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Introduction

The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on the *2021 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut* from April 26-27, 2022.

The Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts held a televised hearing on this report from April 26-27, 2022. The standing committee's hearing was held in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly and was televised live across the territory. The hearing was open to the public and news media to observe from the Visitors' Gallery, and was livestreamed on the Legislative Assembly's website. The transcripts from the standing committee's hearing are available from the Legislative Assembly's website.

Witnesses appearing before the standing committee included the Deputy Auditor General of Canada and senior officials of the Government of Nunavut's Department of Justice. The standing committee notes its appreciation to the witnesses

Observations and Recommendations

Issue: Government of Nunavut Action Plan

The *2021 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Follow-up Audit on Corrections in Nunavut* contained a total of nine specific recommendations. The Department of Justice formally agree with all nine of the recommendations.

The report also included the department's "updated 2021 responses" to a "list of recommendations outstanding from 2015."

Standing Committee Recommendation #1:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed action plan that outlines the specific timelines for the department's implementation of its responses to each of the Auditor General's nine recommendations.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a detailed update on the status of the implementation of its "updated 2021 responses to recommendations outstanding from 2015."

Issue: Commitments to Provide Information

During the televised hearing, witnesses from the Department of Justice made a number of commitments to provide additional information to the standing committee.

Standing Committee Recommendation #2:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include the information items that were committed to during the televised hearing of April 26-27, 2022.

Issue: Outstanding Annual Reports

The department's 2017-2018 annual report for the corrections division was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 6, 2019. The 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 annual reports have not yet been tabled.

The standing committee notes that the new territorial *Corrections Act*, which is not yet in force, provides that:

Annual report

70. (1) Within six months after the end of each fiscal year, the Director shall submit to the Minister an annual report consisting of a general summary of the activities of the Corrections Division during the fiscal year.

Standing Committee Recommendation #3:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include copies of its 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 annual reports for the corrections division.

Issue: Violence in Correctional Facilities

Significant discussion took place during the standing committee’s televised hearing concerning the issue of violence in correctional facilities.

During the televised hearing, witnesses from the Department of Justice indicated that there were approximately “213 violent incidents in this past year” in territorial correctional centres and youth custody facilities. Witnesses also indicated that the department has been “working with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada to ensure that if a client assaults a staff, that that assault is met with charges and with the possibility of extended time because we want our staff to feel safe and there does need to be repercussions for incidents against staff.”

Standing Committee Recommendation #4:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut’s response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of the number and severity of violent incidents occurring in territorial correctional facilities during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut’s response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of the disposition of charges laid in relation to violent incidents occurring in territorial correctional facilities during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut’s response to this report provide a detailed update on the status of the Department of Justice’s initiatives to reduce violence in territorial correctional facilities.

Issue: Recidivism Rates

Significant discussion took place during the standing committee’s televised hearing concerning the issue of recidivism rates.

In its response to Written Question 9-5(2), the Department of Justice indicated that “Nunavut Corrections does not currently have a measure for tracking recidivism. However, the Department of Justice is currently working on options to define an appropriate measure for recidivism in Nunavut and to track it going forward.”

The 2017-2018 annual report of the department’s corrections division indicated that “recidivism will be defined as a return to territorial correctional supervision on a new conviction within two years of completing.” The report also indicates that “corrections does have an electronic system that tracks all numbers related to recidivism rates ... in 2018-2019, the division will engage appropriate resources to undertake a project related to recidivism in the territory.”

Standing Committee Recommendation #5:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut’s response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of recidivism rates for male adult offenders, female adult offenders, male young offenders and female young offenders for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years.

Issue: Rehabilitation Programming and Mental Health Services

Significant discussion took place during the standing committee's televised hearing concerning the issue of rehabilitation programming and mental health services at territorial correctional facilities.

Standing Committee Recommendation #6:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on what rehabilitation programming and mental health services are currently being offered to offenders at correctional centres and youth custody facilities.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed breakdown of departmental expenditures on rehabilitation programming and mental health services for offenders during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report clarify, in detail, the role of Elders in the department's rehabilitation programming.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report clarify, in detail, the status of its work to enter into a bilateral agreement with the federal Correctional Service of Canada to develop and deliver rehabilitation programming to offenders in territorial custody.

Issue: Correctional Land Camps and Programming

Significant discussion took place during the standing committee's televised hearing concerning the issue of on-the-land correctional programming.

The *Correctional Centres Continuation and Establishment Order* and the *Youth Justice Places Designation Order* made under the *Corrections Act* were published in Part II of the February 2013 edition of the *Nunavut Gazette*. The Orders designated five "bush camps" to serve as correctional centres and youth custody facilities.

Standing Committee Recommendation #7:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on the operations and programming of the five designated "bush camps" (within the meaning of the *Correctional Centres Continuation and Establishment Order* and the *Youth Justice Places Designation Order* made under the *Corrections Act*) during the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years.

Issue: Staffing and Training

Significant discussion took place during the standing committee's televised hearing concerning the issue of staffing and training for employees of the corrections division of the Department of Justice.

The standing committee notes that the Department of Justice has recently initiated a number of job competitions for various positions, including correctional caseworkers, an Institutional Instructor and an Admissions and Discharge Officer. The standing committee notes that the Department of Justice has recently concluded a Request for Proposals process in respect to the "Development and Delivery of Corrections Leadership and Frontline Officer Training" and awarded Standing Offer Agreements to three entities: Boss Tactical Group, CircleNorth Training and the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

Standing Committee Recommendation #8:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed listing of all positions in the corrections branch of the Department of Justice, and that this listing indicate which positions are currently filled by indeterminate, term and casual employees. The standing committee further recommends that this listing indicate the beneficiary status and gender of each employee.

The standing committee further recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed update on what training courses and programs are currently being offered to employees at territorial correctional centres and youth custody facilities.

Issue: *Corrections Act*

A new territorial *Corrections Act* was passed by the previous Legislative Assembly and received Assent on June 6, 2019. The Act has not yet come into force. Paragraph 61 of the Auditor General's report indicates that departmental officials stated that "once the Act comes into force, regulations, directives, and standing orders will be developed to formalize the department's revised approach to segregation."

Standing Committee Recommendation #9:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report provide a detailed timeline for the coming into force of the new *Corrections Act* and the development of new regulations under the Act.

Issue: Chief Investigator

Section 39 of the new *Corrections Act* establishes a new position called the Investigations Officer. This is an independent office-holder whose main role is to ensure that decisions made by corrections staff are following appropriate guidelines under the appropriate legislation. In July of 2021, the department issued a Request for Proposals to fill the position. The Request for Proposals closed a few weeks later. On March 9, 2022, the government published information indicating that the Request for Proposals had been cancelled.

During the standing committee's televised hearing, witnesses from the Department of Justice indicated that "We agree that it's a vital position. In particular we need it to bring the *Corrections Act* into force. The position is not staffed. The Request for Proposals was unsuccessful. However, we have worked to revise the Request for Proposals in the hopes that we will be more successful and that we have sent all the necessary documentation to Community and Government Services to get that Request for Proposals published as soon as we can."

Standing Committee Recommendation #10:

The standing committee recommends that the Government of Nunavut's response to this report include a copy of its revised Request for Proposals in respect to the appointment of the Investigations Officer under section 39 of the *Corrections Act*.