



## HAMLET OF GJOA HAVEN

Box 200, Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, X0B 1J0

**Phone:** (867) 360-7141

**Facsimile:** (867) 360-6309

Hon. Pat Angnakak  
Minister of Health  
P.O. Box 2410  
Iqaluit NU  
X0A 0H0

Tabled Documents 17-5(2)

may 24/18

April 10, 2018

Dear Hon. Pat Angnakak

Thank you for responding to the letter that I had written to you about mental health issues in our community of Gjoa Haven.

We recently had a council meeting and the concern was brought up again, that the community is in desperate need of help with mental health issues. The community sees that the mental health workers are over worked and therefore are not able to meet all of the needs of the community. Clients are becoming violent in homes that are already over-crowded and children, elders and special needs people are being affected by this violence. There has been a tragic increase in suicide as well as assault with deadly weapons, two of which have ended in murder.

This issue is not going away and without your support, Gjoa Haven will continue to be in a crisis situation. Just three days ago, we had a mental health patient subdued and medivaced to Yellowknife because he was a danger to himself and others. This was a direct result of the lack of help needed to ensure he was taking his medication. We are also in a housing shortage, and we are aware there are units to be built, but this is not helping the present situation of over-crowding and violence. We need more than understanding to help the families, victims, patients and community members of mental health problems. We need you to convince other policy-makers and planners, e.g. the executive branch of government, the ministry of finance and other ministries, to focus on and invest in mental health, especially in Gjoa Haven.

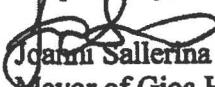
The consensus at our council meeting was not to try and hire locally, but to hire more qualified, professional mental health workers that can provide on-call services, home visitations and counselling. As a leader of my community and my people, I am heartbroken to be in a position that seems to not be helping nor leading my community. I value my role as Mayor and want to provide the best possible quality of life to all who live in Gjoa Haven. It is the whole community that suffers when one small part of our lives becomes ineffective or destructive.

Thank you for wanting to fill the paraprofessional position in Gjoa Haven, I am hoping that will help. In the meantime, I am asking for you to come to Gjoa Haven and speak with our council about the needs of our community, the factors associated in making decisions about mental health in Gjoa Haven and the prospect of creating infrastructure in Gjoa Haven that would provide an out patient facility that could help monitor, counsel and manage mental health patients with their day-to-day living. We are open to implementing pilot projects where mental health advocacy proposals can be tested.

Traditional Inuit medicine and family practices are being affected by modern diseases. As Inuit, we rely on our elders and their wisdom to help see us through difficult times. Now, we are having to rely on others for the same support we would have asked from our family groups. As mayor, I am now tasked with trying to bridge the gap between our traditional values and the actual reality that governments and policy shape our future. We need common values and mutual approaches to help identify strengths and understand weaknesses. I am looking towards the future of my community. Please help our future be better than it is right now.

Thanking you in advance for your time and support.

Respectfully,

  
Joanni Sallerina  
Mayor of Gjoa Haven

cc. Colleen Stockley, Deputy Minister of Health  
David Stockley, Senior Administrative Officer, Hamlet of Gjoa Haven

Karen Kabloona, Associate Deputy Minister, Quality of Life Secretariat  
Victoria Madsen, Director of Mental Health and Addictions

MLA Tony Akoak for Gjoa Haven