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Monday, February 27, 2023

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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Tony Akoak, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeeagok
(Quttiktuq)

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Development and Transportation; Minister of
Energy*

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(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee
(Uqqummiut)

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and
Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible
for Immigration; Minister responsible for the
Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible for the
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(Rankin Inlet South)

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for Suicide Prevention*

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
(Netsilik)

Alexander Sammurtok
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield
Inlet)

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(Aivilik)

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Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)

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*Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of
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(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Justice; Minister
responsible for Labour; Minister
responsible for the Qulliq Energy
Corporation*

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*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women; Minister responsible for the
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Hansard Production
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Box 1200

Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0

Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266

Website: www.assembly.nu.ca

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, February 27, 2023

Members Present:

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

>>House commenced at 13:29

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good day, my colleagues. Thank you for being in attendance. I hope you had a good rest over the weekend. I look forward to the hard work ahead of us over the coming days.

(interpretation ends) Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

**Minister's Statement 146 – 6(2):
Creation of Associate Deputy
Minister Positions**

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good afternoon" to my colleagues

and Nunavummiut who are listening to the proceedings in all of our communities.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I'm excited to demonstrate our government's commitment to Inuit employment at the highest levels of the public service. Each department and agency can now assign an associate deputy minister to work as a core member of their executive team.

The new role is structured to enable qualified Nunavut Inuit to assume senior-level responsibilities over time and to gain experience and essential skills through a program of mentorship, structured teamwork, and focused preparation. Each associate will shadow and report directly to the deputy head of a department or agency.

The creation of Inuit associate roles in all departments for up to three years reflects a commitment of the *Katujjiluta* mandate to pursue a representative public service as required by Article 23 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. I look forward to seeing more departments introduce associate deputy ministers to be the future leaders of our public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Simailak.

**Minister's Statement 147 – 6(2):
Sustainable Energy in Nunavut**

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, all. People of Baker Lake, good afternoon as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation continues to make progress on a cleaner energy future for Nunavummiut through its power plant replacement projects, renewable and alternative energy programs, and energy efficiency initiatives. Much like the 60-plus countries meeting this month at the World Sustainable Energy Days Conference in Austria to discuss the importance of clean energy security, the Qulliq Energy Corporation is engaging in consultations with stakeholders regarding the deployment of renewables in the territory.

The corporation is dedicated to carefully assessing the implementation of clean energy solutions. This transition must be carried out in a way that doesn't negatively affect customers who already pay the highest electricity rates in the country. The Qulliq Energy Corporation's current Net Metering and Commercial and Institutional Power Producer programs demonstrate the utility's commitment to providing sustainable energy opportunities with minimal financial or operational impact on its valued customer base. Initiatives like the Independent Power Producer Program for large-scale community installations are taking shape. To ensure a program of this importance is implemented vigilantly, this process requires significant engagement with experts in the field and interested stakeholders.

The territory's newest power plants bring reliable and energy-efficient technologies to communities that need them most, while displacing the territory's diesel consumption and reducing our impact on the land and our environment.

The Qulliq Energy Corporation's construction of the new Baker Lake head office is nearing completion. I am proud to share that our new facility may become the first in Canada's northern territories to achieve Energy Star certification, which we hope will inspire other building operators in Nunavut to follow suit. The corporation has put tremendous planning and creative design work into ensuring our future infrastructure utilizes energy-efficient technologies. The construction of this project is expected to be completed this spring, and I am excited about the long-term benefits of running a green facility in Nunavut.

While there is still much progress in moving toward a sustainable energy future, it is essential to acknowledge the strides the corporation has made to greenify our operations without sacrificing reliability and affordability for Nunavummiut. The Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to exploring every potential opportunity to incorporate renewable energy into the Qulliq Energy Corporation's power production operations and further reduce our environmental footprint. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 148 – 6(2):
Nunavut Search and Rescue
Roundtable 2022**

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the Members of this House on my department's delivery of the first Nunavut roundtables on search and rescue that were held in November 2022.

The roundtables were held in three locations starting with the Qikiqtani roundtable in Iqaluit, the Kivalliq roundtable in Rankin Inlet and, finally, the Kitikmeot roundtable that was held in Yellowknife.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, with assistance from academic partners like Dr. Peter Kikkert, Dr. Whitney Lackenbauer, and Calvin Pederson, who is an active search and rescue responder and researcher in Kugluktuk, we were able to secure funding through various grants to ensure these meetings were a success. The roundtables brought together 60 community responders and 50 additional representatives in the spirit of Piliqatigiinni and Aajiqatigiingni to discuss all aspects of the search and rescue system in the territory. Mr. Speaker, participation came from the territorial and federal government, the non-profit sector, Inuit agencies, and other Inuit organizations.

The roundtables facilitated the sharing of strengths, challenges, lessons learned, best practices, and *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* for search and rescue prevention, preparedness, and response. Community responders were able to relay their concerns and ask their territorial and federal partners questions about how the search and rescue system works. This also provided Nunavut Emergency Management and federal responders the opportunity to recognize and thank the volunteers who selflessly

provide search and rescue services to their communities all year round.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps most importantly, the roundtables strengthened the relationships that make effective search and rescue operations possible. In Nunavut, search and rescue often requires collaboration, communication, and coordination between local, territorial and federal responders.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, as one community responder noted, "these roundtables remind us that – Nunavut Emergency Management, Coast Guard, the military, all us volunteers – are working together for the same reason: 'so that others may live.' That's a powerful thing and that should be celebrated."

(interpretation) We very much thank the search and rescue responders in Nunavut for the hard work that they do in saving lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 149 – 6(2): Colorectal Screening Program Launch

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues. I apologize for my raspy voice today.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform my colleagues and all Nunavummiut that the Department of Health is launching a colorectal cancer

screening program pilot. The goal of this program is to identify cancerous and precancerous lesions in people without any symptoms for the early detection and prevention of colorectal cancer.

The pilot launch will happen in three communities. Pilot activities begin in Gjoa Haven from March 3 to March 9, in Arviat from March 12 to March 17, and finally, in Pond Inlet from March 19 to March 25.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in Canada. It is important to let Nunavummiut know that colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable, and beatable. Nunavut has high rates of colorectal cancer and this program is one way the department is being proactive in its approach to improve the health of Nunavummiut.

The colorectal cancer screening program is preventative in nature and is designed to screen those between the ages of 50 and 74 who are at average risk for colorectal cancer by providing a simple-to-use at home screening test. Following the pilot programs, the department is planning to roll out the screening activities across the territory in the longer term.

Colorectal cancer screening is a proven way to reduce mortality rates and improve health outcomes. Some ways that individuals can improve their health and lower their risk of developing all cancers include eating healthy foods, engaging in regular physical activity, limiting alcohol consumption, and reducing or stopping tobacco use.

I invite all MLAs to join me in encouraging Nunavummiut to decrease

the risk of colorectal cancer by continuing to make healthy lifestyle choices and by visiting their community health centres to learn more about the benefits of proactive colorectal cancer screening. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 150 – 6(2):
Nunavut Climate Change Youth
Advisory Committee Second
Cohort Callout**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I send my condolences to the people of Arctic Bay and I extend my love to those who have lost a loved one. They are in my thoughts.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the callout for the Department of Environment's second cohort for the Nunavut Climate Change Youth Advisory Committee. My department's Nunavut-wide Climate Change Youth Advisory Committee aims to engage youth on climate change issues in Nunavut and to build capacity within the territory.

Engaging young Nunavummiut ensures a variety of perspectives is taken into consideration and increases our ability to act on climate change while strengthening community-level action.

Mr. Speaker, the committee is open to youth aged 16 to 35 and focuses on a Nunavut-wide approach that includes

our high school students. Committee members are asked for a two-year commitment which allows for a focus on building knowledge and skills.

The callout for the second cohort will run until March 31, 2023. Priority will be given to Inuit enrolled under the *Nunavut Agreement* and applications can be obtained on the climate change website or by emailing climatechange@gov.nu.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Ministers' Statements. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

**Minister's Statement 151 – 6(2):
Inuglugijaittuq Ilinniarvimmi
Inuusilirijiit Virtual Symposium**

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share information about Inuglugijaittuq, a virtual symposium for *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit*, or occasionally referred to as school community counsellors. The fifth annual five-day virtual learning event occurred this February. The event focused on sharing strategies and best practices for creating more inclusive, safe and caring spaces for students.

Mr. Speaker, *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* play a key role in ensuring the well-being of students and that they feel safe, encouraged, valued, and supported. They help students navigate life's challenges, and provide insight to education staff.

Mr. Speaker, during the symposium, *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* were introduced to new safety planning resources and how to utilize them as both intervention and prevention tools. They also participated in training sessions and discussions on strategies that benefit students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Mr. Speaker, a session on gender and sexual diversity and inclusion was delivered to recognize and respond to the diversity of student needs, where learners can feel comfortable and flourish. Opportunities for learning from sessions like these create a safer environment that is conducive to learning and lead to better mental health for all our students.

Mr. Speaker, there are 45 *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* in Nunavut and we continue to build capacity of our school staff by offering meaningful professional development opportunities to strengthen the *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* community of practice. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all our *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijiit* for their dedication and commitment to our students. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Minister's Statement 152 – 6(2):
Government of Nunavut Staff
Housing**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the recent work and actions the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Allocation Committee has taken to ensure the staff housing allocation process is more equitable and efficient, while also prioritizing our Inuit employees.

The Staff Housing Allocation Committee consists of assistant deputy minister-level representatives from all government departments, as well as the Legislative Assembly, Nunavut Housing Corporation, and Nunavut Arctic College.

(interpretation ends) The committee implemented changes to allocate units faster by removing duplicate positions from the wait-list, removing previously allocated units that were vacant for more than six months, and increasing the percentage of units available for all job levels.

The committee also developed new criteria for the staff housing wait-list, which led to allocating over 50 units to Inuit employees between October 2022 and January 2023.

Mr. Speaker, these are only some initial measures my department is taking to tackle the challenges we face with staff housing allocation. The committee will continue working collaboratively to

mitigate the impacts that staff housing shortage has on our employees.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all officials supporting this important committee's work, especially the Nunavut Housing Corporation, for their assistance in implementing these changes that better support current and future employees. I encourage the committee to continue with efforts like these in finding innovative solutions that ensure staff housing allocation is guided by Havaqatigiingniq and Aajiqatigiingniq. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. (interpretation) Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Item 3: Members' Statements

**Member's Statement 192 – 6(2):
Medevac Limitations**

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise a concern brought forward by my constituents and the Hamlet of Kugaaruk regarding the limitations of medical evacuation services for the community.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is not the first time that this concern has been raised in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, under the current contract, there is only one airline which provides emergency airline services for the community. Mr. Speaker, having only one airline puts severe limitations on the level of emergency services that can be provided. An individual in a health crisis has to wait a very long time for the

medevac plane to arrive and then transport them to the nearest treatment centre in Yellowknife or, occasionally, Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Government of Nunavut look into this situation and explore possibilities to improve medical emergency air services for my constituency.

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling a letter from the Hamlet of Kugaaruk on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

**Member's Statement 193 – 6(2):
Condolences to Paul Sammurtok**

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet. The reason why I rise today is to keep relatives in my thoughts today, as today, our relatives will be laying my paternal cousin, the late Paul Sammurtok, to rest today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Condolences to the family. (interpretation) Members' Statements. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

**Member's Statement 194 – 6(2):
Sanikiluaq Participants at Arctic
Winter Games**

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon, colleagues (interpretation) and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about, and to express my pride in the youth from Sanikiluaq, and I rise today to voice my thanks to the athletes who represented Sanikiluaq during the Arctic Winter Games in Wood Buffalo, Alberta.

First of all, two athletes from Sanikiluaq partook in this event and I'm very pleased and proud of them. As there were only two badminton athletes from Sanikiluaq, Davidee Kudluarok and Kenneth Takatak.

Mr. Speaker, the local youth brought home ulus. Mr. Kenneth Takatak got a bronze ulu and Davidee Kudluarok got three gold ulus.

Mr. Speaker, Davidee Kudluarok held the flag of Nunavut during the closing ceremonies. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the coaches and the youth who played badminton as well as athletes who took part in the Games. Their names are:

Amber Aglukka of Iqaluit, Jack Allakariallak of Iqaluit, Saumik Darehshoripour (SIC?) of Iqaluit, and Tina Kudlualik of Qikiqtarjuaq, Rodney Nakoolak of Coral Harbour, Martha Joy Qaqasiq of Pangnirtung, Iris Sowdluapik of Pangnirtung, and San Tao of Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, Davidee Kudluarok, Kenneth Takatak, Mike Qavvik, and Joanasia Sala travelled yesterday to attend the Games in Prince Edward Island. I'm very proud of them and also all the Nunavut athletes that will go to play sports. Go, Team Nunavut, go! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

**Member's Statement 195 – 6(2):
Powerful Peewee Hockey
Tournament in Rankin Inlet**

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues, people of Pond Inlet, and Nunavummiut.

I want to start off by commending the residents of Iqaluit, as they display their hospitality and in their welcoming of people from outside of Iqaluit. My son, Allen is warmly welcomed by residents as I bring him with me, as he plays hockey locally when we attend sessions.

He was just selected to be part of the team that went to Rankin Inlet hockey tournament called "Powerful Peewees", and they played over the weekend, and yesterday they were fortunate enough to win the gold yesterday in the tournament, their first ever gold medal.

>> *Applause*

I'm extremely proud of my son. I've always wanted a son whenever I got pregnant and he became my first son when he was born, and he is also my one and only son.

I would also like to thank the parents for fundraising so that the youth could attend the tournament. I would also like to thank the coaches, specifically the head coach Tooma Netsiq, assistance coach Shamus Armstrong, assistant coach Seana Guitton, and...I apologize, I also wish to express my appreciation to the Iqaluit Amateur Hockey Association.

These athletes will be returning tomorrow with their gold ulus. Miles Henderson, Tooma Jr. Natsiq, Phyllo Armstrong, Jayden Lewis, Rhianna Qamaniq, Seallen Robinson, Cameron Sharp, James Aariak-Shirley, Noah Cooper, Matoo Netser, Inookie Wilman, Pearl Uluqsi, Charlie Dorrington, Jonah Liard, Allen Nutarak, and Marc-Andre Taukie.

(interpretation ends) Go Iqaluit Blizzards!

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

**Member's Statement 196 – 6(2):
Review of Nunavut's Language
Legislation**

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation to inform all Nunavummiut that the standing committee is currently in the process of reviewing Nunavut's language legislation.

Mr. Speaker, both the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* require that the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut conduct a review of the provisions and operations of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, a motion to refer this responsibility to the Standing Committee on Legislation was

passed unanimously by this House on November 7, 2022. The standing committee has begun its work.

Earlier this year, invitations were extended to a number of office-holders and organizations. These invitations requested formal written submissions concerning the administration, implementation, effectiveness of provisions, and achievements of the objectives of Nunavut's language legislation. The standing committee looks forward to reviewing the submissions that are provided by the stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to extend the same invitation to members of the listening public and to all Nunavut residents who may have an interest in the legislation which governs language use in our territory.

Copies of the legislation can be downloaded from the Government of Nunavut's website under the Department of Justice link for legislation.

Public notices have been issued and information concerning how to provide submissions to the standing committee is available on the Legislative Assembly's website at www.assembly.nu.ca. The deadline for submissions is Friday, March 31, 2023, at five o'clock p.m.

Submissions will be publicly tabled in this House as part of our record of deliberations. Individual submitters may be invited to appear before the standing committee at our televised hearing which will be held in April of this year.

The standing committee looks forward to hearing from Nunavummiut on this

important initiative. *Ma'na, quana, merci*, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

**Member's Statement 197 – 6(2):
Appreciation of the Department of
Education**

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge the Minister of Education and her officials, and to voice my appreciation as they just visited Clyde River, and I also thank the residents of Clyde River for welcoming the visitors last month.

The minister and her officials met with the DEA staff, and they also met with officials from the Piquusilirivvik Cultural Centre, as well as Ilisaqsivik Centre staff members. We met with these officials while in Clyde River, as well as the hamlet council and their community administrators and there was cooperation among the stakeholders that attended the meeting.

We worked hard and especially took advantage of the visitation from the representatives of the Government of Nunavut, as it can be quite cumbersome to schedule meetings but I put great pride in trying to meet the needs of my constituents and that will continue as well.

Due to these reasons, I would like to thank the residents of Clyde River for welcoming the officials from the Department of Education who toured the community to hear the concerns of the residents and we look forward to seeing

future improvements. That was my reasoning for rising today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

**Member's Statement 198 – 6(2):
Kugluktuk Hunters and Trappers
Organization**

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish Nunavummiut and Kuglukturmiut a good afternoon, along with the people watching.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today with concerns for the Kugluktuk HTO board.

In November 2022 I noted that there was no Government of Nunavut presence at the advisory committee for the cooperation of wildlife management annual status meeting, with the regional biologist just calling in for a presentation.

The committee met and discussed the Bluenose-East, Bluenose-West and Cape Bathurst caribou herds, with the Bluenose-East herd being the main herd that Kugluktuk harvests from, and it would be great if the Nunavut government made that a priority for review.

Also, there was no Government of Nunavut presence at the Bathurst Herd Advisory Committee meeting in January 2023 in Yellowknife with the Bathurst herd being at a critical low and it also is

not seen as a priority, with the only thing being done was implementing a TAH.

The GN and KAA, or Kugluktuk Angoniatit Association, collaborated on a remote camera project last year where remote cameras were installed in the Bathurst caribou calving grounds. Data is still being analyzed at present. The Government of Nunavut needs to make the Bluenose-East and Bathurst caribou herds a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the other is the wolf incentive program. In June 2022 a ministerial meeting in the GN forecasted an amount to be higher where the caribou populations have a TAH and are still waiting for information on this.

