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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Tony Akoak, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeagok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

Hon. P.J. Akeagok

(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut)

Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister responsible for Indigenous Affairs

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Education; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for Seniors

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanasic

(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council

Joelie Kaerner

(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee

(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial Management Board; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources; Minister responsible for the Status of Women; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Hon. Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Minister of Environment; Minister of Energy; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Alexander Sammurtok

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut**Tuesday, February 27, 2024****Members Present:**

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

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>*Prayer*

Speaker: Welcome back, everyone, even though I said the wrong date yesterday. Welcome.

Before we proceed with the orders of the day, I wish to make a statement.

Speaker's Statement

As the House is aware, the federal Minister of Justice recently announced an appointment to the Nunavut Court of Justice, and we congratulate the newest member of our court.

I am deeply honoured to have the opportunity today to pay tribute to retired Justice Bonnie Tulloch.

Prior to being elected to this House, I was one of a number of staff at the Legal Services Board's Gjoa Haven office.

Bonnie Tulloch's commitment to Inuit and our communities was very real, and she accomplished many things during her time in Nunavut.

I will take a moment to read into the record her official biography that was published by the Nunavut Court of Justice:

"Madam Justice Tulloch received a Bachelor of Laws from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1995.

She was admitted to the Bar of Ontario in 1996, the Northwest Territories Bar in 1998 and the Nunavut Bar in 1999.

Madam Justice Tulloch was the Executive Director for the Keewatin Legal Services Centre Society in Rankin Inlet from 1998 to 2000 and Executive Director of the newly-created Nunavut Legal Services Board, located in Gjoa Haven, from 2000 to 2003.

She then moved to Iqaluit where she was a sole practitioner before joining the Department of Justice, Canada as a Crown Prosecutor in the Nunavut Regional Office in late 2004.

She became Regional Director and Chief Federal Prosecutor in 2005, a position that she continued to hold within the then newly-created Public Prosecution Service of Canada until 2008.

In 2007, she was named Special Advisor on Northern Issues for the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

She was responsible for policy decisions in all three territories; recruitment and retention of lawyers and sat on a number of committees in Ottawa.

She was a member of the Akitsiraq Law School Society Board of Directors for a number of years and was an executive member of the Violence Against Women Working Group that was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Justice for Nunavut from 2005 to 2007. She was Vice-Chairperson of the Nunavut Federal Council in 2006 and 2007 and President of the Nunavut chapter of the Canadian Bar Association for two years.

Madam Justice Tulloch was an active member of the Law Society Membership Committees in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories for a number of years.

She held the positions of President and Vice-President of the Law Society in 1998 and 1999.

Madam Justice Tulloch was appointed a Judge of the Nunavut Court of Justice in early 2012.”

As a number of my colleagues may be aware, Bonnie recently retired from the court and has been battling a serious illness.

I can say with absolute certainty that Bonnie is no quitter. She is a fighter.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Bonnie and her husband, Merv, will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this coming Saturday.

I ask all members to join me in paying tribute to Madam Justice Bonnie Tulloch for her service to our territory and people. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

(interpretation) Thank you.

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

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 364 – 6(2): Bilateral Meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau

Hon. P.J. Akeegok (interpretation): Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good afternoon” to my fellow MLAs and Nunavummiut who are listening to the proceedings.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, following the historic signing of the *Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement* on January 18, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and I held a bilateral meeting. We spoke about the importance of devolution signing for Nunavut's future. The cultural component of the event, which showcased so many incredibly talented performers, brought the strengths of Nunavummiut to the world.

I brought forward again how housing is our number one issue and that we need more investment from our federal partner. Nunavut has done its part to build more homes by partnering with Inuit development corporations. Now it's time for Ottawa to do their part. I cannot emphasize enough how lack of housing affects every aspect of the lives

of Nunavummiut, from education to mental and physical health. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister agreed to continue collaborating with us on strengthening arctic security and sovereignty and to build more homes faster for Nunavut.

I expressed our appreciation for investments in elder care. One of the cornerstones of our *Katujjiluta* mandate is aging with dignity, and that includes keeping our elders here in Nunavut.

I was happy with the opportunity to discuss Nunavut's priorities once again with the Prime Minister here in Nunavut. I look forward to seeing more investments from the Government of Canada in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

**Minister's Statement 365 – 6(2):
Nunavut Household Allowance
Increase**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in line with our *Katujjiluta* mandate priority to explore ways to make homeownership and private market rentals more affordable for Nunavummiut, I'm happy to announce today that the Department of Finance is making improvements to the Nunavut Household Allowance for government employees in Nunavut.

>> *Applause*

The amount of this benefit has not changed from its original \$400 monthly

payment since 2008. Mr. Speaker, supporting and encouraging staff to move from subsidized staff housing into homes of their own is a key focus of our government's mandate and of the Nunavut 3000 strategy to expand the housing continuum. That's why I am pleased to announce today that effective April 1, the Nunavut Household Allowance for Government of Nunavut employees will be increased to \$1,000 per month.

>> *Applause*

This increase provides an additional incentive and support for GN employees who own or rent their homes on the private market. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Government of Nunavut employees who receive this benefit to contact their pay and benefits officers to ensure their contact information and addresses on file are up to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

**Minister's Statement 366 – 6(2):
Conservation Officer Conference
2024**

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, my department has wrapped up their annual Conservation Officer and Wildlife Guardian Conference here in Iqaluit from February 5 to February 13. All conservation officers and wildlife guardians from the territory came together for these sessions. This in-person training opportunity fosters

relationships with colleagues, as well as provides a forum in which to learn together and share experiences, best practices, and expertise with one another.

Mr. Speaker, the training included interdepartmental and interagency discussions on topics of mutual interest. There was delivery of educational materials on legislation and regulations that impact the daily work of conservation officers.

There was also training on personal defensive tactics as well as an informative session on Nunavut History and Governance specific to the *Nunavut Agreement* Article 5, Wildlife.

We continue to be committed to training our staff and enhancing their skill sets to assist them in their duties and responsibilities, while strengthening their relationships with hunters and trappers organizations and communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the conservation officers for their service and dedication. I encourage others to consider such a career path. As a former conservation officer myself, I can attest to how enjoyable and rewarding being a conservation officer truly is. You work directly with the communities and hunters, while surrounding yourself in the beauty of the land while being mindful of conservation for the sustainability of future generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 367 – 6(2): Direct Appointment of Ten Positions

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the direct appointment of ten Inuit to positions at the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

The Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to implementing our Inuit Employment Plan by recognizing and rewarding the efforts of our hardworking employees who contribute to providing safe and reliable energy to communities across Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) In December 2023 the QEC received Executive Council approval to award these appointments to qualified Inuit staff who have been serving the corporation for several years. Eight employees are residents of Baker Lake, one is a resident of Cambridge Bay, and one is a resident of Iqaluit.

As the territory's sole energy provider, it is imperative to reinforce the QEC's dedication to building a workforce which reflects the population it serves. This includes providing opportunities for Inuit to succeed at all levels of our operations. I am proud to share with the Assembly that after thorough consultation and in alignment with the *Nunavut Agreement*, we have made the direct appointments in the following positions:

Regional Customer Service Administrator, Maintenance Supervisor, Billing Clerk, Senior Billings Clerk,

Procurement Coordinator, Billings Supervisor, Attendance Coordinator, Recruitment Coordinator, Training and Development Specialist, and Purchasing Clerk.

These individuals possess the necessary expertise and skills for these positions, along with an understanding of the unique conditions and challenges of Nunavut communities.

Uqaqtitsijii, by actively building and supporting our Inuit workforce, the QEC is in a better position to serve the needs of Nunavut's growing population. The QEC plans to continue reinforcing its commitment to Inuit employment in the future. The direct appointment of these ten invaluable employees to indeterminate positions at the corporation is a small but significant step toward the goal of an equitable and inclusive workforce at the Qulliq Energy Corporation. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 368 – 6(2):
Government of Nunavut One of
Canada's Top 100 Employers**

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today to announce that for the seventh year in a row, the Government of Nunavut was recognized

as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for Young People and Recent Graduates, and for the third year in a row, the government was recognized as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers. These awards are a testament to the exceptional work and commitment the Government of Nunavut has made to Tunnganarniq, creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment for employees.

This recognition would not be possible without the efforts of public servants who work hard to contribute to creating and fostering a workplace that offers support, training, and employment and development opportunities to students and youth. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

**Minister's Statement 369 – 6(2): New
Chief Justice of the Nunavut Court
of Appeal**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I think our theme today, Mr. Speaker, you and I, is about judges, so I really appreciated the comments that you just made for a recently retired judge.

Mr. Speaker, on February 12, 2024 I had the honour of attending the Nunavut Court of Justice for the swearing-in for the new Chief Justice of the Nunavut Court of Appeal Ritu Khullar. The Chief Justice of the Alberta Court of Appeal also served as Chief Justice of both the

Nunavut and Northwest Territories Courts of Appeal.

The ceremony held on February 12 marks the first time a new Alberta Chief of Justice has also been formally sworn-in in Nunavut. The Court of Appeal holds a crucial position in upholding justice in Nunavut, serving the role of reviewing and deliberating decisions made by our Nunavut Court of Justice. Chief Justice Khullar has over two decades of experience as a lawyer and judge and has a record of exemplary service on both the Alberta and Nunavut Courts of Appeal and I am confident that she will excel in her role as our Chief Justice.

Despite being based in Alberta, Chief Justice Khullar has visited Nunavut multiple times already, and upon her appointment, she has demonstrated a commitment to immerse herself in our territory's culture and legal traditions. On behalf of all Nunavummiut, I want to express congratulations to our new Chief Justice of our Court of Appeal Ritu Khullar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 370 – 6(2): CGS Support for Nunavut 3000

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, (interpretation) as well as my fellow MLAs and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my department is pleased to be partnering with the Nunavut Housing Corporation

in the Igluliuqatigiingniq Nunavut 3000 initiative.

The ambitious aim of this initiative is to provide 3,000 new housing units by 2030. Before the Nunavut Housing Corporation can finance and build these housing units, suitable land needs to be located and secured first. Community and Government Services is strategically positioned to collaborate with the Nunavut Housing Corporation as my department is responsible for overseeing community planning and land administration in Nunavut communities.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, my department is providing a variety of services in this effort, including the sharing of newly developed mapping. My department's Planning and Lands Division is using state-of-the-art mapping technology, including community base mapping, satellite and drone-based community imaging, digital elevation models for topography, geotechnical evaluations, drainage plans, gravel studies, and community plans.

Mr. Speaker, the Planning and Lands Division is designing and surveying new residential subdivisions on municipal lands in communities and is coordinating the raising of title to the newly created lots so that municipalities may lease them to the Nunavut Housing Corporation. My department is also involved in addressing the critical granular shortage by conducting gravel studies to search for new sources and facilitating purchases of granular screeners and crushers.

(interpretation ends) Finally, Mr. Speaker, my department is participating in the Land for Homes housing

development readiness assessment program and the Housing Accelerator Fund. To contribute to Land for Homes, my department is providing consultation support on how and where housing units can be located and is helping to coordinate provision of housing land to meet the Nunavut Housing Corporation's building schedule. For the Housing Accelerator Fund, my department helped develop initiatives that were forwarded to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for funding consideration and is now assisting the Nunavut Housing Corporation and municipalities with project management now that funding has been approved in 22 communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 491 – 6(2): New Co-op Store in Igloolik

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to my colleagues, fellow residents of my community, and Nunavummiut.

