



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

2nd Session

6th Assembly

HANSARD

Official Report

DAY 71

Friday, March 1, 2024

Pages 4432 – 4494

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 Joanasie

(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)

Joe Savikataaq

(Arviat South)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, March 1, 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. Joellie 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 13:29

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak) (interpretation): Good day. Before we proceed, Ms. Quassa, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good day. (interpretation ends) Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements**Minister's Statement 377 – 6(2):
Social Work Month**

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and appreciate the invaluable contributions of social workers as we

celebrate Social Work Month during the month of March. The theme for this year's Social Work Month is "Empowering Social Workers," highlighting the importance of empowering social workers to inspire action and lead change in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to be conscious of the role we play in supporting the critically important work of social workers. We must commit to providing them with all resources needed to carry out their duties. I encourage everyone to take time to interact with social workers in your communities, learn about their positive contributions, and identify ways to actively support their mandate.

Mr. Speaker, social workers are instrumental in shaping a brighter and more compassionate future for all Nunavummiut. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to them for their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of others. Their tireless efforts are deeply appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 378 – 6(2):
Social Worker Wellness Program
at Larga Baffin**

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

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share an important stride forward in

supporting the well-being of Nunavut Inuit who travel to access necessary medical care. (interpretation ends) Through the diligent efforts of the Department of Health's Medical Travel, Population Health, and Mental Health and Addictions divisions, we have created a social work and wellness program at the Larga Baffin boarding home in Ottawa.

The Department of Health, with excellent support from Larga Baffin, has hired a dedicated social worker employed through the Ottawa Health Services Network Inc. (OHSNI). This social worker is stationed at the boarding home and will deliver an array of crucial services, including mental health and substance use support, supportive counselling, social system navigation, crisis management, and more. The approach taken will be individually tailored to meet the client's specific needs during their medical journey.

Uqaqtitsijii, Health is now actively exploring and pursuing other avenues to expand this initiative, with an aim to offer similar support to medical travellers in other boarding homes. This partnership shows our unwavering commitment to enhancing supports for medical travellers, ensuring they feel understood, cared for, and seen, even when away from home.

The Department of Health recognizes the unique challenges medical travellers face. We understand that travellers can be extremely stressed, facing exceedingly difficult moments in life, medically or personally, and that it is important to offer wraparound supports during these tough times.

Please join me in thanking the Larga Baffin staff, the dedicated Health staff, and those at Ottawa Health Services Network Inc. who made this improvement possible. We have taken a step forward in ensuring that everyone staying in a boarding home does so with comprehensive supports available, embodying our dedication to not just health care but to the holistic wellness of our community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 379 – 6(2):
National Social Work Month**

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge National Social Work Month. The theme, "Empowering Social Workers," aligns with Nunavut Arctic College's efforts to empower students and build capacity in the Social Service field for the territory.

Nunavut Arctic College has been delivering some form of social work education for almost 40 years. Currently, the college offers a certificate, a diploma, and a degree program, with the degree being offered through Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. This academic year, social work programs are being offered in Cambridge Bay, Arviat, and Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, students in social work programs take courses in areas such as

mental health, addictions, child welfare, and trauma-informed practice. The programs often invite guest speakers who currently or have worked in this important field in Nunavut. Elders are also important pillars in the programs to teach cultural knowledge, practices, and general well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that students in these programs are committed to their communities. Through group projects, students have organized community events for World Mental Health Day, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, World Suicide Prevention Day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, and International Women's Day. Students have also participated in bringing food to elders, delivering Christmas hampers, and boys and girls groups.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the National Social Work Month, I invite all members to join me in thanking the Nunavut Arctic College students for choosing to learn within this very important field. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Minister's Statement 380 – 6(2): Mine Training Strategy

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mining accounts for 40 percent of Nunavut's Gross Domestic Product and is our territory's largest economy. As such, there is a huge potential for

Nunavummiut to close the gap in mine-related jobs. Providing training and supporting Nunavummiut to acquire the necessary skills is key to maximizing local employment in the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, we have worked closely with the Department of Family Services and Nunavut Arctic College, as well as consulted over 50 individuals from 27 different organizations to develop the Nunavut Mine Training Strategy. Our aim is to increase awareness and access to mine training programs, develop transferrable skills that Nunavummiut can apply in other industries, and overall strengthen the employability of our workforce.