I will be looking into this matter with questions in the later days of this sitting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

**Member's Statement 199 – 6(2):
Update on Health**

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some members may or may not have noticed that I have been absent from the House for a few days last week and I just wanted to assure all members and members of the public that I'm okay. It's a very rare occasion that I miss sitting days. I received a lot of calls and texts over the last week.

I just wanted to update the House and thank Mr. Main for the Department of Health of all the work that they do. As anyone who has known me for the last little while know that I've had some

mobility issues, so the minor surgery that I underwent wasn't my brain, that I have received a few jokes on; they're for my knees, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to take the time to acknowledge the good work that the Department of Health has accomplished under some very trying circumstances. Surgery dates in the south have been dramatically influenced by not just COVID but RFV and flu season, which has extended the wait period that so many people and so many Nunavummiut have had to endure.

I just wanted to take the moment to, one, welcome myself back to the House here, as a number of members have approached me already today, and to acknowledge that although my knees aren't working as well as they used to, Mr. Speaker, my brain is still working fine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Laughter*

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

**Member's Statement 200 – 6(2):
Tribute to Maggie Gordon**

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to pay special tribute to an incredible elder who is no longer here with us, a community builder, and that is the late Maggie May Annie Gordon.

Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) may I continue? I apologize.

(interpretation ends) Again, I would just like to rise today to pay a special tribute to an incredible community member who is no longer here with us right now, Maggie May Annie Gordon, as she was a very key pillar in our community and someone who has worked for many decades in the public service. She nurtured and nurtured our children, where she devoted many of those decades working in the public service. We are forever grateful for the contributions that she has left behind in our amazing community.

I would just like to mention that she was really a part of the women's auxiliary program that runs here for many years and that her contributions will ever forever be in our hearts and in our minds. As they have a special memorial service here this afternoon, we are all thinking of her family. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Condolences to the family.

(interpretation) Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

**Member's Statement 201 – 6(2):
Kitikmeot Inuit Association
Election Results**

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day to Nunavummiut, everybody in the House, and those in Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to send happy belated birthday greetings to my brother, who celebrated his birthday this past weekend, and wishing him all the best in this year to come.

Mr. Speaker, on December 12, 2022 the Kitikmeot Inuit Association held its election, and I would like to congratulate Mr. Robert Greenley on his presidency and also thank the other candidates who ran this election, thanking David Akoak, Simon Komangat, David Nivingalok, and Simon Qingnaqtuq. For the vice-president of social and cultural, I would like to congratulate Mr. Raymond Quqshuun Sr. and also thank Mr. Bob Aknavigak for running as a candidate during this election.

I would also like to thank and congratulate those who ran in the community elections to represent the Kitikmeot Inuit Association on the board level, wishing them all the best.

In this past January, the Kitikmeot members and myself, and you as well, Mr. Speaker, we already had an initial meeting with the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, and we wish them all the best as they go forward and venture in the next coming years and wish them all well as they go throughout their term.
Quana, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Member's Statement 202 – 6(2): Son Catches First Muskox

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today firstly to inform members that my family in Igloolik are occupying my thoughts, and my heart seems quite heavy today as a result and I will keep you in my

thoughts and prayers during this hard time.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, this is the subject I wish to make my statement on, to convey my appreciation, but firstly, I want to voice my thanks to our local Rangers, who are able to take people on the land to provide training for their roles. Simon, our son, is currently staying in Resolute Bay to attend the training sessions.

Further, I wish to express my gratitude to the residents of Resolute Bay, as my son was provided an opportunity to harvest an animal that he would have never seen in Sanirajak. He was allowed to shoot a muskox recently. I wanted to voice my immense appreciation for this harvest and to state I am extremely proud of his success, which was why I rose today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South. Mr. Kusugak

Member's Statement 203 – 6(2): Powerful Peewee Hockey Tournament in Rankin Inlet

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Welcome back, Mr. Hickes; we need you.

(interpretation) I am very pleased to rise today to congratulate, acknowledge, and thank all of the participants and athletes that came to Rankin Inlet for an amateur hockey tournament.

Participants came from all across Nunavut, and it was very exciting to watch the games. Thank you again to everyone who made the tournament possible. Rankin Inlet came in second, but we know that we will come back and get gold next time.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, the organizers of these tournaments are tireless. In fact, there will be another round of hockey tournaments in Rankin Inlet this coming weekend for players of ages 15 and over. I would like to thank the tireless organizers, coaches, parents, and the athletes for making these important events happen. It is always great to have all these people come to Rankin Inlet to participate, and I want to warmly welcome them and thank them for their participation. I am sure that this upcoming weekend is going to produce another very exciting tournament.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to mention that this past fall, my younger sister passed away, Jean, which we took very hard. However, my oldest sister recently got a grandson, who was named Pootoogook after my little sister. My little sister has returned and I am happy. I hope that you can all celebrate with me. Congratulations also to my sister on her new grandson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: I have no more names for members' statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Craig Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will undoubtedly acknowledge my parents, who are visiting here in Iqaluit. They wanted to see their family members, so they are here in Iqaluit. They are here in the House and I hope that you will welcome them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. I have no more names. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 288 – 6(2): Mould at Coral Harbour Community Learning Centre

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my constituents in Coral Harbour and Naujaat, as well as to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Arctic College.

Recently while I was visiting the adult education centre in Coral Harbour, I was able to observe that it was quite unsafe due to the significant amount of mould formation. Additionally, it has been observed that students appear to be getting ill more frequently as a result of this. I would like to ask the minister if she is aware of this problem and if it is being addressed. That is my question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. I believe the question from the member was about students getting sick at the school, if he can clarify his question, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker: My apologies, Ms. Gross; Nunavut Arctic College.

Sorry, I have other things on my mind today, so please bear with me.

Clarification from the Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was if the school building is being inspected properly to ensure there is no safety concern for the students and staff in the building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* for the clarification. The school, the CLC that the member is referring to, is attached to Sakku School in Coral Harbour. There has been a company called Blue Metric, which has been doing diagnostic testing to the school pertaining to mould and the ongoing evaluations have been happening over the year. The Department of Education has been monitoring the school portion of the building.

Last week, I received a letter from the member regarding the community learning centre, which is a part of the

Sakku School. We have made arrangements for the students that are currently attending the college to go to another building. The staff is looking at that right now as a serious matter to ensure that the students' needs are being well looked after and that they're being accommodated at an alternate location. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The students have been in frequent sickness in the adult education centre and it's a hazardous and safety concern. We should not have government staff and students going to school in a building that is unsafe. I'm wondering if the minister can indicate when the students will be moved to another building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. Yes, the students' needs will be accommodated and Nunavut Arctic College is finalizing the paperwork as we speak for the students to move into a temporary new location. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister didn't specify a date when the students will be moved into another building. I would like that to be clarified, and in the future, I do not want Nunavut students to be placed in

buildings that are deemed hazardous.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* again to the member for his question and concern regarding the safety of our students that attend Nunavut Arctic College. As soon as we were alerted to the issue, Nunavut Arctic College took immediate action. As I said, Nunavut Arctic College is working on paperwork to finalize the transfer of a temporary lease agreement for the students and, if all goes well and goes through, we will be able to accommodate those needs as early as March 1. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 289 – 6(2): Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Nunavut

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. His mother just left and now I'm happy. I'm just kidding.

>> *Laughter*

As I was about to direct my question, (interpretation ends) this made me more nervous to face the Minister of Justice, as his parents are just right behind him. I'm just joking.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Justice and they concern the operations of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Speaker, on November 8, 2022 the federal Minister of Public Safety and territorial Minister of Justice issued a joint statement regarding the expansion of the First Nation and Inuit Policing Program.

As the minister will recall, he indicated during the fall sitting he hopes that this program expansion will “see the end of all two-person detachments in our territory.” That’s good news.

Mr. Speaker, the safety of our communities is a top priority. My understanding is that the number of police officers stationed in communities depends on the population.

Can the minister clarify how the number of police officers stationed at detachments is currently determined?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question in regard to how Royal Canadian Mounted Police members are allotted to communities. There are a few different factors that would come into play; population size, crime rate, and one other factor would be housing. We are working on that as well, but those are some of the factors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, let me state this further. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the issued statement regarding

the expansion of the First Nation and Inuit Policing Program indicates that “new Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers will be hired for communities across the territory on an ongoing basis.”

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance recently delivered the 2023-24 Budget Address in the House. During the delivery of the Budget Address, he indicated that there is “\$2.8 million to increase the number of Royal Canadian Mounted Police members in several communities.”

Can the minister clarify how his department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will determine how to allocate officers to Nunavut’s communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question. Yes, it would again be the population size, crime rate, and housing allotments, if housing is available or not. Those are a few of the factors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) It is important that adequate housing be provided for the officers who are stationed in my constituency. It has come to my attention that the rental contract for a housing duplex in Clyde River has recently expired.

Can the minister clarify how local housing for police officers is secured and

what the process is for renewing a housing rental contract? (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. Craig Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for her question. Again, there would be a few factors. If there are some local realty companies that leases out units to the Government of Nunavut or Community and Government Services, there are some Government of Nunavut apartment units that are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 290 – 6(2): Out-of-Territory Care

Mr. Hickes: You caught me off guard there, the Tasiluk.

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

Mr. Speaker, last year I had asked the minister some questions on out-of-territory care clients that the Department of Family Services administers. At that time and I will correct my math, it’s one of the few occasions where I made a numbers error, but I’ll blame it on not hearing the initial response fully. Just under 200 people through the Department of Family Services are receiving care out of territory. At the time I had asked the minister what some of the capital infrastructure demands were needed to be able to repatriate some of those clients. I would just like to

ask the minister, in one of her responses, she said that the department has been looking into other projects that could help support the repatriation of Nunavummiut who are forced to receive care out of territory. I would just like to get an update from the minister on any discussions that the minister has had with her colleagues on that. Thank you.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) When we're talking about out-of-territory care for youth or adults, it really depends on the level of care the person needs. When we're talking about what other supports we have done to better improve the services for the clients, one I could say is that when they're out of the territory, we started having more staff. For example, in Ottawa, we have client liaison officers that do site visits to the residences and provide us information on how the clients are doing. This is a frequent visit that the staff do to keep us posted on the level of care that the patients or clients are getting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for that response and I will be following up on this down the road as well. When we look at infrastructure projects and the infrastructure deficit that the territory has, any time we can look at providing services closer to home, I definitely want to explore that with my colleagues.

With the recent announcement of the girls' group home closure due to the contract being changed to another entity, I don't recall seeing any request for proposals through the Nunavut Tenders website. I may have missed it, but I don't recall seeing anything of that nature. With some of the media coverage that was recently covered through the media, it was stated that the contract had been fairly recently renewed with the contractor and then was just recently pulled and then a new contracted entity is coming into place in the near term.

When I talk about the infrastructure needs across the territory, I think it is critical that the infrastructure that we already do have maximizes its benefit for Nunavummiut. I know a number of years back that there was a general children's group home that was closed and repurposed as a girls-only group home. I would just like to get some clarification from the minister on what kind of turnaround time to make sure that those services are being provided back here in Iqaluit and what type of contract, the length of contract, and under what parameters that the contract was agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. I also thank you for that follow-up question. The group homes, especially the youth group homes, are required to outline the type of service or assistance they will be receiving while in the care home and what kind of accommodation they require. These are some of the details we look into.

Further, the home you mentioned is no longer in use and we are currently reviewing the matter to determine what better usage it can provide, so it is under review. However, I cannot ascertain the actual dates for completion of this review. I will commit to informing the House when the review is done. At this time, I have no idea when it will be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'll just follow up with the minister. I'm a little confused, Mr. Speaker. As I spoke earlier, my brain is working at full capacity, but maybe I'm missing something.

Mr. Speaker, when I saw the coverage in the media, it stated that the contracted entity had been removed and that a new contractor was coming into place. The minister just stated that they're considering repurposing the building. I would just like to get some clarification on what actually is occurring. There are seven girls that were relocated out of that facility, five to foster homes and two back to their families. In addition to the high need of just those seven young women, there are other people in need across the territory to utilize services like that girls' group home.

I would just like to get some clarification on: is that facility going to be maintained as a girls' group home with the new contracted entity that the media had alluded to or is this all stopped until a decision has been made on what purpose that infrastructure could be utilized for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that follow-up question and further, I appreciate your efforts regarding the youth by expressing concerns about their care, which you often emphasize, whether or not it is appropriate.

In speaking to the matter of repatriation of youth, it is particularly important with youth or children when we are trying to return them to Nunavut, the question of proper housing or services often crop up as ongoing concerns while in treatment. There are also physical or mental issues that often are also required to be resolved, and if they face mobility issues or mental issues, the question is usually if we have the appropriate facilities and this need often arises in our assessment reviews.

With respect to the youth home, we haven't received a definite reason as to why it was closed, although the report you read previously is something I can comprehend, but not every detail was truthful. The group home is currently closed and we are assessing it to determine if there is a better course of action to provide more care for our children or youth, so this is part of our ongoing review to make that decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 291 – 6(2): 2023
Construction Plans

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

Mr. Speaker, I was very excited when the government announced the Nunavut 3000 plan and was very excited mainly about the ambitious targets that were set in that plan as well as the unique nature of collaborating between the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the GN, and other stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the plan itself is very ambitious, which does actually include approximately 3,000 units over the term of the strategy, but it also includes preliminary targets for the 2023 summer construction season of 360 units, including 84 in Iqaluit and 40 in Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, given the land availability constraints in many of our communities, including the very limited land availability in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, I would like to ask if the minister would be able to provide an update on the preliminary targets for the 2023 summer construction season and if the minister believes that we are on track in getting the construction of 360 new units as well as the 84 units in Iqaluit and 40 in Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for my first question during this Assembly. Mr.

Speaker, yes, we are on track. We are on track to hit those targets, mainly in the communities he is asking about, in Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. Yes, we have plans to build those houses that are in the plan across the territory. Mr. Speaker, we are working with, in particular to Iqaluit, the city and with other entities to ensure that the land is available so that we could put up the very much-needed houses in this city and same too with Rankin Inlet and other communities that are getting housing units this summer. The plan is on schedule. We are working with the municipalities and other entities to ensure that there are enough lots to put the much-needed houses in. 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. Mr. Speaker, one of the more significant constraints in achieving affordable housing in Nunavut is the high cost of land development. Mr. Speaker, the lack of land on which to build housing and other non-residential infrastructure is commonly cited as one of the primary barriers to growth and private investment. In Iqaluit it can cost up to \$100,000 to acquire a serviced lot.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: when it comes to addressing or increasing affordable housing, does the Nunavut Housing Corporation or the Government of Nunavut intend on subsidizing the land development cost to make true affordable housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a couple of ways to skin the cat, I guess.

Mr. Speaker, just using Iqaluit as an example, I think it's a good example for a community where we have a really huge need for housing, up to 400 in our term anyway, and very little land to put it on, but we know that when you go through the city, there are a lot of derelict buildings and underutilized lots where you have a one- and two-bedroom that is taking up space that, with a few adjustments and a tear-down here or there, it could be used to utilize large number units.

We're going through that process. We're taking a look, working with the city, and taking a look at our own government land leases that we do have and other leases in the city to see what lots we could re-create or tear down where necessary and use more efficient space of that area. We're taking a look at that and there are other landowners in the city that we are working with to see what we can work together to ensure that we can maximize the land use and also decrease as much as possible or defray as much of the land costs as we can.

We're juggling a few things here, but the goal at the end of the day is to ensure that there are adequate houses that we can get and most affordable for those who intend to purchase them. There are different purchasing items out there too, if I may add. We're taking a look at the possibility of rent-to-own existing houses and so on and so forth that I'm

sure we will get into during question period during this session. 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. With our limited land availability, I think it is very important that our government does its best to address decrepit, vacant housing units or underutilized lots.

Mr. Speaker, returning to the affordability aspect, the Nunavut 3000 target includes 900 new affordable housing units. Mr. Speaker, acquiring serviced lots here in Iqaluit reaching approximately \$100,000 a lot, does the Nunavut Housing Corporation intend to create some sort of subsidy or other program to offset the land development cost specifically for these 900 new affordable housing units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Exactly. Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned in previous discussions with the members, we're taking a look at the overall housing corporation plans and it includes affordable housing and finding creative ways to ensure that people who would like to purchase houses can and to be able to afford them. We are looking at different gaps. Like I said, we're taking a look at maybe lease-to-own units. We're taking a look at the affordable housing continuum and in terms also of bringing back some kind of the old

homeownership assistance that was done back when Nunavut was in the NWT days, maybe a HAP 2.0 program kind of a look at it where we would supply material and you supply the labour or you supply the material and we supply the labour. We're taking a look at different ways, creative ways to see how we can ensure that people in Rankin Inlet...Rankin Inlet and Nunavut...

>> *Laughter*

...would like to get into their own homes that they can do so affordably. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 292 – 6(2): Issues with Iqaluit Boarding Home

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Amittuq. I do empathize with the people of Igloodik and Sanirajak for the loss of a loved one.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health concerning the Tammaativvik Boarding Home.

Mr. Speaker, in my constituency, there was a problem that a medical traveller experienced recently at Tammaativvik, and I no longer have the choice but to publicly convey this concern.

Now, when Inuit travel for medical appointments, they must be treated with care and professionalism, both at Tammaativvik or anywhere else they go for medical services.

Recently this past week, an elder aged 68 years old was apparently kicked out of the boarding home for making a complaint about a misdeed they witnessed where an employee saw this person videotaping the interaction between themselves and another client. The employee wanted the cellphone and due to owning this phone, the person refused and for that, she was kicked out.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to ask is: what rules does the Department of Health put into effect at the boarding home? If I am in error, the minister can correct me. We just heard that the Nova Group has a 10-year contract, but correct me if I'm wrong on this detail. What are you trying to do in the Department of Health when people are supposed to be treated nicely?