As you may recall, I would like to congratulate the people of Igloolik. On January 20, 2021 the local Co-op in Igloolik burned down and from then on, they have been raising funds to build a house, but in the meantime, they were using a convenience store where you can purchase meats and groceries and it's still in use. The convenience store is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I believe that it's the only convenience store that's open 24/7.

With hard work, they erected a new Co-op which is now being used since December 12, 2023. We can now go to the local Co-op. We have yet to put a date on the official opening, but I would like to congratulate the people who worked at the 24/7 convenience store. To date, I believe we want to keep it open because it's very convenient for the people of Igloolik. We are very proud of the Co-op opening another store in Igloolik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Member's Statement 492 – 6(2): Recent Premier's Visit to Constituency

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today that on the dates of February 3 to 5, 2024, to express my gratitude and a big thank you to our Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Akeeagok, for visiting my constituency community of Taloyoak. Mr. Speaker, it was very impactful and beneficial to my constituents and a step forward of how we are going to move into the future.

On a positive note, Mr. Speaker, we had meetings with the hamlet councillors and mayor. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mayor Lenny Panigayak for showing our Premier the infrastructure in Taloyoak and touring the community.

Mr. Speaker, we did a radio call-in show for a few questions and the purpose of the visit and information to the

community. Afterwards we visited the eldest elder in Taloyoak and we gained great knowledge from Mary Ittunga and I thank her greatly.

Mr. Speaker, we had a feast with the community and live music to enjoy, as well as constituents had time to ask questions and take pictures with our Premier. On the last day we started off with the breakfast program at Netsilik School and did a tour of the school, and we talked with high school students about education and opportunities and our roles as MLAs. Afterwards we had a meeting with the Taloyoak association board of directors, and I thank them all greatly.

Mr. Speaker, I represent Taloyoak and Kugaaruk in this House, so therefore I'm inviting our Premier to visit my constituency community of Kugaaruk. Mr. Speaker, I had the first week of August in mind for the visit, when the time is great for hunting and the beauty of Nunavut is at its finest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Tununig, Ms. Nutarak.

**Member's Statement 493 – 6(2):
Recent Visit from Nunavut's
Member of Parliament**

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I send my regards to the people of Pond Inlet and my family members.

I would like to say "thank you" to our Member of Parliament, Lori Idlout, who was in Pond Inlet from February 19 to

22. While in Pond Inlet, she had meetings with the district education authority, the hunters and trappers association, the Co-op, and other entities. She also visited the high school and talked to the students about her roles and responsibilities as the Member of Parliament for Nunavut.

I would also like to thank Mayor Joshua Arreak and the councillors of Pond Inlet. We are very rapidly developing in Pond Inlet, so I very much thank our councillors and mayor. I also thank our constituents for welcoming everyone with open arms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 494 – 6(2):
Qikiqtarjuaq Housing Initiative**

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you. Good day to the people of Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House about an exciting initiative that is taking place in my constituency of Uqqummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the hard work that the Qikiqtarjuaq Housing Association as well as the Inuksuit School have put into developing the "Qik Start Cooperative Education Work Experience Initiative."

Mr. Speaker, this pilot project will provide opportunities for grade 11 and 12 students to earn school credits and gain valuable training experience at the housing association.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Nunavummiut and Canada are experiencing a shortage of skilled and certified tradesmen and tradeswomen.

This initiative is intended to provide students with a lead start in pursuing rewarding careers in the trades.

We desperately need more certified Inuit plumbers, more certified Inuit electricians, more certified Inuit carpenters, and more certified Inuit equipment operators.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Yes, indeed.

(interpretation ends) The “Qik Start” project is an excellent step in the right direction, and I ask all members to join me in expressing our appreciation to my constituents who are working hard to make the initiative a success.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members’ Statements.
Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

**Member’s Statement 495 – 6(2):
Language Services for Health**

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the people of Kugluktuk and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a concern raised in the community of Kugluktuk but which is probably a concern in many communities in the other regions across Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I draw this to the attention of the Minister of Health and to the Government of Nunavut as a whole. The primary concern is with respect to the medication that the nurses hand out to elderly patients who are often not fluent in the English language.

Elders are concerned that they are being given the wrong medication for their illnesses. This concern is serious because some prescriptions are for types of medicine which are very strong. When information about their medication is not available in a language that patients understand, this can lead to confusion and fear and a reluctance to take the medication.

Mr. Speaker, communication is very important and even more so when our health is at stake.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon the government to consider establishing new full-time interpreter positions in our health centres.

I further encourage the government to partner with our Inuit organizations to ensure that every community has someone at the health centre who is able to communicate in the local dialect.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement as my time has run out.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please continue, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you.

When we are talking about our health, it is a very personal topic and we should be able to discuss, communicate, and understand in our own language.

At the appropriate time, I will have questions on this issue. Thank you.

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

**Member's Statement 496 – 6(2):
Recent Passing of Qapik
Attagutsiak**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colleagues, Nunavummiut, and especially the people of Arctic Bay, please join me in remembering Qapik Attagutsiak, who passed away on December 14, 2023, when she was 103 years old. Qapik and her husband, Isaiah Attagutsiak, had nine daughters and five sons, and even more children that they had adopted who were orphaned and they took care of children of parents who were away for a long time. They had adopted numerous children as well.

During our grieving, the Nunavut government was very comforting at the time when they lowered the flag to remember this individual. Her children were very respectful and appreciative of the fact that the Nunavut government had acknowledged her life. We buried her on December 23 and the majority of her children reached to her great, great, great children. Our Commissioner, Eva Aariak, and our Premier, P.J. Akeeagok, attended the funeral along with the entire community.

We had three ministers, Leah May, Sam Willie, and Aigah Attagutsiak, who is the daughter of the elder, who delivered the eulogy and they made a strong speech about her life, how we should be caring for each other, and that we have to live a healthier life. Many people spoke well of the woman and we could speak forever about her.

I know that many people and relatives wanted to attend the funeral service, but due to flight scheduling issues and the busy Christmas season, they were not able to attend.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please continue, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

While she was still alive, she would say that we can smile at each other while we are alive. Please smile at each other and greet each other. She was very humble every time she was recognized. She urged everyone to be humble and to lead a good life, and she continually spoke about leading a good life.

Her relatives and family wanted to bury her as soon as possible and they were able to do so in a rapid way in the month of December, when it was the Christmas season. Everyone was working so well; even laypersons and the ministers were calling. We thank you for your phone calls and sympathies.

When Qapik was buried, we asked her to rest in peace, and let's be proud of her life and not be saddened. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

**Member's Statement 497 – 6(2):
Happy Belated Birthday to Wife
and Daughter**

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, I would like to send my condolences to the family of Iqaluk in Sanikiluaq.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I totally forgot to make a member's statement. Over the weekend, two of my family members, my household members, had their birthdays. My wife, Margaret, had her birthday on February 25, and yesterday our third daughter had her 14th birthday, and I would like to publicly say "happy belated birthday."

It would have been extra special if she hadn't come out of this world on the 25th, but it still is very special to us and I just would like to say "happy belated birthday" to my family. I'm not very good watching giving birth. I actually fainted...

>> *Laughter*

...during the child's birth, and I really hope that I won't have to experience that again, but you know, I have children too that one day are going to be parents as well.

(interpretation) Thank you very much. I just wanted to make that statement.
(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Visitors in the gallery, please enjoy your visit. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Item 6: Oral Questions

**Question 726 – 6(2): Abuse in Our
Schools**

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recently heard from a constituent that a teacher in one of the schools is being abusive to students. The concern was raised through the appropriate channels, but it is unclear how these reports are handled and addressed.

Can the minister clarify whether her department's violent incident database records and tracks these kinds of incidents? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. I know that reporting incidents is one of the first ways that we can address the situation within the Department of Education to not only

track incidents but to work with the appropriate designates, such as our school leaders, to address what's happening and to go down through the appropriate channels.

However, our school leaders are also responsible to inform our deputy minister or associate deputy minister of incidents that do occur in our schools and we do take them very seriously. When we do receive incident reports that are in the nature where we have to get others involved, we're very much working with the appropriate channels to ensure that the safety of our students and staff is at utmost priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you, minister, for that statement.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in the situation I am referring to, the parents complained to the district education authority about the teacher's behaviour. They were told that the teacher cannot be fired because there is a shortage of staff at the school.

Can the minister describe what policies the Department of Education has in place to prevent teachers from abusing students and what actions should be taken when an abusive incident is reported? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. We don't have a policy *per se* in terms of protecting teachers, but we do have a policy to ensure that our children are protected and we have an agreement with many different agencies to ensure that if there are any incidents that we need to report, we use our code of ethics and follow that to ensure that they are well protected.

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but in terms of the last question, the violent incidents are reported on our violent incident reporting tracking system but without any names. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. When things are discovered and the need comes that something has to be done about them, there should be policies that do that.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Department of Education has begun to monitor and track incidents of violence and abuse in our schools. I appreciate that it is important to collect and analyze information in order to develop effective campaigns to prevent such things from happening. However, certain behaviours, especially by people in positions of authority, must be addressed right away, with immediate consequences to prevent such abuses from happening again.

Will the minister commit to looking into the rate of teacher abuse against students and come back to this House with a clear and firm directive on how these kinds of

situations should be handled?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. Yes, we can look into ways that we can help our students or the teachers if there are any instances.

We do have, once again, a code of ethics that we do follow and we have an existing Human Resources Manual that we use to guide those ways of being in our schools and have zero tolerance. We also have investigative processes which we go and use if there is any instance where something might have occurred in our schools. We do lead those with investigation and there is a process that we go for.

This is the same policy that is with all GN employees. It is not just for teachers that we have that policy. It goes for every GN employee and we follow and go through the human resources policy for any type of investigation that might be pertaining to somebody who is working within our schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 727 – 6(2): Specialist Visits to Communities

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

Mr. Speaker as our communities are growing, the need for such specialist

services as dental teams, eye teams, and ear, nose and throat teams are growing. However, it seems that the visits by the specialist teams have not increased in number or duration and not everyone gets to be seen.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on how specialist visits are determined for different regions and communities and what process is followed to make sure that every individual who has been identified as needing an appointment actually gets in to see the specialist? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for that question. The patients are looked at following their need by different specialist doctors or some by nurses. We have different services available.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in terms of specialist care, there are different ways that Nunavummiut can access it; one way is by travelling through to one of our receiving destinations. In this case, it would be travelling to either Yellowknife or Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, we also strive to offer services in community where possible. In this case, Taloyoak, for example, has a newer health centre. It has the ability to host more specialist clinics because the infrastructure is adequate for the size of the community. However, if we look at Kugaaruk, we run into real difficulties in trying to provide more specialist care

in community in Kugaaruk because the infrastructure there is lacking in terms of the health centre.

We offer a range of specialist positions and specialist services, including gynecology, orthopedics, psychiatry, cardiology, neurology, ear, nose and throat specialists, respirology, and dermatology, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to the interpreters if I was talking too fast. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The lack of visits by the specialists is especially concerning when it comes to our children.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard concerns from staff in our school system that some children would greatly benefit from having their eyes checked in case they need glasses or to have their ears checked when they seem to have problems with their hearing.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify what kind of communication takes place between health personnel and education staff to identify children and youth who may need to be seen by a specialist when they come to the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In most communities, there is a good working relationship between staff at the local school and the health centre. In terms of the link with regard to specific

health needs, my understanding is that would normally flow through the parent or guardian, where if the teacher identifies an issue, let's say, the student is having difficulty seeing things from a distance, they would communicate that to the parent or guardian, who in turn contact the health centre. That's due to issues around consent as well as health privacy in general that are the driving factors in terms of why parents and guardians need to be involved. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It might be the case that sometimes parents or family members are not aware that a child has limitations with their sight or hearing, something that becomes clear to an educator when the child is in the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to addressing the length and frequency of specialist visits to our communities and add some extra time so that everyone who needs to be seen can be seen and especially the children who may be struggling at school due to undiagnosed health issues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I again thank the member for raising this.

