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Asked by: Pat Angnakak, MLA (Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu)

Asked of: Hon. George Hickes, Minister of Health

Number: 40-5(2)

Date: June 6, 2019

Subject: *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*

Question 1:

1. For the following fiscal years, how many children in Nunavut were diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder:

- a. 2018-19
- b. 2017-18
- c. 2016-17
- d. 2015-16

Response:

Less than 5 cases of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) were diagnosed in Nunavut for each fiscal year identified.

Question 2:

2. For the following fiscal years, how many adults in Nunavut were diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder:

- a. 2018-19
- b. 2017-18
- c. 2016-17
- d. 2015-16

Response:

Health does not have information on the number of diagnosed adults, however, the number of FASD-related health centre visits can be found below:

- a. 2018-19: information not yet available
- b. 2017-18: 5
- c. 2016-17: less than 5
- d. 2015-16: 6

Question 3:

3. How many Nunavut residents are presumed to suffer from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder without a formal diagnosis?

Response:

The number of Nunavummiut with FASD is difficult to speculate, as there are no prevalence studies conducted among Inuit. According to some recent data, the current best estimate of FASD prevalence in the general Canadian population is 4%ⁱ. Using this estimate, approximately 1500 Nunavummiut could live with FASD. This would be a conservative number as the estimated prevalence of FASD is higher in special populations such as children in care (3-11%)ⁱⁱ and adults involved in the justice system (10-23%)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Question 4:

4. For the following fiscal years, how many Nunavut children were sent out of the territory for services related to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder:

- a. 2018-19
- b. 2017-18
- c. 2016-17
- d. 2015-16

Response:

Less than 5 Nunavut children were sent out-of-territory for services related to FASD for each fiscal year identified.

Question 5:

5. For the following fiscal years, how many Nunavut adults were sent out of the territory for services related to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder:

- a. 2018-19
- b. 2017-18
- c. 2016-17
- d. 2015-16

Response:

Less than 5 Nunavut adults were sent out-of-territory for services related to FASD for each fiscal year identified.

Question 6:

6. What specific training to identify children or young adults with FASD is provided to health care workers in:

- a. Community health centres
- b. Public health centres
- c. Regional health centres
- d. Qikiqtani General Hospital

Response:

Nurses working in community health centres, public health centres, and regional centres receive training on conducting Well Baby and Well Child assessments, which includes evaluating physical, cognitive, and social development at set intervals throughout childhood. When there is evidence of abnormal physical assessment findings, growth impairment, or not meeting expected developmental milestones, nurses refer patients to a pediatrician or community physician for further evaluation and diagnosis. Nurses are also guided by the *Clinical Practice Guidelines for Nurses in Primary Care* (Guidelines), developed by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), which includes a comprehensive section on FASD. The Guidelines include diagnostic criteria for FASD, as well as information to health care professionals on how to encourage behavioural change when it comes to alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

The FASD team at Qikiqtani General Hospital received training from the Lakeland Centre for FASD in 2015.

Question 7:

7. What specific counselling is provided to families and caregivers of individuals with FASD?

Response:

Treatment plans vary depending on the presentation and specific experiences of each individual and their family's needs. An individualized assessment and treatment plan is developed for each individual, which includes supports from rehabilitation services and mental health.

Question 8:

8. What proposals has the Department of Health submitted to the federal government for specific funding to address fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Nunavut?

Response:

The federal government provides ongoing funding for the delivery of health services and health promotion initiatives.

The federal government's Child First Initiative ensures Inuit children have access to the essential government funded health, social and educational products, services and supports they need. Families can apply directly for the Child First Initiative through Martha Nowdlak at Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (MNowdlak@tunngavik.com).

Question 9:

9. For the following fiscal years, how much funding has been specifically allocated to address fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in Nunavut:

- a. 2018-19
- b. 2017-18
- c. 2016-17
- d. 2015-16

Response:

Program funding (not including salaries for health care providers and department staff working on FASD related issues) can be found below by fiscal year:

- a. 2018-19: \$700,716
- b. 2017-18: \$32,000
- c. 2016-17: \$32,000
- d. 2015-16: \$58,921

The increased amount in 2018/19 is due to a contribution agreement with the Piruqatigiit Resource Centre, which is a non-profit organization that recently opened in Iqaluit that provides education, resources and programming for children, youth and adults with FASD. They also provide programming, resources and support for caregivers, including parenting skills, peer support programs, and drop-in sessions.

ⁱ Flannigan, K., Unsworth, K., & Harding, K. (2018) The Prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; Canada FASD Research Network.

ⁱⁱ Flannigan, K., Unsworth, K., & Harding, K. (2018) FASD Prevalence in Special Populations; Canada FASD Research Network.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.