The Nova Group is under contract and I'm sure that the minister will say, "Go to the Office of Patient Relations." I know it exists, but I would like to know what the Department of Health has done to improve the Tammaativvik Boarding Home operation. That will be my first question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question about the matter, albeit it applied specifically towards one individual and what transpired to cause this problem. Unfortunately, I can't speak to the changes to this specifically in this House.

However, related to your question about the contracts allotted to private companies who operate the boarding

homes, namely, the Nova Group, we are trying to collaborate with them on how to deal with the operational issues to enact improvements in operations, either for human resource issues, meals or lack thereof, transportation with the city and elsewhere, and how to ensure the boarding homes practise more hospitality and welcoming of clients in their operations.

We are usually working with them to resolve these issues and how to resolve any problems or conflicts, and when we hear about complaints dealing with specifics, we usually try to have it investigated. Since the member already spoke about this publicly, it would revolve around the (interpretation ends) Office of Patient Relations (interpretation) and they generally deal with issues such as this.

In regard to the member's questions, those complaints usually go out to the Office of Patient Relations, and I know that the Office of Patient Relations usually rectify the issues and they report the incidents too. This has been very helpful to us. I'll leave it at that for now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this particular matter didn't involve only one incident, although just the one case is a very serious issue that I tasked someone to resolve this matter since I consider it extremely important, and there are still more complaints we have yet to touch, Mr. Speaker.

There are still formal complaints the Languages Commissioner's office has, for complaints made in 2019 and 2020 that are in our hands, and we will clarify this issue by making this statement. Any complaint about a government department or government agency will be dealt if it is an operational issue, as they have to prove under section 12(7) that they are capable of providing the service in the language of their choice. If they prefer Inuktitut, then the response has to be sent in Inuktitut.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, there are also references to the fact that there are no Inuit employees who can provide services in Inuktitut. Furthermore, the government is trying to implement the *Katujjiluta* mandate, to increase the number of Inuit employees by updating the Inuit employment plans, and this is being reviewed currently. I believe this has been reviewed as well with the Languages Commissioner section that was updated.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if this need to provide services in the Inuit language at Tammaativvik is properly implemented, including other medical boarding homes in Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Ottawa. The fact that we are from Nunavut means this requirement should be prioritized since the government believes that the Inuit language service provision is essential and they will try to highlight it more.

What is the government doing to the contractors who provide services to the patients, especially when a 10-year contract service is the ideal length? Will they be providing services and proper respect for the Inuit? For example, if any patient wants to go to the drug store to

get their prescription, I believe the drivers have to say yes because it's part of our mandate.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister can commit to a comprehensive review to ensure that the proper respect and prioritization of language services are provided to our patients who travel for medical reasons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) First of all, for the department, in terms of the medical travel file, it's very important for us to encourage and support the use of Inuktitut. That's throughout the travel experience from when clients leave their home community to when they go to the boarding home and they go to a hospital, for example, and then back home after. Throughout that whole process, we do want to see Inuktitut being used and we want to encourage it.

In terms of Tammaativvik, there have been several new projects implemented by the contractor to support staff and guests, including a bilingual bonus for Nunavut Inuit staff, new training programs, and also improved operational procedures; they have a new booking system. In terms of bilingual staff, as of December, Tammaativvik had six staff who are bilingual. My understanding is that they would like to hire more. My understanding is that they are having a tough time competing for these, the bilingual staff who are very sought after by the Nunavut government, for example, or other employers in the city.

We do continue to emphasize the importance of language in meeting with the contractor, and I have also heard the importance of it directly from the Languages Commissioner when I had met with her. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like a commitment from the minister. (interpretation ends) I would like the minister to commit to the House. Under the Inuit Employment Plan, will the minister commit to the House that of all these other bilingual employees at the boarding homes are... . I believe you had mentioned six, but he can correct me if I'm wrong.

Can the minister commit to the House that there will be more Inuit employees in regard to these medical patients that are at the boarding homes when it comes to transportation issues, boarding home issues, of how the department can tackle these problems and hire more Inuit? The majority of them are for sure Inuit, coming from other communities in the Baffin region.

I would like to have the minister commit to the House that he will make this commitment and make sure this Inuit Employment Plan is in transparency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that the Inuit Employment Plan is for government

employees, so it wouldn't necessarily apply in terms of the boarding home because they're a contractor, but I can commit to the House and to the member that we will continue working with the contractor and working with all our boarding home contractors to support Inuit employment and to support the use of Inuktitut throughout the medical travel process. We know that it's important to Nunavummiut and by extension, it's important to us. (interpretation) I commit to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Question 293 – 6(2): Inflation

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance and they concern the issue of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major concerns that my constituents in Pond Inlet have been raising with me is the increasingly high cost of living in Nunavut.

As the minister is aware, his department's recently published (interpretation ends) *Fiscal and Economic Indicators* document states that:

“Inflation has become a major concern in recent months, reaching levels in Canada not seen since the early 1990s. As Consumer Price Index data exists only for Iqaluit, we do not know how quickly prices are changing in other communities.”

Can the minister clarify the reasons why this important information is not being tracked in Nunavut's 24 other

communities, including Pond Inlet and Rankin Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Usually the price of food is different and Iqaluit is different. Further, the inspections occur more frequently here in the city and the most recent food basket cost appraisers are currently unavailable, so I apologize for that lack of information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recall, his Budget Address of last Thursday announced that:

“By increasing the budget for income assistance by \$7 million, our government will provide some relief against inflation and the increased price of food, which is the largest daily living cost of income assistance clients.”

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, many Nunavummiut will be glad to hear this news. Can the minister clearly explain how the amount of the budget increase was determined? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding that question, we use the records of income support monthly expenditures as the workers administer that program, and the

food assistance amounts are shared as we work with them to enact these funding amount changes. We determine the usage of these funding amounts, and in collaboration with the income support workers, we try to improve this program to move it forward, and how best to provide meaningful and effective assistance.

Some people are unable to keep up with the inflationary costs as they cannot buy the sustenance which they require due to the costs, and we look at ways to see how the assistance can provide more tangible impacts, and we look at how to improve the purchasing power. We undertook this review on how and where we can assist residents to become more independent.

The income support program that provides food purchases can probably be better explained by the income support workers, but there is an upper limit to what this funding is for. This program doesn't look to enrich our clients, but to work with the income support workers to ensure that they get healthy and nutritious food. This is why the funds were being checked for effective purchasing power, and we agreed that if we made the minimum amount higher, it could offer more tangible benefits through this fiscal review, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our foodstuffs have increased rather drastically due to inflation in our community, and I imagine even in your community. This poses many problems in trying to keep

up with the rising costs of food, especially some larger families. Perhaps some families can only afford to purchase food to last a week or even for just two days or the weekend, as it now costs approximately \$500 to \$600 per food basket, and I wanted to just put that into words.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, a family of four living in Pond Inlet currently receive a basic monthly allowance of \$1,553 per month under the current *Income Assistance Regulations*.

Can the Minister of Finance indicate how he is working with the Minister of Family Services to ensure that the regulations are updated in a timely manner to reflect the overall increase to the budget? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We constantly cooperate with the Department of Family Services' income assistance workers and the responsible minister and we have ongoing discussions about certain files. The higher executive management positions are generally in touch, and in collaborating on this file, we determine at which level the current income is set at, what the actual costs of a food basket are, and how this income support fund can provide tangible and effective support for the families.

We would never wish to see hungry residents, Mr. Speaker, and we continually assess the situation to determine if any developments occurred at the federal level, as the federal

government has overarching legislation pertaining to food assistance programs, which we have to follow. For example, if we're going to be making any changes, we will look at improving the amounts. We will be increasing the amount like now, and that's what we generally do, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 294 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Office Closure Policy

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for administering section 1011 of the Human Resources Manual, which concerns bad weather and office closures.

In my community of Rankin Inlet, we have been experiencing some extremely cold weather in recent weeks, and concerns have been raised that the policy has not been applied in a consistent manner.

Section 15 of the government's policy gives authority to the Deputy Minister of Human Resources to decide when to close a government office.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that these decisions should not be made in Iqaluit. I believe that these decisions should be made by officials living in the community.

Will the minister commit to changing the policy so that local government officials have the final say on whether or not local weather conditions require that a government office is closed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for the question. That question has been brought up previously, especially because of the recent extreme cold weather in Rankin Inlet. Your question can be looked into further. (interpretation ends) We could take that into consideration. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Locally elected district education authorities have a responsibility for a number of matters in respect to school closures.

Can the minister describe how the GN's office closure and bad weather policy takes into account decisions by local district authorities to close the schools in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) If I remember correctly, depending on the schools, if it is an elementary school, I

believe that it is minus 55. I might be wrong, but those are the closures that I can state. It does not mean that the GN employees that are the teachers take the day off; they still have to be at work, just like any other GN employee.

We also have to take into consideration that if we are going to have weather closures, it has to be more than one of the combinations, not just one stating that if it is minus 60 degrees, we can't be closing all GN offices. We have to take into consideration about what other factors are in place, like a storm or something else. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister confirm how many office closures have taken place in Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet since the beginning of the 2023 calendar year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question (interpretation ends) I don't have the numbers with me and it will really depend on whether the closures were related to weather or plumbing or something else. It would really depend on why the offices were closed, so I can't provide that number today. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 295 – 6(2): Government Services in Sanikiluaq

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, as I have pointed out in the past, the community of Sanikiluaq is located in a very unique geographic area in Nunavut, in the Belcher Islands of Hudson Bay. We have a rich and complex history, even in recent times. The way in which government services are provided to our community is a reflection of that.

Mr. Speaker, Sanikiluaq is unique in that some of our government services are administered from the Kivalliq region, while other services are administered from the Qikiqtaaluk region.

Can the minister provide a clear explanation as to why the Department of Family Services administers services for Sanikiluaq from the Kivalliq region and not from the Qikiqtaaluk region? 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 that question. That's a very good question. Services were provided by the Baffin region for Sanikiluaq, but it was very complicated to send staff because there was no flight connection at that time between Sanikiluaq and Iqaluit. It is better for staff to travel from the Kivalliq region to Sanikiluaq. If I recall correctly, that's why the services are provided by the Kivalliq region and there is a head

office there for income assistance and family services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the answer, minister. Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, there have been difficulties in providing income support services in the community of Sanikiluaq. The different time zones between the Kivalliq and the Qikiqtaaluk region further complicate matters.

It has been brought to my attention that when the Sanikiluaq income support worker needs to discuss issues with their supervisors, they have to wait an hour for the Rankin Inlet office to open. This creates additional stress for them and for their clients.

Can the minister describe what considerations have been given to providing support to Sanikiluaq's income support workers from 8:30 a.m. in the Eastern Time Zone? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. We have the same problem throughout Nunavut. For example, if our staff members in the Baffin region have to work with staff in the Kitikmeot or Kivalliq regions, there are issues with the different time zones. It is unfortunate, but it is not within our control. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Education administers education services for the community of Sanikiluaq through its Qikiqtani School Operations division. The Department of Community and Government Services considers our local municipal government as part of the Qikiqtaaluk region.

Will the minister commit to working with her colleagues and her staff to ensure that income support services for Sanikiluaq are also administered by the Qikiqtaaluk regional office of Family Services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. I can assure you that we can look at the matter to see if we can make any improvements, especially with the income support services, if an emergency situation or if any immediate action is required by the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 296 – 6(2): Medevac Contracts

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement, I noted the community of Kugaaruk's concerns with the limitations of having one airline provider for emergency medical evacuations, medevacs.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why only one airline service is available to provide emergency service? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking that question. (interpretation ends) I'll switch to English. We have three separate contracts, one for each region of Nunavut, under the medevac service contract and Keewatin Air Limited is the contracted medevac service provider for the entire territory, meaning that they have the three separate contracts.

In terms of issues around medevacs, it's something that the department takes very seriously. Obviously when you're talking a medevac, it's for urgent medical need and so we monitor very closely the volumes of medevacs across Nunavut, whether there is enough aircraft to meet the needs, and we work very closely with the contractor to make sure that, for example, if you have a surge of medevacs in a given community or region, working with the contractor, they can bring aircraft in from other regions to meet the demand.

It's very unpredictable in terms of how many medevacs for a given community or region, so it's something we have to stay on top of and we do that by working

diligently with the contractor.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It often takes a very long time for the medevac plane to arrive in the community, which could put an individual's life at greater risk.

Mr. Speaker, it's not more than one constituent; it's a lot of constituents that wait a very long time. Sometimes it takes two days and sometimes it takes three days for the medevac plane to arrive.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify how his department evaluates whether or not an airline can provide emergency medical evacuation services to a community in a timely manner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that when contracts were put out to tender, there were terms in terms of what we were looking for and that in order to qualify for bidding on the tender, there were requirements that the airlines had to meet.

In terms of the very specific detail, I don't have that in front of me. I am able to look into it further, but for the Kitikmeot contract, there's a dedicated aircraft located in Cambridge Bay, there's another dedicated aircraft located in Yellowknife, and there are four other non-dedicated aircraft located in Iqaluit and Winnipeg that are able to be brought

in as needed by the contractor.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not clear to me how often the contracts for medical evacuation services are reviewed. Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to ensuring that the time it takes for medevac planes to arrive in the community and transport a patient to a place of care is fully taken into consideration in evaluating which airline gets the contract when it next comes up for review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, I can commit to continuing to work with the Department of Community and Government Services, their procurement branch specifically, in terms of the contracts and make sure that the contract terms are being met. We're currently looking at exercising extension options for each region.

Mr. Speaker, I should add on this note that my department did have to deal with an incident in Kugaaruk and what was in the Kitikmeot region and it had to do with the operation of the Community Aerodrome Radio Stations in Nunavut and this was around a medevac and we did have an incident where there was an unacceptable delay in terms of the medevac service and the root issue was the Community Aerodrome Radio Station service being provided in the community.

My department took that incident and those types of incidents very seriously. On January 30 we wrote a letter to Minister Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport, with regard to our concerns and also copied my colleague, Minister Akeegok, and we have yet to receive a reply from the federal minister on that very concerning matter. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 297 – 6(2): Country Food Distribution Program

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, and they concern the Country Food Distribution Program and the community freezer in Kugluktuk.

Uqaqtii, as the minister is aware, his department has provided funding under this program to the Municipality of Kugluktuk towards the cost of operating our community freezer. However, concerns have been raised with me that the current level of funding is inadequate to cover the cost of electricity and maintenance for the freezer, going over \$20,000.

When my colleague representing Hudson Bay raised the same concern in the House during our recent fall visit, the minister stated that his department has been reviewing the Country Food Distribution Program to address this issue. Can the minister confirm what actions his department has taken to

address the issue? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. Yes, this particular program is a very popular program throughout the communities. A number of them have expressed that it doesn't cover the operations and maintenance of some of the community freezers. This is an ongoing review and operationally trying to look at how to help communities rectify the cost of doing business in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister may be aware, the community experienced an unfortunate incident last summer when a significant amount of country food went to waste because the community freezer broke down. This type of incident does not support our goal of increasing food security in our communities.

Uqaqtii, we do not want to have to try to locate and fly in trained repair technicians every time infrastructure like this breaks down. It would be much better if our own hamlet and hunters and trappers organization had trained people who could do the work.

Will the minister commit to having his department work with the Municipal Training Organization to identify and provide opportunities for residents of

Kugluktuk to get the necessary training to maintain and repair our community freezer? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Definitely it is one that we strive as government is to have locally trained people to look after the buildings that are in our communities. I want to thank the member for a very excellent suggestion and something that I'll take to the department and, if it hasn't already been brought forward, that we would bring forward, but it's something that we definitely would like to see locally trained, locally working people throughout our territory and this is one area that I think we could see a lot of good success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response and for agreeing to my suggestion.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, he tabled the 2019-2020 annual report on the Country Food Distribution Program during the Legislative Assembly's sitting of March 15, 2021.

It is important that all Members of the Legislative Assembly have up-to-date information concerning this important program.

Can the minister confirm when the 2020-21 and 2021-22 annual reports will be

ready for tabling in the Legislative Assembly? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I'm truly sorry. I didn't mean to call you that.

I don't have a schedule at the moment of when I will be tabling these annual reports, but once I have confirmation, they will be tabled here in the House. I will have to see if the documents have been completed. We should expect them to be tabled here, but I just can't say when. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 298 – 6(2): Lobbying Policy

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to question the Premier as this is a government position.

Mr. Speaker, I know many meetings are requested to the Premier, to individuals, and to cabinet. Is there a policy or does the Premier differentiate or instruct his ministers the difference between a meeting with stakeholders and a lobbying meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my

colleague. I generally provide full executive discretion to my ministers if they want to meet with an organization based on a particular request or their mandates. If any of the ministers experienced difficulties trying to accomplish that, they are always free to pepper me with questions, and they generally approach me to discuss issues they may be facing if they are meeting another body.

However, our colleague asked if I exert full control over my ministers. No; I allow them full discretion to make their decisions as they are mandated for their departments by the authority provided by this House and they are free to meet with groups associated with their departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the response I received, it appears that there is no position or policy on meetings. There could be a lobby meeting between an individual or organization or business company to have a lobby meeting against either the Premier, individual cabinet ministers, or cabinet as a whole. I'm sure that there are many requests for either businesses or organizations to present their idea to make it more favourable for their position.