In terms of vision care and dental care through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, we have seen increases to the days allotted under each program and so that's something that has been approved through Indigenous Services Canada and

those are now being implemented under dental care and eye care. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It's going to mean more days in community for the residents of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk as well as other communities and more opportunities to get eyes checked and have needs addressed.

I can commit to looking further into this issue specific to the member's constituency to see if there are any backlogs that need to be addressed there and circling back with the member once I have been briefed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 728 – 6(2): Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility

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

Mr. Speaker, the long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet is close to completion after some delays. Can the minister provide an update on when the Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility will be fully completed and ready to open its doors to clients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. The long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet is indeed close to completion. There have been a number of delays that we have

been working through and I must express my gratitude to the Department of Community and Government Services for their strong project management services and support on this project; it's a major one.

In terms of the member's question, the project will be completed before it's ready to open its doors and welcome elders. The reason why there's a difference there is that the project being completed and construction being completed and the keys turned over to the government allows the government to begin filling the space in terms of furnishings and specialized medical equipment. That's not necessarily included as part of the building construction itself. That will take a number of months.

The current target date for the building's completion is in April. In terms of the first residents moving into the facility, we're anticipating it to happen in the summer of 2024. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer, the government issued a request for proposals for an operator for the facility. The deadline was extended a couple of times, but it is my understanding that it closed in the fall. Can the minister inform this House of which entity will be operating the Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility and, if no entity has been selected, will the government be operating the facility itself? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for that question. Yes, when we issued a request for proposals during the second round, there was a successful proponent that owns a business. I'm unable to say who they are at this time, but it's obvious that a business will now be operating the long-term care facility. We are currently working with them and once we have signed an agreement regarding this project, we will make an announcement as to who the business owners are and what their company is called. I regret that I am unable to speak to it at the moment as it has not been announced publicly to Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elders who are currently in Embassy West as well as those who are on the waiting list for a residential placement are very much looking forward to this facility opening its doors so that they can be cared for at home.

Can the minister tell us when the Kivalliq elders who are currently in the Embassy West long-term care facility will be brought back to Nunavut to stay in the Rankin Inlet facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question again. In terms of the admissions criteria for the Rankin Inlet facility, we're very aware that there is limited capacity at that facility and at the same time there's

a high need for these beds. In terms of the admissions criteria, there are a number of different factors that are being looked at in terms of which elders will be given opportunity to move into Rankin Inlet. This was developed by health staff with support of the director of ethics at the Ottawa Hospital. The factors that are being looked at are age, home region, health status, and year of placement.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to year of placement, it means how many years has the resident been out of territory at Embassy West. It's not a simple matter in terms of determining who will get the opportunity to move into that new facility and take residence, but it's a matter that Health is taking great steps to make sure it is done properly in consultation with the elders and their families and look forward to opening of that facility this coming summer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 729 – 6(2): Repairs to Coral Harbour Arena and Community Hall

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services. I want to revisit the issue of community infrastructure.

As the minister will recall, I asked him a number of questions during the recent

fall sitting concerning the urgent need to address electrical and safety deficiencies at the Coral Harbour arena and hall.

The minister has previously informed me through written correspondence that \$40,000 has been approved for this work. Can the minister provide an update today on the status of this funding? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question and I appreciate it. I recall he made a statement about the Salliq hockey, the young group there that doesn't have access to the arena. We do recognize these recreational spaces are an important component of community life. With that, we are trying to work and continue to work with municipalities on getting access to technical support around addressing mechanical issues, electrical, and that kind of thing.

Mr. Speaker, the last I recall on our exchange between the member and my officials, we had provided information to support the municipality in addressing those issues. I do hope that the work will be done so that the arena can be opened at the earliest opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for indicating that this issue is being addressed.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as you know, I recently had an opportunity to spend time in Coral Harbour on the occasion of the mace tour. I heard a number of concerns from the constituency that the community hall and arena remain closed. Can the minister provide a timeline for the reopening of this facility?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My department has been diligently working with the municipality around addressing the building deficiencies at the Salliq community hall and arena. Mr. Speaker, I believe there was detailed information on the building condition assessment done in order to set the next steps on what the scope of work will be required.

In terms of timeline, again, I don't have that detail, but again, I do hope that it will be done at the earliest opportunity, provided that personnel to support or assist the hamlet with that will be made available in short order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recreational facilities are closed due to fire and safety issues. Perhaps before these facilities are closed, the Department of Community and Government Services can set aside funding for maintenance costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the question raised by my fellow MLA. The recreational facilities are buildings you don't want to have closed. These facilities are inspected by employees for safety issues and my department provides funding for various inspections to be conducted. However, aside from that, we are trying to plan what type of capital assets, especially arenas, we will need to move forward with and if renovations or repairs are needed to ensure these buildings are functioning properly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 730 – 6(2): Alternative Energy Initiatives

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

Mr. Speaker, as you and all other members are very much aware by now, I am a committed advocate for alternative energy initiatives to reduce our territory's dependence on fossil fuels and contribute to the global fight against climate change.

Mr. Speaker, as you and my colleague from Iqaluit-Tasiluk will recall, a minister's statement was made in this House at its sitting of March 15, 2016 concerning the Qulliq Energy Corporation's installation of 11 test solar panels at the Iqaluit power plant.

I would like to ask the minister if he can provide an update today on this initiative. I'm very curious to find out if this project had met its expectations and whether or not the Qulliq Energy Corporation considers this pilot project a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for raising this issue regarding the test solar panels. (interpretation ends) In terms of that project, it was intended as a technical experiment most of all. In terms of the financial impact of it and whether it was a success or not, there has never been a formal evaluation of the project to my knowledge. However, that being said, the panels are functional. They're not feeding electricity into the grid, but the power that they do generate is consumed at the power plant up the hill. The project is operational and it has been generating or producing power that's used at the plant without any issues at this point in time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his response because my understanding is that the solar panels were integrated into the power grid, but I guess I was mistaken.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kugluktuk has asked numerous questions in this House about the status of his community's new power plant,

which was originally planned to incorporate a hybrid solar-diesel design.

As the minister will recall, the letter of expectation addressed to the chair of the board of the Qulliq Energy Corporation for the current fiscal year urged the corporation to “continue its efforts in securing funding for solar energy projects through the Government of Canada’s Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities and the Alternative Energy Fund.”

I would like to ask: can the minister provide an update today on the status of these funding applications, how many applications have been submitted and for which communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for raising the issues around the Kugluktuk power plant construction project. We had an exchange on the project here in the House recently and it really was a shame that the renewable component of that project was removed.

However, I think the Qulliq Energy Corporation had to look for ways to cut costs in response to drastic inflation. We’ve had to do more than just remove the renewable power components in Kugluktuk. We had to remove the power plant construction projects in Kugaaruk and Chesterfield Inlet from the list to be included under the Arctic Energy Fund. I think that just illustrates how tight the budgets are around these capital projects.

In terms of funding applications that we do have out currently, I don’t have that information in front of me, but I can commit to collecting it or looking for it and following up with the member. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the minister’s responses. Mr. Speaker, I had submitted written questions in the previous Assembly about the specific cost related to this pilot project at the Iqaluit power plant and I believe that 11 solar panels have a combined power generation of somewhere in the 3-kilowatt range, very small, but the costs associated with the purchase of this technology was \$17,000 and the shipping was \$3,000. This very small project had a very minimal cost of \$20,000 and would likely have paid itself off within a very short period of time, shorter than the life expectancy of the asset itself.

Mr. Speaker, for my final question, for the submission that Qulliq Energy had submitted for such hybrid installations on our power plant, what sort of financial considerations and solar power generation capacity were they considering on requesting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) There was a pot of renewable energy related funding that was tied to the Kugluktuk power plant project at one point. However, due to issues around

timelines, I believe that most of the funding could not be utilized, unfortunately.

In terms of the member's question, I believe the member is interested in learning whether renewable components could pay for themselves if they were added onto power plants or the economics of renewable components to power plants. I have to admit that I am not an expert when it comes to these matters. I can again commit to looking into it further.

One of the exciting things about renewable energy in general is that the cost per kilowatt-hour in terms of capital cost continues to get lower and lower over the years. As technology improves, production ramps up worldwide. Solar panels, for example, are cheaper now than they have ever been in terms of the price per kilowatt-hour generation capacity. It's an area that the Qulliq Energy Corporation looks forward to supporting in Nunavut in the future. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 731 – 6(2): Inclusivity at Baker Lake School

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Baker Lake.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, today I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, a project has been underway for quite some time to create a special needs

washroom at the Jonah Amitnaaq Secondary School in Baker Lake. After a couple of false starts, a contractor was hired and materials were chartered into Baker Lake.

In order to meet the needs of students, an existing washroom must be expanded by approximately 12 feet in order to accommodate individuals that are using a wheelchair, a lift, and space required for support staff as well as a toilet, sink, and table. Instead, the washroom was expanded by a mere 30 inches, not nearly enough room to help a student out of their wheelchair to use the facilities.

Can the minister clearly explain what standards her department should be following to ensure that students who need school spaces adapted for their use can be fully and properly accommodated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question and thank you for his advocacy for the work that was requested for the school in Baker Lake to get the standard washroom integrated into the department.

I can say that we did transfer funds from our ongoing lifecycle last year to work on the project and we do have a new school planning and design standard which follows the Canada national standards for design in our schools and all of our new school builds. The rebuild or reconstruction of our schools, if they are getting renovated, does follow these new designs and we do work to

incorporate them. If any school does require those types of designs that are for accessibility, we do follow those guidelines for that purpose. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. Mr. Speaker, I have corresponded with the minister on this issue a number of times.

When I learned that the deputy ministers were travelling to Baker Lake, I reached out to the Deputy Minister of Community and Government Services and also the Deputy Minister of Education, asking to meet with them at the high school there to show them first-hand what area needs to be fixed or expanded and worked on. I made sure I copied both ministers on my invitation. Unfortunately the Deputy Minister of Community and Government Services was the only one to reply as he was unable to visit.

Can the minister clearly explain how her department is working to meet its commitment to ensuring inclusivity in our schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. Yes, we do work closely with our counter department, the Department of Community and Government Services, who does all of the maintenance work for our government assets, including our

schools, so we work hand in hand with them.

As I mentioned in the last answer, we transferred money from our ongoing lifecycle to get the work done. That money that was transferred from our budget for ongoing lifecycle was transferred to the Department of Community and Government Services to work on that project.

Mr. Speaker, I know that if there is time and we're able to visit the community, I always see that as an open invitation. I hope that we will be able to go into our colleague's community. If time was permitting, I know that the department would have been very happy to go into our school, as we always are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nunavut's *Education Act* affirms that "all children can learn" and that "diverse learning needs and abilities should be supported in an inclusive education system." I believe that inclusivity means giving students the respect and dignity to thrive in our education system by taking their needs into account, not wants, needs.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has said twice now that they have transferred money from their department to Community and Government Services to work on this special needs washroom, but it's not enough. The original plan was about 12 feet, its 12-foot expansion, to accommodate all of their needs. It was a mere 30 inches.