Training is a key component in *Katujjiluta*. Not only does the Mine Training Strategy support our mandate; it is also an investment in Nunavummiut to keep jobs local and build a stronger economic future for our territory.

Later today I will be tabling the strategy and sharing this very important initiative, and I welcome my colleagues to read and learn more about this important strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 381 – 6(2):
Planning Act Consultations**

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my department has completed public consultations to repeal and replace the *Planning Act*. Over 270 individuals were directly engaged in these consultations with valuable feedback and new ideas gained from Nunavummiut through this process.

The engagements took place via in-person community visits, stakeholder interviews, and electronic submissions of comments to the Planning and Lands Division consultation website. My department visited five communities in November and December 2023, speaking with municipal mayors and councils, community members, hunter and trapper organizations, local housing associations, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, regional Inuit associations, Inuit Heritage Trust, Tuttarviit Committee, and visited high school social science and geography classes.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut *Planning Act* establishes Nunavut's legislative basis for municipal land use planning, including five main planning tools: general plans (most often entitled 'community plans'), development schemes, zoning by-laws, general planning administration, and enforcement provisions.

Mr. Speaker, my department is pleased to be reviewing the *Planning Act* to ensure it meets the needs of Nunavut communities. There are a number of

desired outcomes of this initiative as we look at modernizing this piece of legislation to ensure it complies with the *Nunavut Agreement*, provides for greater opportunities for Inuit to participate in community planning processes, and provides for an open, fair and transparent planning system for the territory.

Mr. Speaker, a new *Planning Act* will provide the Government of Nunavut and municipalities with access to innovative and efficient tools by adapting Canadian best practices to be suitable for Nunavut. I look forward to presenting this initiative for consideration within the life of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 382 – 6(2):
Long-term Service Awards**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am excited to announce that the Department of Human Resources is once again presenting Government of Nunavut Long-term Service Awards. These awards are a great way for us to celebrate and recognize the continuous service provided by our outstanding employees and the contribution our public servants make in Nunavut communities and in the lives of Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual in-

person award ceremonies were suspended, but they resumed earlier this month. Over the remainder of 2024, the department will distribute 920 awards covering the period of 2020 to 2023 to eligible employees throughout the territory. Staff are planning long-term service events throughout Nunavut, including a gala for those employees who have reached 20-, 25-, 30- and 35-year service milestones. After this period of catch up, the department will resume annual long-term service celebrations.

I look forward to updating my colleagues as more details of upcoming ceremonies become available. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 383 – 6(2):
Baby's Safe Sleep Initiatives**

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to speak about recent improvements made through the Baby's Safe Sleep Initiative. The initiative is part of Health's commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of our youngest Nunavummiut.

In January 2022, Health initiated an evaluation of the Newborn Wellness Program, conducting cross-jurisdictional scans and community consultations across Nunavut. The review yielded recommendations, such as developing visual educational materials in Inuktitut, launching a targeted communications plan, and enhancing training for health care providers.

Since the review, we have taken actions such as the territory-wide distribution of translated Baby's Safe Sleep Environment resource materials and launching a public awareness campaign coinciding with Health Canada's Safe Sleep Week. We have also provided face-to-face training sessions for our health care providers and armed them with resources about safe sleep practices. Also, we currently have available the Baby's Safe Sleep tool kit for health care providers, which includes:

- An interactive teaching tool
- A baby's safe sleep video

It's very cute, I'm told, Mr. Speaker.

- Posters and handouts
- Online training

Today we are taking another action, and I am pleased to showcase Nunavut's new newborn wellness kits aimed at supporting parents and caregivers in giving a safe sleep environment for their newborn infant. Packed inside a diaper bag, the kits include an infant sleep sack, infant health care kit, and printed tools parents need to ensure their newborn has a safe sleep environment.

Uqaqtitsijii, every expecting parent in Nunavut attending their prenatal appointments will receive a newborn wellness kit. Members are invited to meet our Newborn Wellness program team, who are in the lobby over break time to display our tool kits for health care providers, and the new newborn wellness kits.