How can I put this? Is there any mechanism that the Premier uses to determine whether a meeting is a lobby meeting or just the stakeholders for a meeting? I'll come up with an example. Mr. Speaker, one of the members brought up the agreement with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and a

Nunavut construction company. It's their partnership agreement which was signed back in, I believe it was, October and it's to build 2,000 units with the possibility of a \$2 billion contract. This must have been a historical, incredible meeting at the first time. That's the example of what could be a lobby meeting because the potential to earn not even millions, but billions of money they're changing hands is there.

Is there any lobbying policy that the minister has, abides by, or is thinking of making? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again thank the member for that question. Early on when I did come with the honour of being selected to serve in this capacity, I did look into what procedures or processes are in place and it was very clear that there is no registry right now, so I took it upon myself to look at other jurisdictions and I looked at the examples of the NWT, which really document the different meetings that elected officials, especially the cabinet, have and then you look at the Yukon experience where there is an actual registry that is structured through an Act.

I did and have looked at different mechanisms that could potentially be applied here in our instance and that work is ongoing. I fully am a strong proponent about being accountable, about being transparent, and as such, it's something that I noticed immediately that other previous administrations didn't have. That's something that my office is currently looking into to see

what would be the best pathway moving forward to address the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that the Premier is looking into this. As I stated earlier, there is the partnership agreement with the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The Nunavut Housing Corporation, it is quite an incredible meeting that must have happened when the process started and another process right now is the Qulliq Energy Corporation is in the process of having an independent power purchase agreement and we have seen letters asking for meetings with the minister, with regular members and, I assume, with cabinet.

When does the Premier anticipate that there will be a government position on what is lobbying and the lobbying legislation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for bringing a very important question of being open, of being transparent, and that's something that I think we all hold to the highest level here. It's not just with the members that the member mentioned; it's with major mining companies that are here in Nunavut wanting to secure the riches, so he's absolutely right. That is at top of mind in terms of what the Premier's Office is hoping to do is put together, obviously, the research around it. I don't have a definitive date. It's something that my

office is looking into right now on, really, the best pathway to address this very issue. It is something that is very important to me personally and that's why, even though there is no policy, I started looking into the issue so we could actually put process and structure into some issues that have been brought forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members, be aware that the time allotted for question period is now over. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There is none. Questions period is extended for another 30 minutes.

Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 299 – 6(2): Medevacs for Naujaat

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the ministers. Mr. Speaker, my questions are concerning medevacs from my other constituency community of Naujaat.

I have been hearing a number of concerns from my constituents regarding the length of time it takes for a medevac to arrive in the community of Naujaat. One patient waited three days for the plane to arrive while another waited for six days.

Can the minister tell us if he is aware of these long delays in medevac services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The questions from the member are about one person and I don't know the details of the problem, but I would like to look into it. However, when I was being asked questions, I said that we always work with Keewatin Air, the airline, and we get an update twice a day about where their airplanes are now and what they are doing. We get an update. We're looking into seeing if we can use other airlines that don't usually go to the Kivalliq.

However, emergencies like this happen out of the blue and we do know that they are an emergency and we treat them as an emergency. If there are two people that need medevacs in different communities and there's only one airplane available, then we try to see which case is more of an emergency and they follow the condition of the patients for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for the response. I'm not talking about one person; I'm talking about the contract for medical travel where the nurse actually goes along with the medevac. They were told that there was no nurse available, so the medevac couldn't come. It's not about one patient; I'm talking about one contract. It is a major contract. What if someone

was dying? I'm just trying to make sure that the medevac doesn't come too late. Is lack of equipment part of the problem? Mr. Speaker, I would like a good response. Thank you.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) For the Kivalliq region, in terms of the contract, there are three dedicated aircraft, two located in Rankin, one located in Churchill, and then there are three additional non-dedicated aircraft that are available. We are working with the contractor because year over year, our medevac volumes in Nunavut are increasing roughly 10 percent a year, which is quite concerning. In 2022-23 we had 2,647 medevacs, which is very high. When you have a growing demand like that, it takes a lot of work to try to make sure that the contractors are able to meet the need and that patients are not being negatively impacted.

The final thing I'll say is that Keewatin Air is frequently providing enhanced services, which is defined as supplementary or additional medevac services over and above the service obligations within the service agreement. We have recognized that there is an additional need. We're working with the contractor to see how those needs can be met as we go forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. My constituents are concerned that delays in medevac transportation are

putting their lives and the lives of their family members at risk.

Will the minister commit to looking into this situation and getting back to me in this House on what steps he is taking to resolve it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I should be able to commit to that, to conduct more research into this matter to determine its status, and further, to add more private businesses such as Keewatin Air, who we are working with. We are deliberating our options on how to deal with this challenge and how we can add more planes to their fleet to ensure that we receive good air service for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 300 – 6(2): Condition Rating of Health Centres

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me again. I have a question for the Minister of Health.

Recently on February 22, on our first sitting day, I asked the minister about the Qikiqtarjuaq Health Centre due to its dilapidated and antiquated status. In the response I received towards the end of question period at that time, the minister stated that if the federal government had additional funds, he wanted to place more emphasis. It is due to this reason that I want to now ask this question.

With the current health centres that the government owns, there are scheduled inspections that are supposed to be conducted at specific times, usually annually. They usually have inspectors travel to the communities to conduct the inspections. Based on those scheduled inspections, I wonder if you have the last inspection report provided for the health centre.

When did the inspection for the health centre take place? Were the fuel and water and sewage components inside the health centre inspected? I also ask if you have seen the results of the last inspection report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking about that local facility. Now, the department has been aware of this fact for many years related to the Qikiqtarjuaq Health Centre, as it is simply too small and antiquated and this is well known.

The questions asked by the member related to the fuel system and if it underwent inspections. Based on the information in front of me, the health centre was last inspected in 2021, which included an assessment and it looked at the status of the facility. We used our own funding to review what I would term in English as (interpretation ends) ongoing lifecycle (interpretation) to determine what requires repairs, renovations, or if they require more inspections such as safety inspections. These were prioritized during this review.

The maintenance funding for unit repairs are always too low to conduct proper repairs. (interpretation ends) Health and safety (interpretation) are what we focus on as we try to keep up with all of our needs and to ensure Nunavummiut who require medical attention are safe and healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for indicating that the last safety inspection took place in 2021, which identified different hazards at the time.

I am rising once more to show the anxiety we face as this fuel tank has remained in usage ever since it was constructed and it has never been refurbished or replaced. Since it was built, it has continued to be used, and I was informed that I was in my teenaged years when the health centre was built. With this historic usage, we are fearful that a lot of corrosion has probably damaged the (interpretation ends) pipes. (interpretation) I cannot remember the term for pipes in Inuktitut, but I am referring to the piping lines for the fuel tank.

I want to clearly inform the health department officials that this is becoming a public hazard and is dangerous to keep operating without additional safeguards. We need this remedied. I don't think I'll be rising again about this matter, Mr. Speaker, but I would like to say that the health centre is located adjacent to the shoreline with this dilapidated fuel tank. If anything happens to the lines, it will drain towards

the area where the hunters dock their boats.

I urge the health department, if they have funding available, to look at immediately replacing the fuel tank. We still have to wait another five years before we get a new health centre in our community of Qikiqtarjuaq. Due to these various issues, I am talking about this concern. Mr. Speaker. I just want them to remember that there is something very worrisome in Qikiqtarjuaq. Thank you for this opportunity to ask questions.

Speaker: It's just a comment. Do you want to comment? Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask for a briefing to determine when exactly the last inspection took place, but an emergency led to expending the funds towards the health centre in Taloyoak that was for emergency repairs.

Whenever a fuel spill occurs, it incurs a lot of expensive remedial work to lay out the affected area and to then clean it up. They are also displeasing to one's eyes after the ground is turned over to clean it up, but I will confirm that these details are as you have conveyed, and a fuel spill would be very disconcerting as the cleanup can expand, causing expensive, large and ugly ground clearance.

Let me add these final comments in English. (interpretation ends) In terms of the specific issues with the Qikiqtarjuaq facility, the space to process laboratory specimens and the pharmacy are inadequate. The storage space does not have capacity to store needed supplies, and the clinic space is inadequate to house required furniture and equipment.

Again, I would like to thank the member for hosting myself as well as the federal minister, Jean-Yves Duclos, to Qikiqtarjuaq for a very short visit last summer. I know that it was very impactful for the federal minister in terms of discussing with him, and I believe that it really opened some eyes in terms of the infrastructure needs that we have in Nunavut. It wouldn't have been possible without the member's kind hospitality, as well as sharing some frank messages with the visitors, including myself. (interpretation) I sincerely thank her for her hard work and effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: That was your last question, Ms. Killiktee? Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Question 301 – 6(2): Mental Health Services for Pond Inlet

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. I apologize; I also have a question for the Minister of Health. Maybe when you start getting up and down, you will feel better.

I'll be speaking English. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, in his minister's statement on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, the minister indicated that his department is increasing the mental health services in Nunavut.

Can the minister provide further details on how mental health services are currently being increased in the Municipality of Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member. (interpretation ends) Currently in terms of mental health and in Pond Inlet we currently have two frontline staff. They have a professional classified employee as well as one paraprofessional.

In terms of increasing the number of staff available, we are working quite hard at bringing on more paraprofessionals across Nunavut. We have ladder positions where Nunavummiut can come in at an outreach worker level and then work their way up through a combination of on-the-job learning as well as the units that they complete, and they can end up being in a supervisor position.

That's something that's targeted for Nunavut Inuit and it's something that has been supported with federal funding under the territorial health innovation fund. We thank our federal partners and are quite excited about more mental health paraprofessionals across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my constituents have been desperately asking for mental health services in the community of Pond Inlet. There has been no such service since January, which put much of the burden on the health centre nurses. This is too much for them on top of their regular work.

The minister just stated that they're working to get more Inuit recruited and employing more Inuit in the health service. Is the minister working to enhance partnerships with Inuit organizations to improve the level of care in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I mean, the Department of Health, we recognize that we can't do it all in terms of mental health programming for all communities and so we do look to organizations, whether they're non-profits or whether they're Inuit organizations, for support. We look in terms of ways to collaborate. We can combine funding resources in some cases; in some cases, we can share infrastructure. That is a big part of what we're trying to do across Nunavut.

We look at the Atii Angutiit tour, which has just finished up in the Kitikmeot region. What that tour is trying to do is support locally-led initiatives, particularly for young men, and we envision a future where there are strong non-profits or strong municipality-led programs, as well as programs from the Department of Health, including Inuit organizations. All those programs working together, I think, have the potential to really make a difference in terms of mental health for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been beneficial for Pond Inlet and 70 men had attended the program in the High Arctic. It was very helpful and we also need to have one geared towards women because we go through hardships in life, and I believe we need to establish or come up with programming. To say it in English, we need (interpretation ends) survival skills (interpretation) and we need survival skills within the community. We need survival skills in our community and we need the programming.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the minister has also noted, addressing mental health issues can be just as important as addressing physical health issues. Will the minister commit to providing adequate and appropriate mental health services in the community of Pond Inlet at the earliest opportunity? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can commit to continuing to work to support Pond Inlet to the best of our ability within the available resources. I didn't agree completely because I just wasn't sure what I was going to commit to there, but we are facing staffing difficulties and I do apologize for any impacts to mental health services across Nunavut as a result of our staffing issues. We know how important the services are, and we're really trying to remain competitive nationally and attract professionals that we need.

I just want to take a quick moment to mention the Healing by Talking

Program, which is a counselling service that can set Nunavummiut up with a counsellor that is their personal counsellor, who they know and can build a relationship with. Through the Healing by Talking Program, clients have access to 22 free counselling sessions. There is a toll-free number to set up an appointment and it is 888-648-0070, or you can contact your local health centre and ask them about Healing by Talking.

It is a really exciting program and it is increasing year by year. There is some very encouraging news coming through that program. (interpretation) I just wanted to mention that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. I have no more names. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Question 302 – 6(2): Igloolik Elementary School Mould Issue

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for acknowledging me again. Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question to the Minister of Education in regard to the elementary school in Igloolik.

First of all, I want to thank the minister for inviting the federal minister to Igloolik to open Nunavut's first \$10-a-day daycare program. Thank you very much for that, minister.

When we were in the community, the elementary school smelled like mould and the odour just stank highly as it is mouldy, and the children attending the school are quite young. My first question for the minister is: after we visited the school in Igloolik, were any specific

plans developed by the department? I would first like to know what kinds of plans exist departmentally for that school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. There were some technical difficulties in the beginning, but I believe I caught the member's question asking about the Igloolik elementary school and what is being done.

After visiting the member's constituency, it was really nice to visit there with the federal minister and his other MLA colleague as well to be there to support the announcement of \$10 a day and we got to visit the elementary school, as noted. When we were there at the elementary school, we did hear from teaches as well as others that were there that there were concerns with the school and those were brought forward to me and the education department's senior staff that were there. We are looking into the situation in regard to the elementary school. I have received a letter of correspondence from the district education authority in Igloolik regarding the school and the needs that are there.

Mr. Speaker, there are always a lot of needs in our schools and we do work to address them with the capital projects going forward. I can tell you that it was really good to see the school first hand. All of our schools are at different states and we continue to advocate for our schools, and I wish there was enough money to ensure that all the schools' needs that are out there right now could be met, but they do take time. It will be

on the list in the future to undergo renovations, but I just don't have that information right yet as it still has to go through the capital process, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for her long-winded response to my question. As I just stated now, indeed, Madam Minister, you are truthful in that if we had unlimited funding sources, we could fund an elementary school in Sanirajak, as it is just too tiny to accommodate the students. Obviously, this is due to our limited capital funding cycles, and I hope that you will include smaller communities in the capital estimates and projects, such as Sanirajak's needs, when allocating facilities.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, the minister just clarified that communities must go through the capital planning process. I wonder if there is a parallel system, perhaps, with a secondary plan for the school. Can the minister speak to that consideration?

If the school continues to be utilized, the teachers and staff are getting sick from the smelly mould and the parents are disconcerted about their children potentially getting sick or skin infections from the mould. There are quite a lot of concerns within the school in Igloolik.

Can the minister ask the Department of Community and Government Services how they can improve the situation in Igloolik's school condition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. In regard to the matter in Igloolik, I have flagged that within the Department of Education and the staff is working with Community and Government Services to look into the situation and see what we can do and if there are appropriate funds to see if we can get some of the work done ahead of time. We're always happy to put in some requests to meet those needs, but I do have staff that are working on the matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for her response and I appreciate her collaboration with the Department of Community and Government Services.

With the aging capital structures affected by mould, it takes intensive capital to renovate or to replace the construction materials, but it's very important that the schools in Nunavut are mould-free because some parents are reluctant to send their children to school when there is a mould odour.

You indicated that it's in the capital planning process. I would like to know how far it is in the prioritized stages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. I think there might be some confusion. We are aware of the issues at the school and right now it isn't in the capital process or in the queue, so to speak, but we do have a matrix that we use for all of our schools and the utilization and the renovation rates that the schools are in different priorities.

Right now the school that he's referring to in his constituency of Igloolik is currently not in the queue and I don't have a date as to when it will be, but I know that we can provide that when that information is available. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. 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 11: Petitions

Petition 003 – 6(2): Advocate for Our Air Travel Rights and Demand Better Service

Petition 004 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Office Location

I have two from the constituency of Gjoa Haven. It's in regard to air service in the community where it obstructs patients going for their appointments where they are being bumped off in a community.

The other one is for present government office space where people are not happy where it is located. Thank you.

Item 12. Responses to Petitions. Item 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

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

Committee Report 010 – 6(2): Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Commissioner’s Land Act

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner’s Land Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Bill 12 will be placed on the order paper for Wednesday, March 1.

Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 100 – 6(2): Letter from Hamlet of Kugaaruk

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a letter I received from the Hamlet of Kugaaruk with respect to medical emergency air transportation limitations.

Mr. Speaker, this letter refers to issues I raised during my member’s statement.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the government to review this document with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for the Workers’ Safety and Compensation Commission, Ms. Nakashuk.

Tabled Document 101 – 6(2): 2018 Annual Report of the Workers’ Advisor Office

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the 2018 Annual Report of the Workers’ Advisor Office.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the Inuktitut version of the annual report will be tabled once the translations are completed. 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. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 16, 17, 18, and 21 with Mr. Savikataaq in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 16:05 and
Committee resumed at 16:34

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

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq): Good afternoon. I would like to commence our Committee of the Whole meeting. Today we're going to deal with bills... . Sorry. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to review the government's main estimates and deal with the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement to first deal with Bill 18?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 18 – Appropriation (Operations &
Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024 –
Health – Consideration in
Committee**

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the committee

agree to let the officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the officials to the witness table.

For the record, Minister Main, please reintroduce your officials to the committee. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have Deputy Minister Megan Hunt as well as Executive Director of Corporate Services Greg Babstock with me. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We already had our opening comments. Do any members have any general comments to the minister's opening comments? Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the minister and officials. Sorry; I might have missed the opening comments here in person, but I was following along at home.

My comments are more to do with staffing, Mr. Chairman. When I look at the staffing, the history of the department, there was correspondence that we received through our Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness last year when I had asked some questions regarding funded and unfunded positions.

At that time, there were nearly 90 unfunded positions across various communities through the Department of

Health, and then I look at the staffing components from casual staffing to relief workers and it comes up to nearly a thousand people. I do acknowledge that some people will be double or even triple counted when you get into the relief category from casual.

I look at the statement of an increase of two PYs from last year, and I have a number of concerns, starting off with the positions that were allocated to the COVID-19 Pandemic Response Secretariat, the 21 term positions that were utilized by the secretariat. Now it makes it look like the department is increasing by two PYs, yet it's actually 23 PYs and 21 of those positions were set to expire in this fiscal year.