The District Education Authority of Baker Lake was advised recently that the project file is closed, the project is done, and they were basically told, “This is what you’re stuck with.”

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to working with her officials and colleagues at Community and Government Services to revisit this issue and ensure that a special needs washroom of the appropriate size is created at the Jonah Amitnaaq Secondary School? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question and for raising this. I can say that we will personally look into the matter and ensure that what the member is bringing up is looked into further. I know that we’ve had correspondence around the issue and specifically to the size, but I can say that we do have an accessible washroom in the school and we will look into the matter further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 732 – 6(2): Public Housing Eviction Policy

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

As the minister is aware, the Pond Inlet Local Housing Association is responsible for the delivery of public

housing programs in the community and the administration of policies in this area.

Concerns have recently been brought to my attention in respect to what policies are in place when it comes to evicting public housing tenants for rental arrears or other reasons.

Can the minister confirm if all local housing organizations in Nunavut are required to follow the same policy or do they have the authority to develop their own policies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that the local housing authorities have to follow certain guidelines in terms of their eviction policies; some very basic ones like you can’t evict people when they’re in extreme cold temperatures during the winter and things like that. There are some criteria that they have to follow, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. We do get letters from public housing tenants seeking assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we are currently in the middle of winter. When it comes to cutting off power to people in the middle of winter, the Qulliq Energy Corporation’s terms and condition of service provide for the corporation to

install a load limiter rather than turning off the power entirely.

Can the minister confirm whether or not the housing corporation has a policy in place to prevent evictions from occurring in the middle of winter? Does the local housing organization senior management know about this policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have to be aware of who is getting evicted and I am very pleased that we've had correspondence going back and forth on this situation. The staff should know that there should be no evictions in the middle of winter or in the extreme cold. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. We have to make sure that everyone is aware of these policies and even the tenants aren't aware of those policies.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I fully understand that local housing organizations need tools to deal with problematic tenants and I fully understand that they need tools to collect rental arrears. However, eviction should be the last resort in dealing with tenants.

Can the minister clearly explain how a public housing tenant can appeal an

eviction order? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They don't just evict the tenants unless they have a very good reason.

We have to properly take care of the public housing that is being rented and it takes quite a lot of money to repair and renovate a housing unit. We also have to pay for the electricity and home heating fuel. If tenants are behind on payments, they usually have a meeting with the local housing organization to set up a payment plan.

I don't know of anyone who is on the eviction list, but if a tenant is going to be evicted, they can have a discussion with the local housing authority and appeal the case. There are housing boards of directors and they can also get further information, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 733 – 6(2): Conservation Officer Training Courses

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the Minister of Environment on the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start off with one of the lines there that says, "As a former conservation officer myself, I can attest to how enjoyable and rewarding being a conservation officer truly is." Mr. Speaker, the member must have found something more enjoyable.

>> *Laughter*

There are two of us in here that used to be conservation officers but now work in this House.

Mr. Speaker, on the second page it says, "There was also training on personal defensive tactics as well" as part of the courses. The courses are here and I imagine there might be a first aid course, there might be a firearm proficiency course, but the training that is done for conservation officers when they get here, are any of the courses put on mandatory? Is there a requirement that these officers absolutely have to take that course or can they opt out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his questions. He truly has the same exact background as me of former conservation officer, former Minister of Environment before me, so I really have my respect for the member.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the personal defensive tactics, we do advise our conservation officers to use their duty belts when they conduct an investigation and inspections within communities. Those are the recommendations we advise our conservation officers, but in

terms of an office environment, those personal defensive tactics can be removed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister didn't answer my question. My question was: are these courses, for example, personal defensive tactical, is it a mandatory course? Do conservation officers have to take the mandatory course? Is it a mandatory course? For example, if a person has a class 3 licence, it's mandatory that they have to have a medical. Otherwise, they lose their class 3 licence. For this course, defensive tactics, is it a mandatory course? If a conservation officer does not take it and does not pass it, are they not allowed to wear their duty belt anymore? Can the minister clarify whether the personal defensive tactics course is a mandatory course? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the questions. For the conservation officers that are indeterminate, that are employed by the Department of Environment, those personal defensive tactics and duty belts are mandatory. In terms of the wildlife guardians that we have, they have a limit of what duties they can be required to undertake as a wildlife guardian within the department. In terms of the member's questions, yes, those are mandatory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister said that the personal defensive tactics course is mandatory, but he was not clear whether it's a mandatory course or not. An example I used is a class 3 licence. It's mandatory they get a medical. If they don't get a medical, they lose their class 3 licence.

I would like to know if this police defensive tactics course is mandatory. If a conservation officer does not take the course, are they not allowed to wear their duty belts anymore? Can the minister please clarify if a personal defensive tactics course is mandatory and, if it is not taken, would it affect the conservation officer's ability to do their duties as outlined in their job description? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member, for the question. The personal defensive tactics are mandatory for every conservation officer. The annual conference that is held each year here in Iqaluit provides our conservation officers to prepare for possible defensive tactics within our territory, but in all honesty, we do not want to see that happening. We have to make our conservation officers to be prepared for personal defensive tactics. It is mandatory to have the defensive tactics for our enforcement officers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 734 – 6(2): Electrical Infrastructure

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a joke, my eye has been twitching since this morning, so perhaps the minister I would like to ask has a magic wand to make our community look clean and good. My question is for the new Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

As the minister will appreciate, it is very important that the power plants and related infrastructure in our communities be in good condition. I'm talking about the power poles. A number of concerns have been brought to my attention regarding the condition of a number of power poles in my constituency. They appear to no longer be in good condition and need to be relevelled.

With that, can the minister indicate how often the Qulliq Energy Corporation conducts inspections of power poles in Nunavut communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for that question in regard to power poles. We're aware that we would like to have renewable electrical energy available to all communities, which includes all the wires and power poles. Whether it is in Clyde River or Qikiqtarjuaq, we like the power poles to be in good condition.

The workers go to the communities and we send linespersons to the communities once we find out that there are deficiencies that need to be corrected or repairs done. It is very difficult to work on the poles during the wintertime, so they mostly work on the poles during the summertime. The superintendent usually identifies which communities require work on the power poles and that's the process we use with the energy corporation when they work on the power poles, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for that clarification. However, I'm talking about the safety of the wires that are connected in both of my constituency communities. I know that the snow gets really deep in Clyde River and sometimes the snow reaches the roof of houses. It is evident that it has an effect on the power poles.

With that, I would like to urge the minister to conduct an inspection of power poles in both Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River. Can the minister indicate what budget is available for the repair and/or replacement of power poles, and will he commit to having the Qulliq Energy Corporation conduct an inspection of power poles in both communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will check with the corporation staff to find out when they plan to go to the communities and if

they didn't go inspect the communities for quite some time, I'll find out whether they have any plans to go the communities. When we are informed about concerns from mayors and councillors or Members of the Legislative Assembly, we do follow up on them later on. I appreciate the concerns that are provided to us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for committing to look into it. The municipal councils are quite busy as the communities are growing.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's current business plan indicates that a generator set replacement project has been underway in Clyde River.

Can the minister provide an update on the status of this work and can he clarify if the project will have any impact on the power rates that customers in Clyde River may pay for their electricity?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) With regard to the status of that specific project in Clyde River, I don't have that detailed information here in front of me, but I can follow up with the member regarding it.

In terms of impacts on the rate structure, if there was an impact, it would be

spread across the entire territory because we're all under a unified power rate now. Any impact, if it is felt to ratepayers, would be spread amongst customers all across Nunavut. It would also have to be as part of the regulated nature of power prices in Nunavut through the Utility Rates Review Council.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that answers the question. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Question 735 – 6(2): Language Services for Health

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

In my member's statement, I spoke about the need for more full-time interpreters in our health centres.

Can the minister provide an update on whether all community health centres currently have full-time interpreters and what steps are taken to ensure that these interpreters speak the local dialect? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question on this issue. Language services play a large part in health care delivery. The Department of Health fully supports Nunavummiut to use their own language, whether they are from Kugluktuk, Arviat, Grise Fiord, or elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, the interpreters that work are called clerk interpreters. There are ten clerk interpreters in the Kitikmeot. (interpretation ends) I'll switch to English for clarity; my apologies. We currently have ten full-time clerk interpreters in the Kitikmeot region and four who are working on a casual basis. Specifically to Kugluktuk, we have one full-time clerk interpreter and it is a requirement to speak in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun for the position. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The reason why I brought this up was one of the elders had concerns about it. I'm not sure if the interpreter was there, but there was concern from elders that they weren't communicating too well with the nurses about the medication.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest areas of concern regarding language services at our health centres is about prescriptions and the lack of explanation or information about the medication in a language that patients can understand. Patients need to know what their prescriptions are for, when to take them, and what side effects and other considerations they should be aware of.

Can the minister describe what steps are currently being taken to ensure that prescriptions with descriptions of medications, instructions on how often they should be taken, and any other important information are made available in the language spoken and understood by patients? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. In terms of our current practice, we rely heavily on clerk interpreters when written information is not available in the client's language of choice. Those clerk interpreters do work from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, but they may be called in to interpret off-hours as needed. That is something that is put into practice.

We fully support the desire of Nunavummiut to have more pharmaceutical information in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. We have initiated a common translations of medication project and we are working with retail pharmacies on this to ensure that Nunavummiut have access to information about their medications in their language of choice. It's currently being worked on, it's not completed yet, but it's an important project for the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) If I may, through correspondence, get the name of the clerk interpreter for the Kugluktuk nursing station.

Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that the Department of Health has worked with such entities as the Inuit Language Authority and Nunavut Arctic College to develop Inuit language medical modules so that interpreters and translators have standardized terminology to refer to

when discussing health and medical issues. However, it does not seem that dialect differences or spelling conventions are taken into account.

Will the minister commit to instructing his staff to work with these other entities to develop dialect-specific terminology, especially with respect to prescriptions, that can be used in community health centres to ensure that patients have and understand the correct information when it comes to their medications?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the specific request for commitment, I don't want to commit to something that might already be committed to or is already being worked on. However, I can certainly look into the issue specifically to the member's questions around Inuinnaqtun in particular and see what considerations have been given in the ongoing translation of medications project. I can also commit to looking into what resources are available specifically around pharmaceutical terminology for that subject matter. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 736 – 6(2): Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Community and Government Services and I would like to follow up with the Rankin Inlet Elders' Centre.

As it was stated, it was originally scheduled for an October 2023 opening and in October 2023 it was stated that it was at 90 percent completion. As the minister stated today in an earlier response, the spring of '24 or in the next couple of months, the facility is expected to be completed and opening this summer.

I would like to get a little bit further detail on the reasons for the construction delay of the Rankin Inlet Elders' Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, the current status of that project sits at about 90 percent complete and substantial completion, there were some delays on this. In terms of the reasoning behind this, I can't say specifically, but I think there are some challenges with the contractor in terms of meeting some of its targets. However, we are working with the Department of Health on making sure that it does get completed and that it's put to good use once it's finally finished. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope it's further than 90 percent complete now as that was October information.

Mr. Speaker, as stated in some supporting documents for our upcoming bill on capital carryovers, some of the delays were caused by delayed payment

to subcontractors by the main contractor, resulting in the slowed down or stopped work, as well as site schedule coordination between the main contractor and subcontractor.