I do have a lot of concerns not just with the Department of Health but for a number of these different positions that are kind of now being reallocated across the Government of Nunavut. I kind of find it's a bit of a shell game, if I may use that term and I'm sure the minister will correct me with maybe a more appropriate term, but when we're looking at having positions that were created for a specific project and specified as term positions... . The minister was a member when we were fighting for those positions to help create the secretariat and I think a lot of the work that has gone on there can't be complimented enough.

I think Nunavut is one of the jurisdictions that managed to get through the COVID-19 pandemic fairly unscathed to a certain degree, but a lot of money was spent and a lot of energies were expended to achieve the little success that we did have. I am very concerned that these positions that were

created term are now being considered basically indeterminate and reprofiled to indeterminate positions across a couple of different government departments, but most notably and deservedly so were the positions came from Health or were needed within the health context.

I just want to leave it as a comment that I'm very concerned that the number of unfunded positions and the number of people that are in casual positions, yet the department is still looking forward to creating even new positions in a critically understaffed department. Across the Government of Nunavut as a whole, we're nowhere near capacity. Some departments are as little as 50 percent capacity and some are a little bit higher. I think Family Services is one that is quite noticeably higher.

With that being said, Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of concerns and reservations about all of these positions that are being created utilizing term positions that were created temporarily, and as well as not looking more at funding from within a bunch of positions that aren't filled or unfunded positions that are being utilized. People are in these employment sectors across multiple different health centres across the territory, yet they're unfunded positions, so it does create a fiscal hardship for the department to make sure that there are monies available.

It has been noted, I think last year or two years ago, two years ago was the first time in my memory that Health did not come forward with a supplementary appropriation to the Assembly with a negotiation of the Non-Insured Health Benefits agreement that was signed. Although it's on a year-to-year basis, I

do look forward to a longer term basis recognition of that federal program being adequately funded, and I know the minister has made comments to that effect fairly recently as well.

I just want to highlight some of the concerns that I have on the direction, not so much the direction of what the department is doing, but what direction the department is staffing and how the government overall is going about creating these positions in critically understaffed and nowhere near capacity civil service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do you have any more general comments? Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and your officials.

(interpretation) With respect to the elders' centre being discussed, there is one scheduled for construction this fall in Rankin Inlet, with the future opening sometime after completion in the next year of 2024. I believe the elders currently residing at the Embassy West facility from Nunavut should be the first ones emplaced in this new centre, at least if I were the Government of Nunavut, as the elders from Nunavut would be happier in a facility in Nunavut rather than down south.

On page 6, second paragraph, there's \$3 million to be used for health centre security purposes. These can easily be filled by local people and Inuit instead of flying in people who are going to fill those positions as guards. If we hire Nunavummiut, the money would stay here, but when we fill the positions with

people from the south, the money flies out of Nunavut. They can easily be filled by Nunavummiut. We can also provide training so that we can fill those positions with Nunavummiut, and we can increase the number of people that are employed in Nunavut.

I just wanted to make that comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Any more members for general comments? I have no more members on my list for general comments, so we will now proceed to the page-by-page review of the bill, starting on page H-4, and there are four branches; Directorate, Public Health, and Health Care Service Delivery. If members can go to H-4, Directorate. Any questions on the directorate? If members can stay on topic for each branch, then it's less confusing. I'll just give members a little bit of time here. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening.

In the previous Assembly, when we passed the new *Mental Health Act* and shortly after, the Department of Health created a number of mental health professional positions within the department, and at that time throughout the pandemic, there was a lot of public call for mental health workers to attend police when they go out on mental health calls and that has been raised in the Assembly on multiple occasions over the years. I was just wondering if the minister would be able to provide an update to this House on any discussions that have happened between the Department of Health and the RCMP

about allowing the department's mental health workers to attend mental health calls. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm not aware of any specific discussions on having mental health workers attend calls. There is a close working relationship between the RCMP, which fall under the Department of Justice under contracted services, and health staff at the community level. Particularly when you look at mental health clients, there is a need for coordination there. We don't want to have the police working in a silo and us working in our own silo.

When the clients are shared, in some cases, we do make efforts to collaborate with the RCMP and that's done at the community level. Unfortunately, when we bring in things like turnover of officers or turnover of mental health staff, those are barriers that we have to get over or overcome in terms of that collaboration. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In our communities, whenever the RCMP attends these mental health calls, typically, a lot of the time it is individuals who are at risk of committing self-harm, but unfortunately those individuals are most often taken into police custody for their own protection. However, that is definitely not the most appropriate situation for

anyone suffering from mental health to be in, to be placed into a holding cell.

I understand where the minister is coming from, that there are working groups at the community level to try to move in that direction, but from the departmental standpoint, is there any intention to have our own mental health workers attending mental health calls alongside the RCMP? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Currently there are no firm plans in place that I'm aware of. It's certainly something that we can take into consideration, but in terms of staffing and mental health, we would be focused right now on providing the existing services that we have on offer and staffing is quite tight right now. Team-based care is an area that's being explored by the department with our partners. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move on to my next line of questioning and it's in relation to the compensation that is offered to our medical professionals and it's something that just recently came to my attention was that there are a lot of similar positions or a lot of similar medical professional positions between the NWT and Nunavut.

One thing that caught my eye was that almost all of them, very similar positions between the two territories, was that the

NWT tends to compensate their employees better and have better compensation packages and salaries. I was wondering if the minister or the Department of Health is aware of that situation, the salary discrepancy between similar health care professional positions between Nunavut and the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, we're aware of that discrepancy and in the letter to the standing committee dated February 15 we provided a jurisdictional comparison of pay and benefits for different professionals. Right now it's just really competitive nationally where we have jurisdiction after jurisdiction rolling out incentives, whether they're signing bonuses or relocation allowances. We are all competing right now and it's up to us in terms of administering or running the department to make sure that we are competitive nationally and that we're able to attract those key professionals. You look at community health nurses, for example, without enough community health nurses at the community level, then we're running on reduced services or emergency-only services and that's the type of situation that really concerns me because it means that health care service delivery is being impacted by something that's in our control, which is staffing. It's something that's top of mind for us, being competitive nationally, and something we're actively working on specific proposals to address. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that response. I recall reading the information in the letter that was provided and it did provide an environmental scan of recruitment and retention incentives but didn't actually include the actual base salary of comparable positions.

I just want to clarify that very recently I had seen near identical positions, for example, ultrasonographer and X-ray technician, those types of positions which we would see in every type of hospital, whereas the Nunavut base salary for those positions was something like \$10,000 less than the equivalent positions in the NWT.

For that specific example where it's a clear, straight base salary that is no longer competitive between the two territories, I just want to ask that question again: for identical or highly similar positions, such as ultrasonographer and so on, is the department familiar where there is a discrepancy in the base salary between the two territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, the department is aware that base salary is also an area where we're not necessarily keeping up. We did bring through a round of critical staffing measures that were focused at improving the workplace environment or workplace conditions for our employees and we're

working on another package which would focus on the competitiveness when it comes to compensation and benefits, but it's something that's in the works. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the visitors in the gallery. It's great to see you.

I want to ask a question regarding the business plan on (interpretation ends) page 151, pages 150 to 151 of the business plan. (interpretation) Am I on the right page? Okay. I want to ask this question in English regarding (interpretation ends) the Department of Health's 2023-26 draft business plan that notes ongoing investments and virtual care programs. What specific virtual care programs are being considered and will any new technology be required to deliver them? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I will try to keep it short. There is a lot to talk about under virtual care; it's really quite an exciting area for us.

Most of the platforms that are required in terms of technology are in place. All of our platforms were upgraded recently with support from our federal partners. There may be some technology to be added, but a lot of the work around virtual care is service related.

In terms of what we're planning, we're planning to continue supporting the virtual nurse practitioner program. We're also planning to bring on a case management tool which helps to integrate specialist referrals into virtual care.

We're also planning to work on establishing an 811 tele-triage service, which would have a nurse on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. That's a service that's falling under the virtual care portfolio.

We're also investing in training, \$100,000, and we're also planning to invest into the Ottawa Health Services Network Incorporated (OHSNI) in terms of bringing on a support team through OHSNI focused on case management.

Those are the things that we are working on under virtual care and we are also exploring virtually delivered psychiatry services. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To carry on to your response to the question that I just gave, so then, how about the interpreters? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I apologize; I didn't catch the question, if the member could repeat it.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main, the member asked what about the interpreters, as opposed to what you were explaining about. What about the interpreters? Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Our plan for the 811 tele-triage service is to include requiring Inuktitut capabilities. If that was the question, I hope that I answered it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We will soon find out. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was a very short question that I asked. It is crucial that interpreters be made available to Inuit, especially as Nunavut continues to develop and many different kinds of people live side by side, such as Inuit and Qallunaat.

There are many Inuit today that do not understand any English, and although some may understand a little bit of English, the medical and anatomical terminologies are not learned. That is why I am asking about interpreters.

These new programs must have interpreters accompanying them and I want to make sure that interpretation is available for the new programs. I hope that I was understandable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do consider the fact that interpreters are required. For example, if a patient from a health centre in Qikiqtarjuaq is virtually communicating with a doctor, the worker at the health centre called a clerk interpreter would help as required whenever virtual care is needed. If the patient doesn't understand English, they get help from the clerk interpreter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that clarification. I now have a better understanding of the current process.

I would like to move on to this one (interpretation ends) about the family engagement plan to offer community members an opportunity to provide input on health care services in Nunavut. How will input and feedback be collected and what are the expected outcomes of this plan? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Yes, so it's our patient engagement team that's taking on that work. It's an exercise in order to understand the needs of Nunavummiut better and the intention is, as I understand it, to take that input and then work it into planning for the department. It could be into the annual business plan

or it could go into specific projects, service expansions, or changing the way that we operate at the community level. It could also feed into business cases that go forward for funding consideration, depending on what the input is. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm concerned about the fact that it will need to be set up right and be monitored properly. There are people who want to express their concerns. The surveys shouldn't just be shelved and there should be adequate staff.

What I want to say is that particularly in the smaller community health centres, they are extremely busy and they are always short-staffed. Compared to these days, we didn't need to make appointments in the past. We now have to make appointments to go to the health centre. If it's not an emergency, they can only see me tomorrow or the day after because they are so busy in the health centre. This needs to be settled, along with everything else.

I will leave this as a general comment and I will speak again later. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment, but I believe Minister Main wants to comment, so Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just thank the member for recognizing that our staffing situation and the need to

have a full complement of staff in every health centre is really important. It's really something that troubles me as minister when I hear stories from our staff or stories from Nunavummiut that they had difficulty accessing essential health care. I don't believe it's acceptable and it's the reason why we're working so hard to try to stabilize our staffing situation and bring more resources into the territory and keep resources and keep our staff working in the territory for longer when they do come. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the minister and his officials. The first question I would like to ask is, (interpretation ends) your department plans to add two new PYs in 2023-24. What new positions are being added? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The increase is two, but that's net. The COVID secretariat positions are coming off, so it's an actual addition of 23 positions that we're proposing. I'll just run through them. There are 11 basic radiological technicians/lab clerk positions, one policy clerk, one Nursing Resource Program admin assistant, and one operations specialist under the Nursing Resource Program; there are eight positions under the Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility and those are continuing care workers as well as a

manager and a supervisor, and one Inuktitut support communications officer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to ask this question. (interpretation ends) The department's 2023-26 business plan indicates that preliminary consultations to develop health information privacy legislation have taken place. Which entities took part in these preliminary consultations and what recommendations have been brought forward to date? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Under this one, we have established a steering committee for this item and the steering committee has established the different timelines for different tasks that are required under this health-specific privacy legislation. We're currently in the pre-consultation activity phase, which is ongoing, and then next we will be moving into the public consultation process, which will provide input into the drafting stage of legislation. In terms of that steering committee, it's the Department of Health and Justice working together on that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. Will you be consulting with all communities or only the regional hubs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the plans for the consultations, I don't believe that the consultation plan has been finalized yet. In terms of how many communities will be visited, we are anticipating that the consultation will cost about \$350,000, but just don't have the plan ready yet in terms of how many communities will be visited. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and minister. During the Department of Health's consultations, I want to make sure that the smaller communities are visited as well because they work very hard in their workplaces and they want their voices to be heard too. That is a general comment from a smaller community.

My next question is, (interpretation ends) according to page H-7 of the main estimates, approximately \$4.7 million is allocated in contribution funding for Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy. How are these funds distributed across Nunavut and how does the government monitor the effectiveness of the funding activity? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If you will just give me a second to bring the right materials up in front of me here.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) Is the member asking for the breakdown of the \$4 million amount? I just want to understand the question better; sorry. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I think the member asked where the \$4.7 million is going and if you have a way of evaluating whether the funds are effective. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just hold on a second here.

If you will bear with me here, *Iksivautaaq*, in terms of the \$4.7 million and where it's going to, we do have a number of our partners that receive funding through that item. I believe that Embrace Life Council is one of them. In terms of the total funding amounts under Inuusivut, we have \$4.4 million that goes towards the Inuusivut which is within the Department of Health; Embrace Life Council received \$1.03 million, this was in 2021-22; Kamatsiaqtut Help Line, \$150,000; Nunavut Recovery Centre, \$2.3 million. These are the line items for a total of \$7.96 million. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to suicide prevention, for example, there is a friendship centre in Rankin Inlet that is responsible for suicide prevention. If a community wants to initiate something like this, can they receive funding through that program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We provide funding for non-profit organizations or committees. It is called the Upigivatsi Fund set at \$3.3 million per year, which is made available through applications from various communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are many people who cut their life short by suicide and it seems to be more prevalent in Nunavut, as we've always had the highest suicide rate within Canada. I wonder if the Department of Health has determined if their suicide prevention programs have any effect. Does this actually lower the number of residents contemplating suicide and how can we ensure we provide tangible suicide prevention measures? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to see the suicide rate go down. We know that too many Nunavummiut are not with us today due to suicide. Through working together, we believe that we can reduce the number of suicides in Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the work around suicide prevention, it is driven by the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy. We had a gathering in Cambridge Bay before Christmas in 2022. There were over a hundred participants at the United for Life Summit. I wasn't there, but from what I understand, it was an incredible gathering of representatives from different organizations, and they are all there to help figure out ways to support Nunavummiut and to make a difference.

We're at work right now on the next version of the five-year Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and that is going to lay out clear action items that we are to work on, not just the Department of Health but all of our partners, in terms of preventing suicide and assisting Nunavummiut in their time of need.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for his efforts in this area. I have another question. (interpretation ends) According to the Department of Health's 2023-26 business plan, Upigivatsi is a contribution program for community and wellness organizations. What specific initiatives have been supported under

this program for 2022-23?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm just getting the right briefing note out here. (interpretation) I apologize. Thank you. I apologize for making you wait.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the projects funded from the Upigivatsi funded program in '22-23, we had a range of... I don't know how much detail you would like me to go into, but we had a range of programs from the Uquutaq Society to the Municipality of Cambridge Bay, the Kaajuuq Youth Centre in Coral Harbour and the Nunavut Literacy Council. There's a range of different projects that go to committees, municipalities, non-profit groups, and some of them are targeted at specific communities and some of them are Nunavut-wide.

That is a summary and if the member is interested, we can provide a written summary. It would be a quicker way to do that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is nodding their head for that, so if you can provide that to the committee. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. My next question relates to this matter which happened last year. The previous

Legislative Assembly approved the *Mental Health Act* and the draft business plan from May 2022 (interpretation ends) indicated that one of the department's priorities for 2022-23 was to "Develop regulations for the *Mental Health Act*." What is the current status of this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The status of the regulations under the *Mental Health Act* is that consultations are underway, but the work is unlikely to be completed by March 31 of this year. Our next steps on the regulations are to conduct external consultations and wrap up those consultations by the end of winter or spring 2023. We anticipate starting drafting the regulations this spring. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) One of the department's priorities for 2023-24 is to "Start implementation of the new *Mental Health Act* in a phased approach." Is the current status of mental health staffing and resources adequate to implement the legislation and, if not, which section of the legislation will be implemented as a priority? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are a number of things that are required before we can bring the *Mental Health Act* into force, and the regulations are one piece. The other piece is the Mental Health Review Board, which has to be created before we can bring the Act into force. There were nine regulations that were identified as priority. We're focusing our work on those nine priority areas for the time being, with a plan to develop the remaining eight regulations after the coming into force, if needed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister stated that they will be establishing the board to develop the regulations. Has the board been established? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the Mental Health Review Board, it is a priority for 2023-24. Next steps in terms of the review board are to determine the honoraria amount for board members and Inuit cultural advisors, and then do a call-out for board members this spring. That's where things sit. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) To date, what specific initiative has been initiated to recruit and train mental health counsellors and mental health workers and other community-based support people to provide mental health services to those in need? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Right now, the biggest initiative that we're running is the paraprofessional project and that's right across Nunavut. It has been supported by federal funding and it's really quite exciting. We're looking to bring on more staff who are capable of speaking Inuktitut, Inuit in particular.

There are four ladder positions under the paraprofessional project. Currently we have 29 paraprofessionals hired across the territory and we're looking for more. There are some unfilled positions currently that we are looking to fill. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Are there any Inuit mental health workers? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) 21 out of the 29 current paraprofessionals are Inuit. In terms of the mental health nurses, I would have to look into that. I don't know that we have the numbers of mental health professionals broken down at that level. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (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..." A number of the communities had recently experienced trauma and crises. Has the Mobile Trauma Response Team been mobilized to travel to these communities and, if so, how long will they stay and provide assistance? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The work of the mobile trauma response teams is very important to support Nunavummiut in times of need. I think, first of all, I should mention that it's not a capability that we would be able to provide on our own. It's through partnering with the Ilisaqsivik Society, Pulaarvik Kablu, Cambridge Bay Department of Healthy Living, and Indigenous Services Canada that we have this available.

Teams travel into communities upon request and my understanding is that the normal time period of a visit or length of a visit is about five days. During COVID restrictions, a lot of the support was virtually, but it's now going back towards more in-person, although there still is virtual support available. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would now like to ask questions regarding mental health. Do all communities in Nunavut have a mental health worker? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Unfortunately there are a small number of communities without mental health current frontline staff and it's not out of lack of position; it's due to staffing issues. We do have positions allocated to every community, but currently based on the information I have, which was as of December 12, 2022, there were a few communities without frontline mental health staff. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the priorities listed in the business plan is to "Start community consultations for the new Mental Health

and Addictions Strategy." The department's business plan also lists consultation activities focusing on such programs as the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Crisis Mobile Response Team process and the addictions and trauma treatment program. How do you coordinate to ensure that the results and findings are collected and implemented in a collaborative manner? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The Mental Health and Addictions Strategy is something that is required of us in terms of the new *Mental Health Act*. The plan is that under the new Act, Nunavut will have a mental health and addictions strategy and it will be something that's always there. It will be updated periodically, but this will be the first time for the territory to have a strategy. Our current plans on that are to conduct community consultations in the upcoming fiscal year and finalize the strategy the following fiscal year, 2024-25, and then move towards implementation in 2025-26. It's likely that we will hire a contractor to lead this work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The Department of Health's 2022-23 main estimates include contribution funding of approximately \$1.5 million for addictions and trauma

treatment. What will the funding be used for specifically? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The \$1.3 million is available to non-profit organizations and community governments and it's an application-based process to deliver alcohol and drug treatment services. We put out a PSA in January of last year and we received a number of proposals and some of the examples of the funded programs include one-on-one counselling, on-the-land programs, group counselling, youth resiliency programming, and other areas. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Concerns have been raised regarding the lack of mental health services for the youth. The business plan indicates that Health is working with Education to implement a "Collaboration Guide for mental health and wellness programming in all schools." What is the current status of the Health-Education Collaboration Guide and would the minister be willing to provide a copy to the members? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On this item, we're working in a support role. The lead for that one is the Department of Education and so I don't want to commit to provide resources on behalf of my colleague, Minister Gross, but that is a project that we are supporting them on. I think we all know the importance of youth mental health and trying to bring more resources into schools, I think, is very important. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. This will be my last question. (interpretation ends) The Atii, Angutiit! program has been delivered in a number of communities to date. Is this program being delivered by Department of Health staff? If not, which organization is it being delivered by and have all communities in Nunavut been reached with this program? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Health is taking the lead role, but we do work with other organizations. (interpretation ends) We haven't yet visited all communities. I believe Coral Harbour still hasn't been visited due to weather and there was one other community in the Kitikmeot which I believe was not visited due to weather, but we are committed to making up those visits and visiting every community in Nunavut.

We're planning to have a first annual gathering of local men's program hosts for this spring. That's going to be kind of the next phase of this where we're trying to build up the local capacity and support the local groups that might have started the Atii, Angutiit! tour. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank my colleague from Naujaat for his earlier question and he finished most of my questions as well, but I want to thank Solomon for that.

One issue not mentioned much relates to the suicide prevention policy. Youth who are pushed into suicide are still beloved, and we must focus this department to place more emphasis on this issue as our government. They should work with the Department of Education in regard to suicide.

My colleague, Solomon, spoke to most of my questions, so I thank Solomon for that, but I wanted to ask them why this Atii, Angutiit! group did not arrive into Taloyoak, so I will ask about the issue. Will they be travelling to our community in the short term? That is now my question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure when we're going to be going to the community, but we will make sure that

we go to all of the Nunavut communities. (interpretation ends) Implementing the Atii, Angutiit! program framework is a business plan priority for '23-24. By coming forward with this budget and asking for your support, we are asking to continue that program and continue that work across the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for his reply. Now, most of my questions were asked earlier, so I thank my colleagues. I got to hear the answers about the suicide prevention program, but I did want this further discussed.

I would like to have this provided to youth who may be contemplating suicide and many young women especially. It is just painful to see when they cut their lives short. I encourage you to keep working on this as it's a high priority, and we all feel for our young people when there is nothing left to contemplate.

I want to work with you, John, on trying to resolve this in my constituency as it is a high priority. Nunavummiut are all loveable and when we hear about another suicide in a community, it impacts us all and you feel for them. The government has to take the lead, and as far as hope, we need to continue to work hard to keep working on suicide prevention. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I believe that was just a general comment.

The next name on my list is Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I want to ask about is (interpretation ends) the government's employment statistics show that over half of the Department of Health's positions continue to remain unfilled. What consideration has been given to reprofiling, restructuring, or removing those positions which cannot be filled? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of positions being vacant, we recognize that it's a big issue for the department. In terms of reprofiling positions, we're not currently engaged in any major initiatives on that front. What we're focused on is making Nunavut an attractive jurisdiction to work in for health professionals.

We are also keenly focused on further developing our Inuit workforce in the territory by offering things like scholarships and bursaries for Nunavummiut to attend school and also through on-the-job training programs, such as the Basic Radiological Technician Program, which is quite successful.

We are also working on direct appointments within the department, where we do recognize that there are long-term casuals that have the ability to work within their positions. That is something that we are also doing.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I am very proud of our people who are able to assist with taking X-rays in Nunavut while communicating in Inuktitut.

We all know that there are a large number of health care personnel such as nurses and mental health workers that come through the communities. Sometimes we get to know some of them very well, befriend them, and even exchange email communication with them. There are some personnel, be it nurses or mental health workers, that would like to stay in or return to particular communities but are not of indeterminate status.

For example, there are some workers that want to stay in Pond Inlet and don't want to be moved to another community, but these requests are being denied. If there are three nurses staffed in Pond Inlet, if one doesn't want to be moved to another community, can this individual stay on in Pond Inlet or do they have no alternative but to go? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of moving staff from one community to another, it's possible that if they were employed as either a casual or as an employee of one of the

agencies, they could get moved from community to community. Even some of our indeterminate staff will go maybe for short stints to go help out if there is a staffing shortage in another community.

One of the things that we are keeping an eye on or making sure that we consider is that indeterminate employment makes sense for employees in terms of the pay and the benefits. We need to make it attractive for them so that they will choose to be indeterminate employees. An example is the ability to have job sharing. That is something that we currently don't have, but it is something that we are working on and it was in the critical staffing measures, the first package that I mentioned earlier. That was mentioned by our staff, they want this, and we are working on making it happen. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. As we have often discovered through talking with Inuit nurses, there are times when they are out of the practice for a while, they have difficulty coming back, or they are not taken back. Why is that the case? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I can't really answer that question without knowing the specifics of the case, but any health professionals in Nunavut who are willing and able to work in that capacity, we are very

interested in getting their contact information and bringing them on or bringing them back into the workplace. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, I think you should be approaching the Department of Human Resources to see what obstacles may be out there for Inuit nurses.

My other question concerns the mental health specialists who are often overwhelmed with work in their community. In Pond Inlet, the (interpretation ends) addiction and trauma support counsellor (interpretation) at one time was an Inuk but resigned from the position with the job description including mental health on top of the workload. Are there any positions specifically for (interpretation ends) addiction and trauma counsellors? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I believe the positions would now fall under the paraprofessional category, of which there are four. I'm trying to remember them off the top of my head. There are mental health assistants, mental health outreach workers, youth assistants, I believe, and mental health outreach supervisors. Those are the four positions, and yes, the local staff do play a huge role in supporting mental health

nurses when they are present in the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. While these individuals reside locally, the (interpretation ends) addiction and trauma counsellors, (interpretation) they can provide many benefits in the communities, as the person can be assisted to deal with mental health issues, such as treatment centres, and this treatment can be provided.

Within the Mental Health and Addictions Division, many workers have large workloads, which results in many cases being deferred. The client then has to look at other treatment options if the first option is not available, but I think some of these positions can be filled by experienced Inuit. This is just a comment that we diligently seek such individuals as well.

The question I wanted to raise and possibly my last question for now is regarding medical travel clients who would like to be seen by the same nurses, who get familiarized with the individual, and oftentimes, when they have to see another nurse, it gets cumbersome for the individuals to reiterate their health concerns.

The mental health casual positions often have to be flown to other communities. When the team in the community health centres are working together and when someone has to be sent out for other duties, it becomes difficult for the team who would just be learning to work as a

team. It is something that has to be considered in those situations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the chain of communication, so within each region, there's a regional director and then they would be looking at things along those lines. I think that management does understand the importance of having a team and group of staff who are used to working together and who know the community, but in some cases, it's hard to keep them together when we're getting pulled to a different community if there's an urgent need in another community. It might be a decision that's made out of consideration for the need to preserve service delivery. Things are so tight right now in terms of our staffing mental health and other professionals. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before I go to the next person on my list, just more of a clarification. The minister stated that they are doing all they can to get indeterminate nurses from casual or agency nurses. It would be helpful for the committee here to know: what does the department pay for a nurse day to the agencies, nurse day as a casual, and nurse day to indeterminate? If the minister would have those figures. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have all the figures. The question isn't

that simple because we're talking about all the different classifications of nurses, so community health nurse... I'll just mention community health nurse, and this was in 2021-22. Agency employers are paying them \$97 an hour and under the collective agreement, we're paying them \$51 an hour. The updated numbers are \$98 an hour and \$53 an hour, so almost double the pay. It's concerning. I can go into more detail if you would like. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) No. How about the casual nurses? Are they paid the same as indeterminate? I read too and I know they have three classifications of nurses and we will just stick to the public health nurses, if the minister has those figures. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have those details in front of me, but casual nurses do get paid a lower rate than indeterminate nurses. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thanks for the clarification. Next person on my list: Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): I have a short question or two perhaps. The first question relates to the business plan on page 152, the Kamatsiaqtut Help Line. Here in the yellow section, looking at this one on page 7, the support given to the Kamatsiaqtut Help Line that comes from your department is \$50,000. This funding is to assist the staff of the Kamatsiaqtut Help Line.

Is this funding assistance provided under a contribution agreement or included on top of the \$75,000 line item in the business plan? How long ago or how many years ago was this funding first placed in this line item? If you have the information, I would like to first hear about this before I ask more questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. The resources available to the help line are identified as \$75,000 because \$50,000 is coming through our Vote 1 grants and contributions funding and an additional \$25,000 of it is coming through our Vote 1 operations and maintenance funding. The combination of the two is making up the \$75,000 of the total funding that is being provided to the help line. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Babstock. It's my red eye that made me misread it. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You didn't respond to my question. How many years has this been in place? I'll ask that first and comment afterwards. Thank you.

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

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and my apologies to the member. This has been the arrangement that has been in place for as long as I have been in this position and that has been six years. We don't anticipate this

to change going forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's unfortunate. I would like to see the funding amounts be increased and not just the wages as services should be funded properly too. Some areas get defunded or lower amounts.

Now, it was mentioned earlier that there isn't much emphasis, although in Canada, we suffer the highest levels of self-inflicted harm amongst our people, and people wanting assistance should be prioritized as the numbers just keep increasing. There has to be more emphasis placed on treatment or service provisions. We want to see more future options for development or additions.

My next question will be: are the mental health specialists that have to be flown in from outside of Nunavut hired through contract or are they on a salary? You did mention it, but I just wanted a little more clarification. That is my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are different employment situations. You have indeterminate positions, casuals, and some on contract. There are different categories in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. It is unfortunate when you see the high qualification placed in the job descriptions advertised, especially for technical or professional positions which are provided for any job opening we wish to apply for. It also depends on the results of our interviews that affect our wages.

There are certain positions that are always advertised but never hired, such as the mental health worker positions. I wonder if this is due to the different cultural foundation they face up here in the north, as there seems to be more mental health workers that are providing services. At least that is how we view it from a non-decentralized community, such as in my community where I represent mostly Inuit, or that is the general suspicion.

Are the workers you hire able to understand the realities that are faced by their clients, or is there no linguistic requirement in these positions? Will you review these job descriptions that are advertised to get rid of these unnecessary barriers? Health always says the clients are important, but if you cannot understand the language, what use is this importance placed on clientele? They should be more orientated to Inuit cultural practices so they can understand that their mental health approaches do not work. That is my question here. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) If we're talking about mental health

professionals, it's a regulated profession. In terms of the educational requirements that are required to work as a mental health nurse, we don't set those requirements; they're set by the regulatory body.

I think the member was asking about maybe orientation or cultural awareness within the mental health field. We do have an orientation training that we require all of our mental health staff who are coming from outside of Nunavut to complete. It's a program that has been developed in-house and it's something that we think is quite important. We have orientation modules that they are required to go through in order to work in the territory.

In addition, we have hosted trauma training summits here. In November 2021, at the trauma training summit, we had 136 individuals trained in trauma treatment, trauma support, and trauma-informed practice.

In terms of Inuit culture and history of Nunavut, that's part of the orientation materials that are required for mental health workers. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Please stop me if I'm going in the wrong direction or if I go too far.

For my fellow Inuit, the people that I represent here in the House and speak on their behalf, this is very worrisome. It seems like the system has gone back to the old ways where people are sent

away, taken away from their families. I'm talking about people who get sent out through mental health services to the south, maybe because there is no service available to them in Nunavut.

There are young people and children being sent out of Nunavut who are unilingual Inuktitut speakers and they don't properly understand English. That's why I was asking the question. It is one of the things that I'm very worried about. What is the purpose of sending people who have mental health issues down south? Is it because we don't have mental health workers in the north? Is that the only decision that mental health workers can make, where the children have to stay down south for a number of months?

Mr. Chairman, you can stop me if I go too far. I have been even thinking that maybe the foster parents in the south are just trying to make money. It's very apparent that some of the children can be helped up here. I have wanted to say that for a while and I'm saying it now. While we're making considerations about the request for money, I believe this is open for discussion, so that's why I am saying these things.

I don't think I have a question, but I am very concerned about the matter. A lot of money goes out from the Department of Health; I think too much money comes out of that to outside of Nunavut. Yes, we are missing too many services in Nunavut, and that's why I assume you have to do that and I recognize that aspect as well. I will stop here for now; I'm going too far. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we can deal with people who have mental health issues or problems in Nunavut, we do keep them in Nunavut, but when there is absolutely no other way or no other place to send them in Nunavut, we generally send them out.

(interpretation ends) In terms of out-of-territory placement, we have an office that handles these matters. When we're talking about out-of-territory placement, we're talking about acute mental health disorders, such as psychosis; we're talking about substance use issues. There's a strong link there with mental health. There are also some clients who leave the territory on long-term residential care, around mental health and addictions issues, and then finally we're also talking about forensic clients who have gone through the justice system and not found criminally responsible or unfit to stand trial. Those are kind of the four categories of clients that we are talking about.

We have 17 vendors that we work with in southern Canada to take clients. Our work on the Nunavut recovery centre here in Iqaluit will be the first in-territory residential treatment, and it's something that we're excited about. It's not going to solve all the problems that we have, but to the member's comments, it will keep government dollars in the territory better and I think it will be a big step forward. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for explaining that. I want to believe your answer and what you said about improvements that are being worked on. I will support that as well because we need to progress in these matters in Nunavut.

My last question is about counsellors who are hired by contract from the south. How long are the contracts? I know they have to keep coming back and forth, which is why I am asking the question. Have you set up how many months the contracts will be in effect? For the mental health specialist or counsellor, do you have short-term contracts, not for the whole year? From my experience, I see that they come back and forth frequently. I would like to get more information on that for my last question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are usually different reasons why they go back and forth. I think the mid-term would be around six weeks for the contract duration, but right now, when we are short-staffed, some of them stay for a shorter time, such as four weeks. We set up the schedules based on the caseloads, and we always place a priority on the indeterminate employees in the communities over the nurses or workers that come and go. We have recognized that we generally spend more money with the contracts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The last person on my list for this branch: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask about the programs offered by the Department of Health. I would like to know if people are aware of these programs. Thank you and that is my only question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe people are aware of some of the programs, but we're always thinking of other ways to keep people informed. In terms of communications in the Inuit language, it has been recognized that we need to strengthen that. Through this budget process, we would like to add one position to it, (interpretation ends) one additional position. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. I think he's done. (interpretation ends) I just have another person on my list again: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. I just have one question. The Government of Nunavut has committed to developing a comprehensive elders' and senior care strategy. The Premier recently announced that his department has engaged a consultant to work on the elders' strategy. How will the Department of Health be participating in this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The elder care strategy is really exciting. Health is working in a support role with colleagues at Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. In terms of the consultations, we are not actually there as a part of the team, but we are engaged in terms of our work at the cabinet committee level. In terms of the Premier's department and mine, we are engaged at that level and there are also links that have been made at the staff level.

Health staff have had input into the direction around developing the strategy, but we're really excited by the multi-party approach where it's not just the Department of Health's issue; this is an issue and needs that involve many different departments and agencies. It's really exciting to see this work happening in the territory. It's long overdue, I believe. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Qavvik. (interpretation ends) Sorry. Next person on my list: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All this funding is going towards programs to help Nunavummiut. When you pick out how much is going where, let's say, for mental health or anger management or substance abuse, is there a figure that most of the funding goes to, any one of those programs, or is it all one bunched together? (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. The budget for mental health is split across a variety of different requirements. The total number for this current fiscal year, we forecasted about \$46 million, including approximately \$30 million for out-of-territory placements. Other programming around the staff that are situated throughout the territory also falls under that budget. It's an all-inclusive number that rolls up into that one budget line item that we track on a periodic basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before you do that, do you look into the communities and, let's say, each community because they're not all the same with the problems going on? Has your department done that? *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we do take a look at things, absolutely, community breakdown is an important part of it. When we look at it from a financial perspective, we are indeed rolling it up into the one single number, but when we're talking about it from the program level, they absolutely are taking a look at community breakdown to determine future needs and future requirements, staffing and whatnot, with regard to the

mental health programming that they deliver. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I asked that is I'm not sure if the rest of the communities are the same, but for myself and Kugluktuk, I see the majority of the people are male that are going to court and some of them had admitted that they need an anger management course. The reason why I asked that is most of them love their families and their kids, but I don't know; I guess sometimes it's hard with some issues going on, maybe from grieving or substance abuse or anything like that, but most of them love their kids and families.