Can the minister update us today on the current status of the contractors and subcontractors and what recourse does Community and Government Services have in its arsenal to address delays caused by contractors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On major projects such as this, my department does try to make sure that we meet our targeted timelines. Also, if contractors experience issues around meeting their timelines as well, we try to work it out. Mr. Speaker, there were some financial issues on either missed payments or delayed payments that we are trying to address. My office did receive some correspondence that was relating to late payments.

We also consult with other departments as necessary, whether it's legally and/or finance-wise, what we can go forward with on our next steps. I do continue to work with my officials on these major infrastructure projects and when there are issues around missed payments, we try to bring it forward to the appropriate authorities to ensure that it's addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping to get a little bit more

information on what type of opportunities the department has in dealing with contractor-led delays in some very important pieces of infrastructure that we're trying to develop in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, there was some recent coverage around the same period of October, it might even have been January, that it was stated that the Government of Nunavut's dollars that had already been allocated to the long-term care home can be spent on other projects, as the federal government announced just last month the \$25 million investment into elder care, and I believe the Premier mentioned that in his minister's statement today. Can the minister clearly explain how this extra money can be spent on other projects? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I along with my colleagues continue to try to bring new money or a net increase in our budgets, whether it's capital or otherwise, and this announcement regarding the Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Facility was through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program that we worked with the Department of Health and we were able to secure \$25 million towards this project. In doing so, the monies that the Department of Health had come forward with, we can redirect those funds to other potential capital projects that are in our plans or that we're trying to advance into construction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 737 – 6(2): Collection of Health Data

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and I would just like to reassure him that it's a different question than the one he took as notice earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, the minister recently provided information indicating that Health is currently working to establish vaccine and immunization registries which will collect information on how many Nunavummiut have received certain vaccines.

Can the minister tell this House how many registries for specific health indicators the department is currently working on and how many are already established? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for asking a question on this issue. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, with regard to developing an immunization registry, one of the lessons learned from COVID-19 has been that an immunization registry must have the capability to integrate vaccination data from multiple sources, both inside and outside of Nunavut, as well as the capacity to share vaccination data with other jurisdictions.

We're currently proceeding on work to develop vaccine and immunization registries and the registry will be

developed separately from MEDITECH, with MEDITECH data being a primary input into the new registry, and both sets of data will need to be validated for completeness and accuracy. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The collection and analysis of health data can greatly guide the delivery of health programming initiatives that have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Nunavut residents.

I am sure that many of my colleagues share my concern with respect to the growing impact of hard drugs in our communities. In January of this year, it was announced that wastewater testing would be conducted in the community of Iqaluit to study the prevalence of tuberculosis in the community. As I have noted previously, this methodology could also be used to measure the prevalence of illicit drugs in this community. Collecting such health data could help inform programs that address substance abuse issues.

Can the minister provide an update on what consideration has been given to piggy-backing on current wastewater testing initiatives to address the presence of illicit drugs in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I'm trying to find the connection between wastewater testing and

immunization registry, but I'll go to the wastewater testing.

That project is a research project that's being led by the Taima TB group in partnership with the City of Iqaluit and also the chief public health officer's office also in a supporting role. It's unproven at this point. It's a research project on whether it's actually going to work in terms of the intended outcome of identifying tuberculosis trends through wastewater. It's yet to be proven whether it works or not.

In terms of testing wastewater for hard drugs, that is definitely a matter that could be taken into consideration for future work. However, I'm not sure if Taima TB would be the ones to lead that or if it would be a different organization. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're tied together or related to collecting data on population health.

Mr. Speaker, having up-to-date information on a population's health status can be incredibly important when planning campaigns for health promotion and raising awareness of health risks. However, I fully recognize that the collection and storage of health-specific information is based on a relationship of trust where people can expect that their personal health data, whether in registries or individual files, will be kept private and secure. I note that the commitment to develop health-specific privacy legislation has been in the Department of Health's business plans for nearly a decade.

Can the minister inform this House of how far his department has progressed in developing health-specific privacy legislation and when a bill might be introduced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the question was raised, what we are working on is doing an information campaign with consultations with different organizations that we will consult with along with Nunavummiut, what their thoughts are on this. After consultation, we will start focusing on the bill. Perhaps by fall, a legislative proposal would be put forth and eventually a bill. As a government, we want this completed as a bill realized regarding privacy issues. 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 are none. Question period is extended another 30 minutes.

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

Question 738 – 6(2): Property Taxes

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends)

My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

As the minister will recall, he recently approved the 2023 Mill Rate Establishment Order under the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act*. This order was recently published in the July edition of the *Nunavut Gazette*.

Mr. Speaker, if my math is correct, the 2023 property tax rate for residential properties in Nunavut communities outside of Iqaluit increased by a little over 10 percent from the 2022 rate. The rate has increased by just over 60 percent over the last five years.

Can the minister clearly explain how the amount of the most recent increase was determined and can he clearly indicate approximately how much additional tax revenue is expected to be generated by this increase? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that kind of detail in front of me, so I would be more than happy to share it with my colleague once it's available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The most recent Mill Rate Establishment Order indicates that the property tax rate for mining properties also increased by a little over 10 percent. The rate has increased by just over 20 percent over the last five years.

Can the minister clearly explain how the amount of the most recent increase was determined and can he clearly indicate approximately how much additional tax revenue is expected to be generated by this increase? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Question taken as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Question 739 – 6(2): Airport Terminals in Amittuq

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation regarding the terminal in Sanirajak.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Airports 20-Year Capital Needs Assessment Update indicates on page 10 that for North Baffin, the Sanirajak terminal was built in 1982, this facility is in poor condition, and it is considered a medium priority. Perhaps the minister can indicate if there have been any changes to that or if it is still in accordance with the plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We just presented this document in the House and nothing has changed. It is part of our

plan on what we need to work on, timelines, and seeking funding. The present plan has not changed, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister knows that there are no ramps as of yet for disabled people in Sanirajak and Igloolik. Can't this be a priority issue by the transportation department with the two communities of Sanirajak and Igloolik that are supposed to be worked on?

We know we have a ramp at the entrance, but when you arrive to the community or are leaving by airplane, there is no ramp. As the minister knows, the steps at the Igloolik terminal are a little steep. Can the minister explain a little more on what the status is on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You approved the funds for the capital and we appreciate it when the projects go ahead. The older facilities didn't have that in place and so we worked through this and this will continue as is. For Sanirajak, we don't have a scheduled date. However, for Igloolik in the 2024-25 fiscal year, plans are to go ahead with the renovation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for clarifying that to the House. It's unfortunate that Sanirajak's terminal, which is one of the oldest facilities, is not being worked on.

The minister mentioned, let's say, "We will give you money if you agree with me." Mr. Speaker, can a further review be made to prioritize the terminal? After \$10 million was used for the airstrip, you would think that the terminal would be included by the Nunavut government. You didn't have a schedule for the terminal in Sanirajak. How can you initiate further analysis as the building is old? Is it just a rushed job or can it be a priority? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I visit the communities and some terminals are really unfit to be in. For example, I was in Kimmirut this fall. It's great that a terminal is going to be built, including the one in Naujaat, which is an even older building. In Sanirajak, yes, it is old, but it is well maintained by the community residents and renovations are made. It may be old, but it's a very good building compared to many other communities.

These buildings are reviewed on an annual basis and we visit eight communities to see what needs to be addressed and fixed and when they do need fixing, we come up with funding. I just can't say what will be renovated and our staff does their due diligence in

carrying out what renovations are needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 740 – 6(2): Arctic College Lease in Coral Harbour

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. I have a question for the Minister responsible for Arctic College.

Last year, the former minister had put in place the NTEP students to be booked in another building and they have been notified that they have to move out or vacate by the end of the month. I was trying to find out what the rationale is behind that. The department stated that they don't want to extend the lease of the building. Can the minister clarify that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for raising his concerns with me on behalf of his constituents. Mr. Speaker, the college decided not to extend the lease as the students are beginning their internships in January and will continue until May. This is the fifth year cohort and classes are done in June, with a graduation ceremony to follow. As the environmental assessment received by the college stated, there was no mould in the classrooms and they will only be used for a matter of weeks after their practicums. The college made the operational decision not to renew the outside lease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The previous minister was not allowed to enter the building due to the odour emanating from the community learning centre. I would like to invite the current minister through a (interpretation ends) formal invitation through this House to visit Arctic College. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies. The translation serviced cut off and I would like to get a confirmation or I would like to ask the member to repeat the question, please. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Can you repeat your question, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked the minister if he would accept an invitation to visit the community of Coral Harbour to see the community learning centre in person. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the translation came. I thank the member for inviting me to his constituency and I can commit to speaking directly with the member outside of this House and confirm dates, whether to go to Coral Harbour or even Naujaat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 741 – 6(2): Contracted Positions in the Public Service

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources. I would like to follow up on the topic that I raised yesterday regarding contract employees.

Mr. Speaker, I find it very unusual that there are instances where non-GN employees such as contractors can be placed into supervisory roles such as superintendents of schools or human resource managers.

The first question that I would like to ask to the minister: does the *Public Service Act* allow non-GN employees to supervise Government of Nunavut employees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. (interpretation ends) I'm not sure where you're going in terms of this question. I will have to take this question as notice. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The question has been taken as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 742 – 6(2): Mandatory Training for Conservation Officers

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank everyone for giving us a second chance. I would like to continue where I left off with the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, I try to make my questions as simple and straightforward, and I'm not getting straightforward answers from the minister about the police defensive tactics course, whether it's mandatory. It was a simple yes or no question. Is the police defensive tactics course mandatory for conservation officers, yes or no?

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. There can be exceptions to the mandatory part where a doctor might have a note for a conservation officer not to perform personal defensive tactics training. To answer the member's question, yes, the personal defensive tactics are mandatory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the clear answer that it is mandatory, but it really isn't because if you have a doctor's note, you don't have to take it. Mandatory means that you have to take it.

For the ones that get a doctor's note in that situation and they don't take the

police defensive tactics and the minister has stated that when they go on investigations, they have to wear their duty belt and in order to wear their duty belt, they need their police defensive tactics course uptake, so it will affect their job duties under their job description.

If a conservation officer does not have their police defensive course, can they still wear a duty belt and fulfill their duties as mandated by the job description? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as I stated, there are exceptions to performance to the enforcement officers, but within our department, it is, however, the defensive tactics are mandatory during our consideration officers' annual conference meeting and we do provide an opportunity for every enforcement officer to be able to perform training within our department.

In terms of the member's question, the duty belt in regard to personal defensive tactics, a person working needs to be in a good state of health. Let's say if they have a broken leg or a broken arm, we certainly want them to have a leave of absence from their employment for the time being. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess if a conservation officer breaks an arm and a leg while they are

taking the police defensive tactics course, yes, they would have to leave; they would not be able to finish it. This is not going anywhere, so I'll just leave it there for now.

Are there any firearm proficiency courses that are mandatory too? All the conservation officers handle firearms for deterring wildlife or for protecting people and property generally from polar bears but any wildlife. Are there any mandatory firearm proficiency courses that conservation officers have to be able to pass? The department does issue conservation officers firearms and the department should be concerned if someone cannot handle a firearm correctly. Are there any mandatory firearm proficiency courses? Thank you.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the firearms training is required for the Department of Environment, but during the cold weather seasons in February, that annual conference that is held, we do have regional meetings that have been held in the past and those are focused on firearms training and there's a pass requirement for a conservation officer to be able to use firearms for wildlife deterrence in our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. I have no more names. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 743 – 6(2): Vacancies at the Head Office in Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me again. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, since last summer, there has been quite a few senior officials leaving the corporation. The president and chief executive officer resigned last summer. The chief financial officer left rather abruptly about a month ago on his own, I believe. The comptroller position has been empty for quite some time. To my knowledge, there are no accountants as well. The director of human resources resigned at the end of the calendar year 2023 and left early in January.