When I see men go to court, I'm pretty sure the family and the kids are going through a hard time too from the father being taken away. That's one thing that might be just a suggestion that if there are more anger management programs in the communities that could be looked into, I'm pretty sure it's going to help with all the rest of the communities and the mental health they go through. *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment, but Minister Main, if you want to comment.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) One of the areas we are looking at supporting under the addictions and trauma treatment system is on-the-land programming, so on-the-land treatment

or on-the-land counselling. It's something that's really exciting and it has been proven effective. Currently Kangiqtugaapik, Iqaluktuuttiaq, and Kangiqliniq have the capacity to or are building the capacity to offer those types of programming, but Kugluktuk, for example, if there was an organization interested, we would be very interested in seeing how we could support them because it's badly needed, it's culturally relevant, and it's achievable. That's why I think it's exciting to talk about on-the-land treatment or counselling.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, *Ikhivautaq*. Yes, that's a good one, the on-the-land, but the last time I was at home, I went to a group hearing. A group of guys were travelling around Nunavut communities. I forget what it's called, but it had something to do with helping men. I went to that to show my support and one thing I saw was maybe lack of concentration or listening, that there were cellphones there, and if you're talking about on the land, you need to go maybe as far as possible where there is no service so that they could get more concentration. That's what I just wanted to say. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) That was just a comment. I have no more names on my list for the first branch. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$70,490,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: I will use my discretion here and take a 15-minute break before we go on to the next branch.

>> *Committee recessed at 18:21 and resumed at 18:53*

Chairman: Welcome back. I'll call the meeting back to order. We're dealing with the Department of Health in Committee of the Whole and we just agreed on H-4, Directorate. The next branch is Public Health, H-5. Public Health. Any questions on public health? I'll just give members a few minutes to go through. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Population Health Division of the department's Public Health Branch is projected to receive an increase of \$879,000 in 2023-24. What new activities or programs will be provided with this additional funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That increase represents the additional costs under the new Nunavut Employees Union collective agreement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business plan indicates that the new community wellness plans have been developed and will be in place until 2026-27. However, contribution funding for community health

committees does not appear to have increased. Why is that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the amounts that are operating grants to the community health and wellness committees, so that's \$10,000 per committee and across all 25 communities, so that's \$250,000. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department's 2023-26 draft business plan indicates that the department will bring into force the new *Tobacco and Smoking Act*. When the Act comes into force, section 24(2) to (4) will prohibit smoking in public housing units as well as government units. What steps have been taken to prepare landlords and tenants to comply with the legislation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the work with the landlords specifically, we have been working with the territory's largest landlord, the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and so they're aware of the prohibitions included in the Act and they're in support.

In terms of the detailed activities that landlords will have to do with their tenants, that's the landlord's responsibility, but it's something that we are going to support from a territory-wide perspective in terms of the media campaigns that we will be launching around this Act. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the priorities listed in the 2023-26 business plan indicates that the department will "Develop and implement a schedule for improvements to public reporting on topics relevant to public health..." What specific public health topics will be reported on as a priority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Bear with me here. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) and apologies for the delay.

In terms of public health reporting, we're currently developing a public health report on the status of the three most common sexually transmitted infections in Nunavut, including gonorrhoea, chlamydia, and syphilis, and we're planning to complete that report in spring 2023. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Health's business plan indicates that an evaluation of the Nunavut Wellness Agreement was completed in 2022. The federal government provides over \$21 million for the Nunavut Wellness Agreement. Will the recently completed evaluation of this program determine the amount of funding provided by the federal government in the future years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of that evaluation report, so the evaluation report did have an accompanying action plan, and so there are a number of recommendations that are set out in that evaluation report. This report was reviewed internally and then was submitted to Indigenous Services Canada at our trilateral meeting with them.

Just to back it up a little bit, in terms of administering the Nunavut Wellness Agreement, it is a tripartite approach with Nunavut Tunngavik, Indigenous Services Canada, and then our department being the three partners.

In terms of the member's question, I can't speak to whether the evaluation report will result in more funding from Indigenous Services Canada. There have been amendments to bring it up to \$242 million, and if there were additional funds available, we would certainly be interested in accessing them on behalf of the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the priorities listed in the 2022-26 business plan indicated that the department will "Continue to support school meal programs with community-based partners." What options are currently being considered to enhance this program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Through the Nunavut Wellness Agreement, on average, there is \$1.5 million to \$2 million a year that is allocated to school food programs, but when surplus Nunavut Wellness Agreement funding is available, Health will distribute what we call "school food enhancements." For example, in 2022-23 an extra \$495,000 was divided amongst all Nunavut schools, and then a second enhancement of \$2.49 million was provided to Nunavut schools in December 2022. That means that schools will get an additional \$20,000 to \$65,000 depending on the size of the school. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. On page H-7 of the main estimates, \$266,000 has been budgeted for cancer screening. Currently, what types of cancers are being screened for and how effective has the program been in identifying new cases of cancer? Thank

you, Mr. Chairman. That is my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Currently, we don't have a formal screening program in the territory, so this colorectal cancer screening program will be our first. In terms of rolling it out, I mentioned today in my minister's statement that there are three communities that will be piloted. Following that work, we will be rolling it out within the rest of the territory. The other types of cancers that we are interested in establishing screening for are cervical, breast, and lung cancer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Following the names on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have possibly two questions. (interpretation ends) The business plan indicates that a new community wellness plan has been developed and will be in place until 2026-27. However, contribution funding for community health committees does not appear to have increased. Why is that? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that it hasn't been identified as a need in terms of an increase to the committee amounts. If it

was identified to us as a need, we would consider whether to increase it or not. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, this fund is especially taken advantage of by our communities, while other communities do not apply for it. This is also a fund that is rarely depleted within a fiscal year, so this \$10,000 fund generally goes directly to the hamlet council. This amount has remained unchanged for many years now. Has any request been submitted to increase this amount? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have not heard of any requests to increase the amount. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was an agreement between the Nunavut government and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in regard to tuberculosis. What is the current status of the agreement to address the tuberculosis issue? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)

The information sharing agreement that we signed with Nunavut Tunngavik is a new tool for us in terms of being able to partner with Nunavut Tunngavik on tackling tuberculosis. We had also been working on a regional action plan with Nunavut Tunngavik. However, we have moved on from that work and we have the information sharing agreement in place.

We're now able to have an easier working relationship with Nunavut Tunngavik when it comes to tuberculosis outbreaks and tackling them. We're very grateful to Nunavut Tunngavik for their ongoing support of our efforts in terms of tuberculosis. It's something that we need to address and continue responding to across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just for clarification here, how much did Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated receive to combat TB or eliminate TB in Nunavut and what date? Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have a Nunavut Tunngavik briefing binder in front of me, but I believe the number was \$27 million. Going forward with the information sharing agreement in place and work on a regional action plan on pause indefinitely, we are looking at project-specific contribution agreements with Nunavut Tunngavik in terms of accessing that funding. For example, if we're doing a community-wide screening clinic, we would have a contribution agreement around that clinic with NTI, and yes, \$27.5 million.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I believe it was either two or three years ago, those funds were received by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Up to today, how much of the \$27 million has Health had access to? Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. \$2 million. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. It's not a huge amount by any stretch of imagination. It's just a comment that if we're going to eliminate TB in Nunavut, we've got to do it a lot quicker than \$2 million over two or three years. We're on Public Health. H-5. Any members have a question on H-5? Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Over a year ago, Nunavut's Chief Public Health Office announced a tuberculosis outbreak in the community of Pangnirtung. What is the current status of tuberculosis cases across the territory today? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of across the territory, we have one outbreak and that's the outbreak in Pangnirtung. We also have tuberculosis infections that are found in various communities across Nunavut. The work to address tuberculosis is right across, but when we do enter into an outbreak or

we discover an outbreak, then we direct additional supports to the affected community.

One of the things that we're dealing with when we talk about tuberculosis is the social determinants of health, such as poverty and overcrowded housing. We're working as the Department of Health on tuberculosis. We have things that are outside of the health system that are negatively impacting Nunavummiut's health. I think that's why you look at things like Nunavut 3000, around housing development, or food security initiatives. That's why those are also very important in terms of the long-term solution to tuberculosis in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for that information. (interpretation ends) To date, how much federal funding has the Government of Nunavut accessed to help the department address the detection and treatment of tuberculosis in Nunavut? (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of the amount that we use per year, it's roughly a million dollars and it comes from the Territorial Health Investment Fund, which comes from our partners at Health Canada. It's that specific fund that we have recently, as the three territories, put in a request to Health Canada for

additional funds so that we can do more important work in Nunavut on things like dealing with tuberculosis. We haven't heard an answer yet in terms of whether we will be receiving increased funding under that proposal. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Also, what is the current status of the government's agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to address the issues of tuberculosis in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The information sharing agreement has been signed by both partners and it's in place and being used.

I should mention that I had the opportunity to travel to Pangnirtung recently, along with our new Chief Public Officer, Dr. Shawn Wachtel, and I very much thank the community and the local MLA for their hospitality. We were there specifically to consult on the community's health needs in light of the tuberculosis outbreak. Nunavut Tunngavik was also able to participate in part of our meetings, so we thank them for that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What's the status of screening in the other communities? Usually there is a tuberculosis outbreak in a particular community or some other disease. How are the screenings conducted in the communities? That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of community-wide screening clinics, we're currently looking at Pangnirtung with a potential community to conduct one in. However, a final decision hasn't been made yet in terms of whether or not that will happen.

Looking at Qikiqtarjuaq, Kinngait, and Tikirarjuaq (Whale Cove), which have had clinics in the past, work has been done in looking at those clinics and seeing how effective they were from a cost effectiveness perspective, as well as looking at the cultural aspects to community-wide screening and how we can make it a less intimidating and more welcoming process for people because we really do want, ideally, everyone in the community to participate. Those are two areas that we have been looking at the screenings from the past.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question concerns the communities. I'll use my community for example. To date, it appears that there have been full-time

positions dedicated to working in this area. Are the communities receiving these positions prior to the screenings being conducted? What is the status of staffing these positions? It has already started in my community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the screening clinics, I think the member touched on an important point, which is that we can't just have a community-wide screening clinic and then leave and say, "Okay, we're done." There needs to be work leading up to the community-wide screening clinic, and then there needs to be continued support in the community for quite some time afterwards to address the tuberculosis in any given community.

To the member's question, there are staff who work at our facilities on TB specifically, and it's not all just in communities that have had screening clinics. We host directly observed therapy training quarterly and that's administering the TB medication. We have this training quarterly. In 2022 we had 48 nurses and other workers who received that training, and the next training is planned for this month.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should be grateful that this has not been abandoned in our community, as I occasionally see a clinic

taking place, and we are grateful that it has continued on and in some other communities.

I would like to move on to the business plan on page 156. I'll read this in English. The middle paragraph states, in English, (interpretation ends) "Develop new community wellness plans with communities for remainder of the Nunavut Wellness Agreement. The Nunavut Wellness Agreement is long-term funding that supports and community-led programs and services and reinvigoration of health and mental health promotions programs."

(interpretation) To speak to it in Inuktitut, the funds provided have many benefits. However, I don't know if there are still funds available to hire staff, but the hamlets usually generate their own funds to use towards community meals and having a staff member on occasion to provide services. Is that still the situation today? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the community wellness plans and what activities they involve, that's determined by the community and the communities conduct consultations in order to develop those plans.

In terms of evaluating the agreement, the community wellness coordinators are the staff members that are hired through the community wellness funding. Health was able to increase the funding available for those positions after the evaluation. I hope that answers your

question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree. Oftentimes they have a lot of responsibilities. There are funds required to support community wellness and for people who prepare the food or when there are soup kitchens on occasion. I have noticed that the hamlets themselves raise a lot of money and they spend a lot of money in this area, which is the main reason I asked the question.

I would like to move on to the next item in the business plan on page 156, to quote in English, (interpretation ends) "Continue to support school meal programs with community-based partners." (interpretation ends) Under status, (interpretation ends) "Health continues to support school food programs through Community Wellness Funding to Hamlets as well as working with the Department of Education on exploring options to enhance school meal programs across Nunavut."

(interpretation) I will make a comment in Inuktitut. This is a very valuable program, but in some areas, it doesn't really have much benefit in the communities that have more than one local store. Today more individuals are ordering their own products during sealift. You kind of see this benefitting the southern market more. Yes, you may be able to purchase in bulk and feed more people, but the funds given to the community are largely used to purchase food from the south. There may be a good reason here.

The nutritional foods that your department identifies, perhaps many of them are not found in the local stores because we don't really see them in our local stores. Yes, the funds are more often spent to order from the south and this is just from my own observation, of course, but on other occasions, you would want to see these economic benefits going to the local stores and I hope that this will also be included in a review. This is my last comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the member's comment, we don't dictate to the funding recipients like schools where they should buy their food from, but we do recognize that this food funding, as the member mentioned, is important and it really does benefit students. We know that having children well-fed supports academic achievement and attendance.

In terms of my colleague, Ms. Gross, the payback in terms of our students is there. As administrator of some of the school funding for Nunavut, we're always looking for opportunities to provide more and I detailed that earlier and we're really thankful to our federal partners who make it possible. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for Public Health. Branch Summary. Health. Public Health. H-5. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$26,563,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Turn to page H-6 and this is the last branch for Health. Health Care Services Delivery. Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The budget for the Medical Transportation Division has been substantially reduced due to additional federal funding being allocated for medical travel. Has the Medical Travel Policy with respect to escorts and especially escorts for elders been changed as a consequence of the new funding agreement? Thank you, *Iksivautaaq*.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No, we haven't made any changes to the policy as of yet. However, we are committed to a comprehensive review of the Medical Travel Policy. It's something that we have identified as a need. We have identified some areas for improvement and so this is work that we are going to be undertaking. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The business plan indicates that one of the department's priorities for 2023-24 is to "Review the Health Client Travel Policy to identify opportunities to better support family members visiting residents in continuing care facilities."

Will the changes in the policy apply only to travel within Nunavut?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No. The work that we're doing to look at that policy would apply to all clients that fall under the department's purview and so that would extend out of Nunavut as well. We're also looking to coordinate this role with our brother or sister department at Family Services as they have a parallel policy around their clients. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The draft 2023-26 proposes to review the current hours of home care operations and staffing requirements. Does the department anticipate employing more home care workers and assistants at the community level? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think this is the beginning of what could potentially be an increase, and I look at my colleague, the Minister of Finance there, and it might be contingent on additional resources that would be secured through developing a business

case. This is something that we're looking at. We want to support individuals needing home care across Nunavut. We recognize that it's important to keep people in their homes for as long as possible. It's not as simple as just saying that we're going to increase home care right across the territory; we need to have specifics around that and there also may be aspects of this that will tie into the strategy work being led by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The business plan indicates that the department has been working with "Nunavut Arctic College to develop a Home and Continuing Care Worker Program (HCCWP)." It delivered its first course in October 2022. How many participants completed the first course and when will the next one be delivered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The new program includes a hybrid of both in-person and online training. This course was delivered to six participants in Iqaluit in October 2022. In terms of the next delivery of the program, I don't have that in front of me, but I can commit to following up with or answering the question in follow-up correspondence if the member would

like. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Through me as the Chair, we will be expecting that correspondence. Next person my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Mental health services are in high demand across Nunavut. How is the department working with Nunavut Arctic College to recruit and train Nunavummiut into the mental health field? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of working with Nunavut Arctic College specifically on mental health, maybe the most related program would be the Bachelor of Social Work program that they have. In terms of the need, it's there, but currently we don't have a formal mental health training program through Nunavut Arctic College. We do have the Bachelor of Nursing program, we have the home care training course that has been delivered, and midwifery has happened in the past, although I realize it has been close to a decade since the last delivery of that program, so those are our main areas of collaboration with Arctic College currently. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) Are you planning in the future to educate Nunavummiut about mental health worker? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Currently, in terms of bringing Nunavummiut into the mental health field, our main initiative is the paraprofessional program. It's not a college course *per se*, but there is training that is provided as part of laddering up through those positions, and so that's a key avenue that we're going after.

We're also looking at how we can integrate employees or individuals trained through other programs, such as Ilisaqsivik's program, how they can be worked or integrated into our service delivery or projects at the community level. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) I'm going to move on to, the Office of Patient Relations plays an important role in addressing complaints and concerns regarding medical services provided to Nunavummiut. When will the minister be tabling a report on the operation of this office? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't want to say never, but we currently don't have any plans to table a report on the Office of Patient Relations. We do have an annual report that just went up on our health website and I believe that was for the fiscal year 2019-'20, and we're working on reports for the subsequent years and that will be posted on our website. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister just stated that he doesn't want to table the report. Why does he not want to table the report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The report is available publicly, so it hasn't been identified as a tabling item necessarily. We don't want to overload the Assembly with documents. However, if there's a desire to see the document tabled, we can certainly consider that. To be honest, it hadn't been identified as a need until now. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. The reason why I was asking that

question is that we have been told many times as MLAs and we have told them to call or write to the office. I did that following a direction I was given. I would like to know if we can work on making more improvements in health in general.