Currently for the Baker Lake head office, what is the vacancy rate of the positions in the Baker Lake head office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. The Qulliq Energy Corporation office in Baker Lake is an important part of the corporation's overall footprint in Nunavut and I think it's an office that speaks to the success of decentralizing positions, looking at the Inuit employment rate there.

In terms of the capacity, I don't have the Baker Lake office parcelled out in terms of vacancies, but we do have 27 vacancies that we are looking to fill

currently through our human resource department. In terms of the Baker Lake office specifically, the top ranking positions in that office are the vice-president of finance, which is currently vacant, as well as the director of human resources is currently filled on a temporary basis and our plans are to advertise the human resource director position in March or April.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for your response. I'm glad that steps are being taken to fill these important positions because it is a very important office. They have been there since the year 2000 pretty much and they provide a very important role to Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, there was another position that used to be in the Baker Lake head office, it used to be the director of information and technology, another senior position, but I believe that position was removed when Community and Government Services took over helping out with that. I'm wondering: is the corporation going to be replacing that position with another position in Baker Lake so that Baker Lake does not lose a civil servant position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that there were some plans put in place in terms of replacing that position. I'm just not able

to speak to the details at this time, but my understanding is yes, there was an intention to replace the position that was taken out of the org. chart.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. My last question is very simple: will the minister commit to getting back to me with that information? I just asked about the position that is going to be replaced with another in Baker Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can commit to getting back to the member as soon as I am able. There may be layers of approvals that need to be approved...

>> *Laughter*

...layers of approval that need to happen before we can announce anything formally, but as soon as I am able to, I can follow up with the member.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 744 – 6(2): Inuit Employment Statistics

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources and are

not related to my previous question that was taken as notice.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Human Resources is responsible for publishing the Inuit employment statistics, the Towards a Representative Public Service Report, quarterly.

Mr. Speaker, the last Inuit employment statistics report was published as of June 2023, which is eight months ago. I would like to ask the minister when the Department of Human Resources will be publishing the September 2023 and the December 2023 Inuit employment reports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. In regard to your question, perhaps we were going to table the information this coming spring sitting. As to exactly when we will be able to table them, I'll get back to the member with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. I have no more names. Next item, Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Responses to Petitions. Item 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Thank you. I have six documents do table today.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 236 – 6(2): 2024-2027 Business Plan of the Office of the Legislative Assembly

Tabled Document 237 – 6(2): 2024-2027 Business Plan of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Tabled Document 238 – 6(2): 2024-2027 Business Plan of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

Tabled Document 239 – 6(2): 2024-2027 Business Plan of the Office of the Languages Commissioner

Tabled Document 240 – 6(2): 2024-2027 Business Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

Tabled Document 241 – 6(2): 2022-2023 Pension Administration Report under the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act

The first document is the 2024-27 Business Plan of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

The second document is the 2024-27 Business Plan of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

The third document is the 2024-27 Business Plan of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The fourth document is the 2024-27 Business Plan of the Office of the Languages Commissioner.

The fifth document is the 2024-27 Business Plan of the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

The sixth document is the 2022-23 Pension Administration Report under the *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act* and the *Supplementary Retirement Allowances Act*.

Item 16. Notices of Motion 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 37, 38, 39, and 40 with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 16:04 and Committee resumed at 16:29

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

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to continue with the review of the 2024-25 operations and maintenance main estimates of the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree that we continue with Bill 37?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Health – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main, 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, (interpretation ends) and I also have some follow-up information, if you will allow, Mr. Chairman, once we get going. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to allow the witnesses to appear before the committee?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Just for the record, Minister Main, if you could introduce your officials and then you can proceed with your update.

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

Iksivautaaq, yesterday there was a question asked about the number of clients receiving care outside of the

territory. I provided the number for Embassy West Senior Living. I would like to add that the number of mental health and addictions clients in care outside the territory as of February 27 is 136. This includes short-term and longer term placements. The clients out of territory for mental health and addictions services are 122 for residential mental health care and 14 for addictions care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that follow-up information, minister. Just for committee members' memory, we are on page H-4. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$71,326,000. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the development of increasing the number of employees that are mental health workers and people who take care of disabled people for all of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to see those positions increase by four positions and that is what we have requested, but we're not requesting new positions for mental health workers at this time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, we are focused right now on filling the existing positions that we have in terms of a mental health nurse as well as other paraprofessional positions that exist. That's the reasoning behind not adding more positions in terms of the mental health workforce at this time. We are

looking to stabilize the workforce before we expand. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. We used to have an addictions counsellor in Pond Inlet and this position has been vacant for quite some time. Is this position still located in Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) To my knowledge, that position still exists in the community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. When can we expect to see the position filled? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) That would be, in most cases, as soon as possible, but within the constraints that we have, limited capacity in terms of how many positions can be posted at one time, in terms of working with our partners at Human Resources, and how many competitions can be run at one time.

Looking at past fiscal years, I'm very thankful to this House for the support for additional positions, but we're looking at positions that were created two years ago

and we still haven't filled some of those. That's an example of how we are focused on filling the existing positions, working with our partner departments. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for that, minister. I think what the member is looking for is if there is an open job action on that position that she is enquiring about. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have that level of detail. I can certainly commit to following up on it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for supplementing my question. Thank you, minister. This position was never advertised to be filled, whether it is casual or not. This position has been filled by Inuit and it has really benefited Inuit, especially for those who would like to go through a healing program. I urge the minister and his department to work harder to make sure this position is filled in the community because the mental health workers are very busy at the moment.

I'll move on to another topic. We have been asking questions in regard to nursing students and the nursing national exam. I believe that's what it's called. For those that are unable to pass the exam, we have been asking in the House whether you can provide support to those individuals so that they can pass the exam. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the support and the interest from the Department of Health towards nursing students, it is there. We want to see graduates of the Nunavut Arctic College Nursing Program come in to work for the Department of Health.

There are a number of ways that we support that. We offer bursaries. We have set up a summer student employment program and there's also a placement program where nursing students can be placed within the Department of Health before necessarily or while they're trying to pass their licensure examination.

If a student is having difficulty passing their exam, we have the ability to place them into a position that doesn't require being licensed while they're working on retaking their exam or doing upgrading around the examination. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. We need to provide support to these individuals. As Inuit, we are very capable. When I was working at the nursing station, I was able to take vital signs, do bloodwork, and we were able to listen to the lungs. We were taught to do all of those things and we were taught how to prepare bloodwork so that we can send the samples out. Inuit are very capable of learning. Although we are not certified nurses, we can do that kind of work once we are taught.

For that reason, I would like to ask you, although it's not in the budget line item, if training can be provided in Nunavut for primary care paramedics and advanced care paramedics. Although I'm a little bit off the budget, primary care paramedics can be taught for eight months, (interpretation ends) 17 months as part time, (interpretation) and advanced care paramedics is a two-year program. I'm requesting if you can provide support from your Department of Health to make sure that Inuit are trained in the communities so that they can do the work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I appreciate the member's questioning around the potential for more training programs. Currently with the paramedic role being a contracted service, I can commit to seeing what we can do with the contracted body to see if there are any opportunities to offer some training or facilitate or support training in that function.

In terms of the longer term plans around paramedics, right now it's a contracted service. It is becoming a normal part of our department in terms of the health teams in community health centres, but right now we don't have any specific plans in place around training paramedics.

With nursing, for example, we work with Nunavut Arctic College. We support the students through there, but the ones who are doing the actual training is Nunavut Arctic College in

that case. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. If you are able to look into this matter, I would like that after our sitting here.

This will be my final question. It sounded like the department was not going to continue using primary care paramedics. We had a primary care paramedic in Pond Inlet that really helps the community. Since the individual is not an advanced care paramedic, they were sent out. Are you back to using primary care paramedics again in the health centres? That is my final question. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the paramedic services program, we are still planning to use both primary care paramedic and advanced care paramedic services. As I mentioned earlier, it is a contracted service that we're using. To date, the paramedic services program has, in our view, been successful in terms of achieving the objective of reducing service disruptions at the community level, reducing things like health centre closures, which are clearly not acceptable to Nunavummiut and something that we want to avoid. We're looking to continue the service and have extended the existing contract and are on track to sign a new contract when the extended contract expires.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Well, let me say that things might be arranged properly, but they can change. That's just a comment. Although it was arranged properly, as primary care was not needed anymore, we're going to now use advanced care due to the paramedics changing often. The Department of Health runs into operational issues, maybe due to the high turnover of headquarter staff. Thank you. That's my last comment.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I fully understood and the Department of Health strives to have stable staffing at the community level because we know the benefits that flow when the care provider and patient know each other, when there's familiarity, and when there's trust. That's kind of the model or ideal that we're working towards and we want to reduce our use of agency nurses and have more indeterminate staff for those reasons. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just before I go to my next name, I would just like to follow up with the response that the minister made that it's taking, in some cases, positions that were approved a couple of years ago, they are still working their way through the HR process.

From a directorate perspective, I'll use nursing as a specific example here.

There are a number of different categories of where nurses are employed, from community health nurses to public health nurses. There are many different categories. Where are the priorities aligned from the directorate in recruitment? When we look at nursing grads, obviously, we are not able to send those to a small community to be the last line of health defence. Typically they find themselves in public health or other health categories.

Where are the priorities right now from a department perspective on where the biggest gaps are in health care? Thank you.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of our priorities and where we're trying to stabilize things, it's largely within the group 5 health care professionals as identified in the Nunavut Employees Union collective agreement. Community health nurses, mental health nurses, public health, there's a demand for all of these positions; also lab techs. We also have shortages in terms of occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and pharmacists.

That's where the work with our partners at Human Resources as well as the good folks over at the union in terms of the retention and recruitment bonus regimes that we have managed to put in place as well as other measures to sweeten the pot or make benefits more generous and more competitive nationally, that's where we're hopeful that things will start to change in terms of stabilizing that key group of professionals. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. The next name I have on my list: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe Inuusivut falls under the Directorate Branch, so, I'll be asking under Inuusivut.

Nunavut passed its new *Mental Health Act* during the Fifth Assembly. The department's business [plan] indicates that "The process to put a Mental Health Review Board in place is underway." Now the question is: to date, what response has the department received in its callout for members of the Mental Health Review Board? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As per section 64 of the *New Mental Health Act*, NTI is responsible for nominating community members and Inuit cultural advisors. Nunavut Tunngavik has recently provided us names or candidates to sit on that board. That's something that's moving forward and it's exciting to see the new board taking shape. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now the follow-up question is: to date, how many regulations for the *Mental Health Act* have been finalized and what areas will they cover? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There are 17 regulations listed in the Act and there were 10 that were identified as priority regulations. I'm not going to go through the 10 that were identified as priority, but the current status of those regulations is that drafting has started this winter and expected to continue into spring 2024. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This one interests me, so I'll be asking. The department's Inuit Employment Plan notes on page 158 that entry-level paraprofessional mental health and addictions positions will be created to enable "consistent, culturally appropriate mental health services across the territory." What is the current status of community-based mental health staffing and resources? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If you will just give me a second; we're just pulling the information here.

Apologies, *Iksivautaaq*. Right now, in terms of the paraprofessional project, there are currently 39 mental health and addictions paraprofessionals across the territory and 34 of those paraprofessionals are Inuit. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next line of questioning is: what new initiatives will be introduced to recruit and train mental health counsellors, addictions workers, and other community-based support people to provide mental health and addictions services to those in need? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the paraprofessional program, it's set up as there are four different positions within the paraprofessional program and they're set up in a manner so that individuals can come in at an entry level and then work their way up through the laddering process and end up potentially as a supervisor.

Our plan in terms of filling those positions is to continue offering competitive pay and benefits, offering a positive working environment, and also making sure that our staff members, particularly in mental health, are taking care of themselves. It can be a very demanding area to work in. Staff can end up being heavily impacted by the very heavy issues that they're dealing with themselves, so there's a big focus on making sure that employees are feeling supported and having access to resources themselves if they need it. That's more or less the plan with these paraprofessional positions.

There is incredible work happening right across Nunavut, thanks to our paraprofessional staff, and I would like to thank them for all of their efforts. We have seen it. It makes a big impact at the

community level. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be moving on to suicide prevention. According to H-7 of the main estimates, approximately \$4.7 million is allocated in contribution funding for the Nunavut Suicide Prevention Strategy. Now the question is: how are these funds distributed across Nunavut and how does the government monitor the effectiveness of funded activities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of allocating this funding, it's divided up in terms of an application-based process. For the '23-24 fiscal year, 99 percent of the funding has been allocated and that funding started being allocated following a callout for proposals or for applications. That's how the allocation model is set up.

In terms of monitoring for effectiveness, we did have some recent work that was done around a bit of an evaluation in terms of how we can better target this fund. The need is huge. It's a little over \$3 million. We reviewed the policy and we reviewed the funding application process internally, and we're now placing a greater emphasis on targeted suicide prevention programming. We're giving priority to community-led programs and projects where the organization addresses and acknowledges the need for different strategies to empower community members with coping skills. We're

looking for culturally relevant approaches as well.

I could go on, but I'll cut myself off there. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Continuing on the same topic, the draft business plan indicates on page 148 that the new 2023-28 Nunavut Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been completed for stakeholder consultations. Was an evaluation of the successes and failures of the previous Suicide Prevention Action Plan undertaken and, if so, how was it determined which activities would continue to be supported as suicide prevention initiatives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Savikataaq) (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There was an evaluation in terms of the previous action plan and that is a public document in terms of looking at the past action plan and seeing what worked or what was successfully implemented and what wasn't successfully implemented.

In terms of the new Suicide Prevention Strategy Action Plan, we're looking at now the spring to have that finalized and released publicly. In terms of comparing it to the old one, the new action plan is going to be more focused. There will be fewer action items; however, they will be more measurable.

We're also looking for stronger emphasis on accountability in the new action plan in terms of which partner organization is accountable or responsible for doing what. That was identified as something needing adjustment. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the priorities listed in the business plan for 2024-25 is to finalize the new Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. However, on page 148 of the business plan, it indicates that community consultations on the strategy have been delayed. The question is: when will the new strategy be made public? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Under the new *Mental Health Act*, the minister is mandated to establish a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

In terms of the work being delayed, we would be looking at a process to initiate community consultations and then move to draft the strategy following that. Our next steps in terms of this work are to put out a request for proposals to have a contracted party, a consultant lead this work. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll do this for the youth of Nunavut. Concerns have been raised regarding the lack of mental health services for 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." The draft guide is expected to be completed by March 2024. That is a month away from now. Now the question is: when does the department anticipate the final version of the guide to be ready and which department will deliver the program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of that work, Health is in a supporting role to Education, it is my understanding, and they would be leading the work around that guide.

From the Department of Health's perspective, we understand the need for mental health supports for everyone, whether they're youth or whatever age they are. That's where we see things like what's happening with Education and moves to have more supports available directly in schools.

It's really exciting because we see mental health as not just a task for our department; it's a task for everyone, for families, for other departments, for local governments, for anyone who wishes to play a part and wishes to contribute to better mental health in Nunavut. The work is there and it is very important. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question. It's in regard to the Atii, Angutiit! program. The Atii, Angutiit! program has now been launched across Nunavut communities. Is this program being delivered by the Department of Health staff and, if not, which organization is delivering it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's my last question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the tour itself, it has been led by Department of Health staff along with contributing artists and experts as needed. In terms of the ongoing work, because the Atii, Angutiit! tour was intended to be a starting point for men's wellness groups in each community, we are seeing that community-based work ongoing and it's really uplifting to see.

There are sponsoring agencies that have been confirmed for all communities and these sponsoring agencies would be playing a support role in terms of the ongoing upkeep and support for the groups in the community level. In the Kivalliq, it's Pulaarvik Kablu, the Kitikmeot Friendship Society in the Kitikmeot, and then the Embrace Life Council for the Qikiqtaaluk region. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. The next name on my list is Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on the question that was just asked about the Atii, Angutiit! program. These are community-based healing programs. Are there additional funds for the programs they may want to initiate? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask my deputy minister to respond to the question. Thank you.

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

Ms. Hunt (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for the question. As for any of the partner groups, they have the opportunity to seek funding through our programs and standards department, and also we encourage groups to be doing partnering, looking at other regional federal funding opportunities to support and enhance the program delivery. Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your response. When the Atii, Angutiit! program was initiated by the government, you would think that the government would provide sufficient funding and that they are initiated in the communities. Why isn't that the case? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The men's groups in the community are eligible to apply for funds from the department, just like any other organization. There hasn't been a carve-out or a specific program created to fund the community organizations, but they are eligible to apply from us or from other funding opportunities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think something similar is there for women or youth. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I'm a little confused.

>> *Laughter*

There has been some thought put into how the youth may be supported more and how we can support the women in the area of mental health. We have the suicide prevention program and action plan with activities that will be outlined. At a later point, we will bring forward new activities through the action plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for clarifying that. I have a question under mental health. There seems to be a lot of benefits when Inuit elders are counselling. Perhaps the elders can be included in initiating support for counselling. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): My deputy will also add to my response.

(interpretation ends) We are interested in seeing how we can have elders incorporated as part of the care that we provide. One good example is the Healing by Talking Program. Right now, that's a program where it's counsellors who are not elders who are providing remote support to Nunavummiut. We have been doing some planning or trying to see how we can incorporate elders into that, where you could have a remote-delivered care conversation with an elder in terms of mental health needs or things like that.

One of the issues in that case or in that specific example is that we have struggled a bit in terms of who defines whether an elder is qualified or not to provide that type of counselling. It's something that we have to figure out, there is no licensing body for elders to say whether they're qualified, whether they're not qualified. It is something that we are keen to move on, and my deputy can give another example, if you'll allow. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Hunt (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you and thank you for the opportunity to build off of the minister's statements.

One of the things that you heard from the Department of Health in our last sitting was around our focus and priority on building elders into the important place of team-based care. Part of our work this year is doing the internal engagement as well as listening to our elders and other important community members in the design of the role and function of elders as part of a team-based care environment, but also as well as looking at cultural navigators, that can be elders, it may be those who are considered knowledge holders or keepers in the community who can really welcome and help individuals navigate, also build trust and do interpretation and translation as part of a culturally appropriate system of care. Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the elders, there are very qualified elders, traditional Inuit who provide counselling. Is it possible to get these types of elders who can be employed by your department to provide those types of services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Hunt (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the follow-up question. That's exactly what our interest is, is building on and leveraging that sacred knowledge that elders have and their traditional ways of

supporting wellness and mental health that is different than western training, being able to bridge and integrate and complement those two to meet the needs of Nunavummiut. Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm asking these questions because I have personally seen an elder providing counselling. An individual went to an elder with problems and then felt better. That's just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the member. We provide funding called Upigivatsi that I touched upon earlier. Looking at some of the communities, there have been requests made and provided funding so that they can work to get the elders and youth together. Those are the types of programs that are funded by our department and we hope that they do go well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Following my list of names, Mr. Simailak.

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

I would like to go back to the subject of agency nurses and paramedics that was being discussed earlier. I'll use Baker Lake for example. The department

would know that the following months, let's say all of March and all of April, don't need agency nurses or paramedics, and then all of July and all of August, they will need the same services, agency nurses or paramedics. I'm wondering who decides where those nurses will go.

I heard you guys talk a bit about how consistency is great; the patient gets to know the specialist and the specialist gets to know their clients. It would be great to continue that, but I'm wondering who decides where these agency nurses or paramedics or other health specialists go, like mental health nurses, if I can add that figure there? Who decides where the specific employee from the agency travels to? Is it the Department of Health or is it the agency? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of allocating staff to a given community, it's the department's decision and so through our health operations team in terms of looking at different communities and in times of shortage, it becomes very difficult to keep health centres from sliding into emergency services only or even worse than that, into closure. Allocations are made in a way to try to make sure services are available for Nunavummiut.

There is consideration given to matching staff to communities that they have been in before. We do consider that, that there are issues created when it's a brand-new nurse or a brand-new paramedic and you have never met the person before. We do attempt to keep continuity in place as

much as possible. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the response. The reason why I had asked that is I had met a mental health nurse in Baker Lake during one of my many office visits in Baker Lake. I was visiting various offices and I met the one mental health nurse that was just about to leave for her break home and she mentioned that she would be back in Nunavut a few weeks later or a month later, something like that, and I knew Baker Lake was still without a mental health nurse. I asked her, "Are you coming back to Baker Lake?" Her response was, "I don't know."

It's quite concerning to hear something like that where they don't know where they're going to be going next. I do appreciate the complexities of trying to balance all of these health centres and mental health offices that you guys have to fill, but these are specialized positions and if they're spending each trip to Nunavut trying to go to a different community and trying to learn their new clients, they're not going to be as much help as they could be, which is why I was asking who decides where these specialists travel to. Is it Health or the agency?

I'm wondering if you can speak more as to how the department is planning to ensure that there is consistency going forward, let's say, for the next year. Is it always the same nurse, mental health nurse or agency nurse, or paramedic to go to the same community? The

department knows which communities will need these specialists because they don't have the indeterminate employee yet and it won't be filled for some time. If the minister can speak to that a bit more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I know that the minister did speak to it, but if you can just give a little more detail. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The key to getting to a more consistent workforce and less unfamiliarity between the care provider and patients is to have more indeterminate staff working across Nunavut. Through our staffing measures packages, we're hopeful that that's coming.

We have put a lot of energy into, first of all, listening to what nurses and other employees want. Going from there, we have been moving to try to meet their needs in terms of providing a more flexible work schedule, if that's what they want, providing more training opportunities. Through the support of this House, nursing resources have increased through previous budgets and then there are aspects around staff housing where we work with partners to make sure staff housing is adequate and sufficient. It can be an issue in terms of trying to fill positions. That's where we see the most room for improvement or the most room for impact.

The agency piece, we will continue working with the nursing agencies to try to have as much consistency as possible, as well as the paramedic contract holder, but at the end of the day, we don't have

full control over which paramedic goes where. That's something we can work with the company with, but they have allocation issues within their own company or their own workforce, so to speak. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I find it a bit troubling where it sounds like the Department of Health doesn't have the final say as to which employee from the agency will be travelling to which community in Nunavut. Is that what you're saying where the agency has a heavy say into where their nurses are going to be travelling to? Let's say that the same agency nurse has been travelling to Nunavut for two years now and they know the Kivalliq, but all of a sudden, the agency says, "No, we're going to send them to Baffin Island now." Is that what the minister is saying, that the agency dictates where their employees are going to be travelling to, even though it's our money that's paying them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My understanding of how the contracts work is that we would request, for example, a paramedic is allocated for this community for this period of time. However, as part of the contracts, we don't have the ability to say to the company, "It must be this specific contract; it must be this specific paramedic that you provided in the last

shift." We can work with them to try to emphasize consistency.