With that being said, I will move on to the questions I asked earlier today to the Minister of Health regarding medevacs. There are issues that come up from time to time and this is not a recent occurrence. There have been elders waiting to leave for a medical appointment. It seems like there is not too much attention being given to them in a timely manner which can cause delays. I wonder if he can respond further to my earlier question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Oh, I unmuted myself. Am I muted? No, I'm on? Thank you.

In terms of medevacs and the need for them to be timely, absolutely that is something that we recognize. Anytime we have delays to medevac availability, whether it's caused by weather or other issues, there is always a real possibility that patient care or people's lives could be at stake in some cases. That is why we are continuously working with the contractor to make sure that we have the capacity to meet the need.

In the Kivalliq region, there is a higher volume, and that's what I mentioned in oral questions today in terms of the contractor going above and beyond the

terms of the contract to try to meet the need. I don't want to get into too much detail because we haven't approved anything, but we're looking at additional aircraft capacity specifically in the Kivalliq and Qikiqtaaluk regions, just to try to keep up with the need, which is growing at about 10 percent per year. It's something and specifically we are looking at jet aircraft capability.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Malliki

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During bad weather, medical travel clients don't have a place to stay overnight if the hotels have no rooms available in Rankin Inlet. Some of them return to the south, but some of them don't wish to do so and they don't have anywhere to stay when the hotels are fully booked in Rankin Inlet.

It is my understanding that the Department of Health spoke with Sakku, but there was no agreement to a contract to make a hotel available in Rankin Inlet. I would like to know why that contract was not approved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This happened before I became a minister and I believe that this discussion occurred before my time. I have not heard as to what was done with it. However, the lack of hotel space is something that we have heard about a lot, and private businesses are quite capable of doing a lot of things,

and it would be good if they could construct another hotel in Rankin Inlet for medical travel patients, people who travel to go to hospitals or have to pass through Rankin Inlet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This question was asked earlier and I would like to add to it. The boarding homes in the south are operated through contracts. I have heard many times that there is often not an interpreter available and that the rooms are not kept clean. This is specifically in reference to the boarding home in Winnipeg. This is frequently reported to us. The staff are not welcoming and I don't know how else to describe it, but I believe that these areas really need improvement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: It was just a comment, but Minister Main, if you want to comment to that. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the member is referring to the boarding home in Winnipeg that is run by the Kivalliq Development Corporation. We are working with them right now as they are trying to move to a new boarding home. It has long been recognized that the current boarding home in Winnipeg is too small. They are planning to move to a bigger building and we are assisting them with that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The next name on my list is Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask about medical travel patients. Government employees are not supposed to stay at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home. Is there a policy where Government of Nunavut employees are not allowed to stay at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is set up that way. (interpretation ends) In terms of just following with the benefits that are available to Government of Nunavut employees, in most cases they stay at hotels, but there have been cases where Government of Nunavut staff have stayed at the boarding home, but it's in rare situations.

I think the biggest consideration around the boarding home here is that it's currently always at capacity. In terms of taking additional guests, they're limited in what they can do. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for that explaining that clearly. Many medical patients who work for the government don't have enough money for unexpected expenses. Sometimes they don't have enough taxi money and

they don't have money to buy groceries or meals, even though they're government employees. If they ask the boarding home vehicle to take them from the airport to the hotel, they're denied. Even if they want to go eat at the boarding home, they are denied. In fact, some patients who work for the government don't eat for three days if they're in Iqaluit because they don't have any money to buy meals. Perhaps your department should be considering other options. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my understanding, they can request an advance prior to their medical travel, according to the travel claim.

(interpretation ends) In terms of staying at the boarding home or eating at the boarding home, as I mentioned, I think the biggest issue here is capacity. In terms of being able to bring additional clients to the facility, the contractor is in the process of moving to a larger facility. Yeah, but noted in terms of the transportation aspect. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for Health Care Service Directorate, H-5. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my constituency communities, the issue of concern is always having a hard time getting a hold of the health centre and it has been going on for too long now. Like my colleague said, I always instructed my constituents

to call the Office of Patient Relations or write them an email.

To your response to him before, it seems like you won't be tabling a report on the operations of this office. Now my question is: do you hear any issues of concerns and do you deal with the concerns in a timely manner, or do you have a timeline or anything to check the issues of concerns?

Like my colleague said, I always instruct my constituents to call the Office of Patient Relations and email them. What's the point of calling them or emailing them if the issues of concern are not going to be dealt with or you're not going to table the report? That's my only question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to clarify, the report is currently available. It doesn't need to be tabled. It's available on our website right now. It's there. It's public, but if members would like a report to be tabled for additional transparency, we can certainly consider that.

The Office of Patient Relations does follow a timeline or they do have targets around the time it takes for them to receive a complaint, acknowledge the complaint, investigate it, and then get it back to the complainant. In the annual report that I mentioned, there is some data around how quick the office is able to do its job. I really do appreciate all the MLAs referring issues to patient relations. In 2021 there were a total of

393 issues referred to the office, and in terms of the types of complaints that they're receiving, those are broken down in the annual report.

On a final note, I just want to say that the staff at the Office of Patient Relations are amazing, and they do a very good job of following up with clients.

>> *Applause*

To be honest, when a complaint comes to my office, it takes longer for me to refer it back to the staff. If it went straight to patient relations, it would get dealt with quicker, but I just say that because sometimes people have the impression that if you bring it to the minister's office, it will get solved quickly. I don't have a magic wand or an easy button, unfortunately, to get things done. Thank you very much, patient relations staff. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you. Briefly, the work that is done in your department is very beneficial and helpful. The process of your department for dealing with issues is a lot better than before. I can also say that concerns and issues will always come up, but I'm very proud of your department and staff for working very hard to make sure that everything is improved. There is work that is being done to improve the services. It's evident that they deal with issues when there is a complaint, but as you said, it might not be done immediately.

However, I believe we are going to conclude for today, but maybe you can inform us about the building beside Tammaativvik. When will you make an announcement to open that place? It's a brand-new building. Do you have any plans to announce the opening date for that boarding home? If you don't want to reply, it's okay too, but I'll leave it as a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The new boarding home does not belong to the GN; it's owned by a private company. We will be utilizing it perhaps within this month. I know it's going to alleviate a lot of issues that medical travellers experience. There are bigger rooms and there is also space, according to my understanding, there will be elders' facilities, rooms where they don't have to go upstairs. There will be rooms specifically for government staff.

The (interpretation ends) Government of Nunavut health staff (interpretation) will also be housed in the boarding home so that the patients can get face-to-face support. We have modelled it after the boarding home in Winnipeg, as medical travellers really enjoy the way it's set up there, and it will be similar here, which will be very beneficial. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> *Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me again. I forgot to ask this question about hospital security. Do all health centres in Nunavut have security guards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some health centres don't have security guards and they are decreasing in number. (interpretation ends) Total communities with no security are eight and there are four communities with Government of Nunavut security. Sorry; 18 communities have security and 8 do not. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there Inuit security guards or do they have transient people coming up here from down south to work as security guards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) This question is a bit hard to answer because there are three types of security. There are Government of Nunavut security positions, there are contracted security positions through Scarlet Security, the contractor, and then there are enhanced security workers.

For the Department of Health, we employ a total of 36 Inuit as security guards, keeping in mind that not all of those are employed at the same time. Scarlet Security employs 53 Inuit as security guards. In terms of the enhanced contract, there are currently no Inuit working in the enhanced program staff. That's an area that I have flagged as a concern.

Just for information, the enhanced programs have security staff with previous law enforcement experience. It's a specialized skill set, but we're currently looking at what we can do around training and mentorship to ensure that local capacity is being built, no matter what type of security contract. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In communities where there are no security guards, will they be receiving security guards, or what is being done there? (interpretation ends) What determines the security in the community? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are a number of different things that determine whether we have security or not. I mean, it's common, looking at the list that I have in front of me, that smaller communities tend not to have security currently. In terms of whether you have what level of security, it

depends on the types of incidents that are happening in the community health centre. It's quite expensive, but at the end of the day, we have a duty to our clients and staff to provide a safe environment. We can't have threats and we can't have physical violence happening in a workplace or a place of healing.

I should also add that the need for secure workplace has been identified as a major factor in retention and recruitment, but we need to be able to offer a safe environment if we want to recruit staff. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The business plan indicates that the department is exploring additional options for elders' and seniors' care within Nunavut communities. One of the priorities for 2023-24 is to "identify priority communities for Elders' independent or assisted living units..." How is the department working with interested communities, organizations, and other Government of Nunavut departments to develop plans in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That item is one that we're working in a support role on. The lead for that item is the Nunavut Housing Corporation and I believe it would fall within the larger Nunavut 3000 strategy, but in terms of

these types of units, they're part of the housing continuum. The longer that we can keep Nunavut elders in their own home or their own community, the better in terms of their well-being as well as financial resources needed. I'm not trying to say that money is the most important thing because it isn't, but it's known that when elders stay in their own homes longer, it's cost effective and health effective in terms of the outcomes in their lives. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Main. (interpretation) I would now like to ask whether the elders' centre in Baker Lake has been renovated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe he is asking about the Martha Talirug Centre in Baker Lake. Yes, it was an elders' centre, but we are currently working on the renovations to the centre to make room for Department of Health staff. We have recognized that the health centre is too small and for that reason, they are looking for additional office space, for example, that will be utilized by the mental health workers. We are starting to work on that. Mr. Babstock is looking at the work to have the renovations done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the business plan on page 160, something that I did not catch before is in the second-last bullet, "Continue to work towards enhanced and appropriate in-territory medical infrastructure and medical care for Elders, which includes working with and leading other departments and agencies..." Where would this medical infrastructure be located if our government proceeds to include this in the business plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As identified in our mandate, we have identified the need for additional long-term care centres in the territory. Right now, Health is working with the Inuit birthright corporation, Nunasi Corporation, and we're working with them and through non-binding discussions in terms of the potential to have Nunasi build long-term care facilities here in Iqaluit and in Cambridge Bay. That's our plan in terms of the infrastructure piece. As well, as identified in our mandate, we are also looking at potential expansions or renovations to existing facilities to ensure that they remain part of the continuum of care across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) This will be my last question, as it is getting late in the day. (interpretation ends) One of our abilities

as elected officials is either we agree or disagree.

In the business plan, 160 *ammalu* 161, it talks about “Health is also working to expedite construction of the Kitikmeot and Qikiqtaaluk Long Term Care facilities.” Have there been any other talks to include our smaller communities in the long run to make long-term care facilities in the smaller communities?

We know for a fact that non-decentralized communities like Arviat, Igloolik, Baker Lake, and Gjoa Haven have long-term care facilities. It seems that our government made a path towards making elder care facilities to regional centres, whereas in the beginning of our elected day or when we came to this office, we had a petition that complex care needs in Nunavut to be met. (interpretation) My question is if you have put any consideration into building long-term care facilities in the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Currently we’re committed to developing the two facilities in Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit in terms of our mandate and what we can achieve with the time we have left in our mandate. In terms of future facilities, at the end of the day, it’s not my decision as health minister. I think it’s a larger decision that falls to the Assembly or future Assemblies and it also falls to communities across Nunavut. If they want to see things happen, they can make things happen, whether that’s

housing development, a new arena, or an elders facility.

I’m not making promises or commitments; I’m just saying that I believe in communities coming together and I think that there are a lot of things that we can do to enhance the life for elders across Nunavut that don’t necessarily involve long-term care and that’s looking at things like appropriate housing, which we’re now looking at Whale Cove, for example. There are only two houses that have been purposely designed for elders and all the other elders in the community want a house just like that because they know they’re not living in appropriate housing. I’ll just use that as an example, as well as the services that we can provide to keep elders healthy for longer. There’s a lot we can do together. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Next person on my list: Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’ll keep my questions brief. The minister indicated earlier the security and he indicated that there are eight communities that do not have security guards at the health centres. Can you identify which communities those are? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Grise Fiord, Qikiqtarjuaq, Resolute Bay, Sanirajak, Chesterfield Inlet, Naujaat, Whale Cove, and Kugaaruk.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister Main. You indicated that it was expensive transportation-wise. If you're considering putting security guards in those eight communities, would they be employees of the Nunavut government or would they be provided by a contracted company? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It would be either through the Scarlet Security contract or as GN security guards. It would be one of the two. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it would be better if the Department of Health looked at these communities and considered only using government employees, but it's just a suggestion.

We have also talked about, for example, in Igloolik they have a long-term care facility. For example, if an individual wants to go visit their parents who are in long-term care in Igloolik, are they provided transportation by the Nunavut government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they're allowed to visit twice a year and the government foots the bill. We are also considering whether we should increase the amount of dollars that we have set aside for this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you're doing the review on the policy and so on, what's the status of this review that you're doing and when is the completion date? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm going on memory here, which is dangerous, but I believe we're just starting the process of looking into that. As I mentioned, it's something that we will be looking at also in coordination with our brothers or sisters at Family Services, as they have kind of a parallel policy around client travel. We want to make sure that it's done in coordination with them, if possible. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the policy will have to be changed to that for the following year and in 2023-24, the health policy concerning client travel.

Now, with our elders who are placed in Embassy West in Ottawa, is there a similar program that the Department of Health pays for the travel or does Family Services pay for it? How is this in place for clients who want to travel down to visit their father or mother or other family? What support is given? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, outside of Nunavut as well, for those who are in care, they are entitled to two visits a year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make this my last question. I think you did mention earlier that you work with Nunavut Arctic College concerning home care for those who may be disabled or chronically ill. In the smaller communities where jobs are scarce, are you also probing into these communities, perhaps, to provide more training that will lead to elder care or care for disabled persons? How much have you looked into this? Are you going to keep the status quo where you have two individuals employed? I'm curious as to where that is going. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are pleased with the updated training that is delivered

through Arctic College and we are appreciative of Arctic College for their continued partnership with us.

(interpretation ends) In terms of the second part of the question, it's there on page 161 of our business plan that we do want to undertake a review of the hours of home care operations and the required staffing in each community. That's coming through from concerns or questions that have been raised to us by our clients and in terms of home care not being available on the weekends, for example, and what would be required to expand home care services. Those are things that we're trying to look at quite closely. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Last person on my list: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It won't be too long. Medical transportation, I just wanted to know if that was medical travel because here it is "Medical Transportation provides transportation services for eligible patients and escorts from their home community to services within Nunavut and out-of-territory." (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Anavilok: Thanks for the quick answer. Medical travel, I know that it is only in the regions, like the Kitikmeot, it's Cambridge Bay, and there were some cases where an elder was supposed to go to Yellowknife or Edmonton and they were trying to send her by herself, 68 years old, she can't walk very far, but they were trying to send her to her appointment by herself.

I went to the medical travel in the nursing station in Kugluktuk and I went to go see them and they said that they were over the phone with Cambridge Bay and they can't see the patients. It would be great if this could be for all the smaller communities that don't have the authority to say who has got a patient or who has got an escort because it's pretty hard over the phone. It's a better idea, probably, to say, "Okay, Mary, she could walk, she could stand okay. She doesn't need an escort."

This might be a suggestion, instead of having them only in one part of the region like Cambridge Bay for the Kitikmeot because other Kitikmeot communities were going through that too, is if they could have somebody be authorized to say, "Okay, yes, you can take an escort with you." It's pretty hard for Cambridge Bay to talk to one of the medical travel people and to be over the phone and they can't see that patient. That might be just a suggestion or a comment, but that's something to think about to have all the communities to have authority to say, "Okay, you need an escort." *Quana*, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Main, I know you can't talk about individual situations, but if you can elaborate on the

escort policy to the member. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I mean, sorry to hear that there was an elder being sent without an escort. I mean, that's something we don't want to see happening.

In terms of the Medical Travel Policy and specifically the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, in the department's opinion or position, the Non-Insured Health Benefits program is overly restrictive in terms of who is allowed to get an escort and who is not. We're constantly supplementing providing escorts using Government of Nunavut dollars rather than federal dollars because we want to be compassionate and we want to be supportive towards medical travellers.

For example, year to date, we have spent \$2.7 million in costs for extra escorts for Nunavut travellers and I think that's money well spent. There can be compassionate reasons around mental health. There can be other reasons around supporting breastfeeding with the mother and the child or even around child care. Those are some of the things we think about when we're looking at escorts. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I have no more names on my list for H-6. Health. Branch Summary. Health Care Services Delivery. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$372,521,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Go to page H-3. Department Summary. Health. Detail of Expenditures. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$469,574,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree that we have concluded Health?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Any brief closing comments from the minister? As the minister has stated that he's tired, so make them brief. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Actually, if you would allow, I would like to let my deputy minister say a few words. She's new to the territory, so if you will allow. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Ms. Hunt, welcome to the Committee of the Whole here and we're glad that you're here. You're the first deputy minister to appear in front of us since this Minister of Health has taken that portfolio. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. It's truly an honour to have been able to be a part of but also be witness to such important business. I have been in the territory now for just over six weeks and it has been a very enriching and rewarding experience.

I have deep roots in health and our indigenous communities and I am just so delighted to be of service alongside such incredible people and communities, to be

a part of improving health but also being a part of building on strengths that really exist in our communities and remembering that it really is very much that grassroots voice that helps us to solve problems together. We succeed together and we fall together, and I am just deeply excited and honoured to have the opportunity to be a part of this journey with the Nunavut government and Nunavut people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki: I wish to report progress.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We have a motion on the floor and this motion is not debatable. All in favour of the motion. Those against. You lose. I will now rise to report progress and Sergeant-at-Arms, if you can escort the witnesses off the witness table.

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

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 18 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Ms. Killiktee. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

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

Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Ball.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Mr. Ball: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind members that the Standing Committee on Legislation will be meeting at 9 a.m. tomorrow in the Nanuq Room.

Orders of the Day for February 28, 2023:

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 16
 - Bill 17
 - Bill 18
 - Bill 21
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

>> *Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 28, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House adjourned at 20:32*