It's something that we want to see, but my understanding of the contract is that if the company provides a paramedic to go to that community for the specified time period, they're meeting the terms of the contract. We can work with the contractor to emphasize our desire for consistency, but down to the individual level, we don't have the ability to mandate a specific staff member to go to a specific community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, once again. Staying on these agency nurses, the reason why it would be great and very beneficial is if we dictated where these nurses are going to be travelling to, again, is for consistency.

I believe we've had cases in the past in Nunavut where an individual was seen multiple times by multiple different health care professionals. After more than a year, someone finally finds out that it's cancer and they've had cancer for over a year now, but it's finally being diagnosed because of a different agency nurse or different nurses seeing the patient multiple times throughout the year. It's because of the lack of consistency, which is very scary for me. I'm sure it's scary for a lot of people, but when it gets down to the seriousness of cancer care, you yourself mentioned it many times that early detection is the best way to fight it.

It would be nice or I wish you could commit to saying that the department will have more say into where each specific agency nurse will be travelling to. Is that something the department can do or can commit to? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I believe that we already emphasized to our contractors, specifically in agency nursing as well as the paramedic program, the importance of consistency and familiarity. That's something that's currently emphasized.

If you will allow, my deputy could add a bit more around the importance of that relationship and how we see it contributing to better health outcomes. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. Thank you to the member. I can't stress enough that I hear you when you talk about the importance of relationship-based care because relationship-based care, when we have those strong connections and we know one another, whether it's at that community member level and of course at the health and wellness level where that circle of care is supporting an individual or individuals. That is our goal. It is our priority.

We strive and are really doing our best to make sure that when we're having whether it is agency nurses, paramedics,

physicians, or others coming to a community, we're really trying to continue to match their consistency to communities that they have been to before. Sometimes agencies or some staff are already committed to be in other places and so we do need to bring in a team member who may not have been to that community. We do now have the orientation process to help prepare them for coming to a community.

As we continue to roll out our critical measures, which are around all group 5, the goal really is to have permanent, indeterminate staff so that we can continue to foster that relationship-based care and have less reliance on contract groups and outside entities in the territory. Thank you.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister and the deputy minister. Still on the subject of agency nurses and paramedics, does the department specify to these agencies that the nurses or paramedics they're going to fly in have at least five years' experience, as an example, or are they sending up people who have just graduated from these schools and are basically learning life experience from Nunavummiut in their new profession? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Depending on the role that the agency staff is going to be filling, there would

be different requirements around that. Whether the staff coming in is a casual employee or whether they're an agency employee, the department makes sure that the required levels of experience, certification, and licensure are followed. I hope that answers the question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes and no. You said that they're certified and qualified, but how much experience do they actually have? Do you guys request that whoever comes up has at least three years' experience in their profession or are these brand-new graduates? Again, it's concerning and scary that people are learning their new profession based off Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My deputy minister will respond to that question if you will allow. Thank you.

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

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. Thank you to the member. To further expand on responding to your question, there are specific competencies, for example, that each of the professions will require, especially licensed professionals. One, it's important that we make sure that they meet and have those competencies. Some of it will be based on years of experience. Some of it will be based on

competencies in terms of the clinical aspects of what they can provide. Also in terms of management, if they're at the SHP or management level as well, it's combined with that.

We also make sure that for individuals coming in who are newer to our remote practice environments but still meet qualifications, there is mentorship and support. Sometimes they may go to a larger health centre and spend time there with nurses before they go into a community health centre where they may be working more isolated and on their own, so they have that support. They have the virtual nurse program and virtual physicians to provide them an added layer of support for diagnostics and treatment.

Those are areas that we want to make sure are offered and that we do support. We also have a program at the QGH where we may have nurses or other health care professionals where we want to be able to further assess, help to develop their skills and competencies so that they can continue to provide good services and expand their services in community where we offer that as well so they can come in and spend time at the QGH and then go back out and practise those skills and have the mentorship support. Thank you.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What's the QGH? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: The Qikiqtaaluk General Hospital. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the clarification. I'm glad that the deputy minister came out and said that they do have a training plan when these professionals are coming in because I did hear murmurs in Baker Lake that happened a few times now where agency nurses are stationed in Baker Lake for their first or second stint in Nunavut and then when they come back to Nunavut, they're shipped elsewhere.

I personally have a little bit of an issue with that. Again, it's based on consistency. My constituents are not getting the consistency with the health care professionals if the department is going to continue doing that. I understand, again, the complexities. You're trying to get more people working in Nunavut, but I want to voice it out quickly that I have an issue with my constituents basically being used as guinea pigs, to put it one way. I know it's not agreeable to some, but I'll move on to my next line of questioning quickly here while I still have some time.

Regarding elder care planning, does the department look at, let's say, people aging in and becoming elders? Is there a database saying, "Baker Lake is going to have 30 new people classified as elders now in the next year and this is the kind of elder care they're going to need" or other communities? I know that once you get older, there are special needs that need to be taken into account. Is something like that done for people aging in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There isn't a database that I am aware of in terms of that specific, demographically tracking community by community, who is coming in and becoming an elder or aging.

However, when you look at the home care program, I think one of the great things about it is that individuals can self-identify because everyone has varying levels of need. Some individuals, depending on health issues they may have, may start to need home care assistance in their 50s. There are other individuals who might not need any assistance until later on, in their 70s or 80s.

The ability for not just elders but also their family members to self-identify or to ask for help through that program is one of its strengths and it's one that we want to continue supporting as well as looking for ways to strengthen it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. My last question for now is on suicide prevention and the plan. Earlier you had responded to Mr. Quqqiaq about the proposals and applications that go out or calls for applications and whatnot. Does the department keep track of which communities are utilizing this or are submitting proposals for suicide prevention and, if there are some communities that are not accessing it or submitting proposals for it, does the department reach out to those

communities to say, “Hey, we’ve got this call-out for proposals for suicide prevention. Is there a group in your community that would be willing to submit a proposal or application for funding for suicide prevention?”? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We do keep track of the projects that are funded through the Upigivatsi program. It is application based, so it’s first come, first served in terms of the allocation, but we have made efforts to streamline the application process. The old application forms were lengthier and we have updated our application forms to make it easier for organizations to apply.

Whether it’s through the Atii, Angutiit! tours or whether it’s through the mental health paraprofessionals working at the community level or through our links with hamlet councils or through community health representatives, we have multiple ways of making organizations aware of this funding and we make efforts to do that, but at the end of the day, it is application driven. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just before I go on to the next person on my list, just for clarification from the questions that Mr. Simailak was asking in terms of experience, it used to be that to get an indeterminate nursing job in Nunavut, you had to have three years of nursing experience and it was an issue because it was one year of mentorship. If that’s still

the case, would the same standards be to the agency nurses? Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Maybe just a clarification, are you asking specifically about community health nurse positions? Okay, so community health nurse positions. My understanding is that there is still a significant experience component that’s required for those positions.

In terms of the agency nursing staff who would be filling those positions, whether they required experience to fill them, is that your question? Yes, that’s the case. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Following my list of names, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I only have a few questions and I want to address some of what Mr. Malliki was saying earlier.

Elders are very knowledgeable and because we’re at a critical time and in your business plan for 2024-25 under Inuusivut, one of the objectives listed in the third bullet, I’ll quote it in English, (interpretation ends) the third bullet under Objectives, “To encourage and support models of wellness and well-being that are grounded in Inuit identity.” (interpretation) I think the only way you can run that program is if you involve elders who have experienced the real Inuit way of life. How will you know if they are using the Inuit way of wellness? How will you be able to say that you are following those? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I completely understand the question. (interpretation ends) I think I can answer this through an example of some of the ongoing work that's happening around Aqqusariaq, the Nunavut Recovery Centre.

There is a development team that has been working on Aqqusariaq for some time and it includes representatives from the Government of Nunavut Department of Health, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, as well as other wellness organizations and it also includes elders with lived experience around mental health and trauma. That development team or that group of experts have been leading and guiding the development of many aspects of the Aqqusariaq facility and now they're getting deep into what types of programming and what types of operations will be happening through that facility.

It is really exciting work, it is important work, but at the end of the day, like the member asked, it is going to be about making sure Inuit values, Inuit culture and language, everything is incorporated in how we deliver care through that facility. I have full confidence in the development team as it's an incredible group of individuals who are leading that.

Sorry; I might have said "development team"; it's the Cultural and Lived Experience Advisory Committee. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister. I'm asking if there are plans to keep the workers there for many years. When Inuit culture and traditions and the Inuit way of counselling are being talked about and these things are being put together, when there are problems with including the Inuit way of counselling, do you edit out some of the things that come from the Inuit way of counselling? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a very good question, Mr. Chairman. There have been some roadblocks along the way, but working together and making considerations together, it is happening in the committee.

We know that Aqqusariaq will be a healing centre and many people in Nunavut have been requesting that kind of service and we want it to be effective and help people in this situation. I know it's obvious that Inuit culture and values have to be what it is based on. They have to be a part of the foundation of the healing centre and we believe in that in the Department of Health. The committee that I referenced also believes in that way and they work hard. When they are having their meetings, they deal with very heavy issues and make considerations together.

From my perspective, I expect that after Aqqusariaq has been completed and it's in operation, it's going to have a very

unique way of doing things that has been adapted to the way the Nunavut people are and that's what we are expecting now.

I hope I answered the question and I hope I made sense in my response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Yes, what you're saying is completely clear and I hope that it can proceed well. With Inuit culture and values and the fact that they will have to be recognized in doing healing in the Inuit way, it would be really good if that could be brought back to the Inuit.

Our colleague also stated that there are people who are aging and we have to consider them for our future planning. Hopefully they won't just have to be in the hospital all the time when they get old. Some of that will happen to us, so we need to have... Well, the future looks better and I'm happy about that.

However, moving on to a completely different topic, to say it in English, (interpretation ends) the virtual care programs, you briefly mentioned those things and have said that there are different programs going on. It's not the specific virtual care programs, but can you tell me how many communities have this virtual care program going on right now? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks to our federal partners, we have the capability to provide virtual care services right across Nunavut, so all 25 health centres. My deputy has the statistics right here beside me and it's evident that virtual care is being provided in every community, which is exciting. Particularly for smaller communities, it means better and quicker access and in some cases, it can mean less reliance or need for medical travel. Another thing that is evident, looking at the numbers, is that year over year, it's increasing, increasing, increasing. From where we sit, it's very exciting that Nunavummiut can access more services closer to home through virtual care. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Would you be able to tell me what new programs are being considered for this virtual care program? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The new services we're looking at under virtual care are access to allergist services, as well as dermatology, as well as ear, nose and throat specialty care and that's in order to provide care faster, minimize medical travel, and also deal with the wait-lists. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. I think the minister can read our minds now as he responded to the next question I wanted to ask. I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you.

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

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

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All in favour. Passed with flying colours. I will now stand up to report progress.

Sorry. I thank the minister and the officials may leave. We don't want you here overnight, so the officials are allowed to leave the witness table. Now I will report progress.

Speaker: Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 37 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? Mr. Kusugak. The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

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

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders for February 28:

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 37
 - Bill 38
 - Bill 39
 - Bill 40
21. Report of the Committee of the
Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 29 – 6(2), this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, that's tomorrow, February 28 at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:56*