Also in the lobby today are staff from Qupanuaq, an organization under the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation,

with whom Health is collaborating to make bassinets available to every infant in the Qikiqtani region. Health also plans to expand this bassinet program with a partnership with the Kitikmeot Friendship Society in Cambridge Bay and Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre as our strategic partner for the Kivalliq region. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernek.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 505 – 6(2): Atii Angutiit in Sanirajak and Igloolik

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my fellow MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to extend my congratulations. It has been approximately two months since the department started the Atii Angutiit. They were able to come to Igloolik and Sanirajak, and while they were there, they built qamutiks and boats to help the people of Igloolik and Sanirajak.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this program is going very well in my communities, and I would like to thank the Department of Health for starting the Atii Angutiit program. Maybe we can also talk about healthy relationships between men, women and youth. If we can start Atii Angutiit, then we can also initiate some other programs for the other populations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 506 – 6(2): Recognizing R.J. Oolooyuk

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Good day to the people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet and Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize R. J. Oolooyuk from Rankin Inlet, who recently graduated from the Price Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba with a degree in mechanical engineering.

Mr. Speaker, in a recent article in the University of Manitoba Today newsletter, Mr. Oolooyuk talks about growing up using, fixing and tinkering with off-road all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and other kinds of machinery that are similar to every one of us who has grown up and lived in the north. His interest in learning how these machines work and how to optimize them to use in the Arctic put him on the path of engineering.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Mr. R. J. Oolooyuk's final engineering project was as part of a team researching and redesigning an engine component to include the performance of Polaris snow machines. Now that is a great example of giving back to your community.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. R. J. Oolooyuk credits much of his success in completing his degree to the Engineering Access Program which did a recruitment

program at his high school. Such programs as these are excellent resources for students who are interested in this field but may need extra support and upgrading to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, R. J. Oolooyuk is a wonderful role model for any high school student who is interested in engineering and has the motivation and dedication to reach out for opportunities to study in this field.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. R. J. Oolooyuk on his degree and wishing him success in his future career. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Member's Statement 507 – 6(2): Local Sobriety Initiative in Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Baker Lake and my fellow MLAs. Have a good day.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Baker Lake residents Aquila Amaruq and his partner, Darlene Nukik. I'll continue in English.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Aquila Amaruq and Darlene Nukik recently began a small group in Baker Lake on sobriety. They're working on helping people, encouraging them to stay sober. They have seen people in Baker Lake struggling with alcoholism and they themselves have struggled with it.

Mr. Speaker, these two are not counsellors, but they are doing what they can locally. They've had help from the mental health nurse in British Columbia and it's succeeding so far.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time Aquila and Darlene have done something locally in Baker Lake to have helped their local Qamani'tuarmitat. In the past, they have organized free luncheons for people in need that need some help with food.

Mr. Speaker, I wish continued success to Aquila and Darlene and ask my fellow colleagues to help me congratulate and thank Aquila Amaruq and Darlene for their efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 508 – 6(2): Visit to Mary River Mine

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to inform the House about my recent visit to the Mary River mine, which took place earlier last month.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to the Premier and Ministers Akeeagok, Joanase and Qavvik, as I was able to join them on this site visit, as well as Qikiqtani Inuit Association President Akesuk.

Mr. Speaker, our visit to the mine site was hosted by a number of senior Baffinland officials, and I thank Paul Quassa, Udlu Hanson, Joe Tigullaraq, and Brian Penney for their hard work. I

also want to thank John Raymond and John Calvert, who are senior leaders at the Energy and Minerals Group, which is one of the co-owners of Baffinland.

Mr. Speaker, the visit provided an important opportunity for my colleagues and I to meet with Inuit who are working at the mine, as well as to convey community concerns directly to Baffinland's senior management.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues from Baker Lake spoke, maybe two weeks ago now, about the important role that the mineral resources extraction industry plays in generating much-needed revenues for government and our Inuit organizations.

Information published by the Government of Canada under the federal *Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act* indicates that the Qikiqtani Inuit Association received approximately \$99.8 million in fees, royalties, and infrastructure improvement payments between 2018 and 2022. These are much-needed revenues that go towards community projects in our region.

As the Member for Tununig, I have strongly supported meaningful training and employment initiatives to benefit the impacted communities.

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

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that it was truly inspiring to meet with constituents who are building careers and developing skills.

I can also say that a number of my female constituents who are operating complex heavy equipment and performing other roles are doing a wonderful job in breaking gender stereotypes in respect to the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, we know that major projects such as Mary River have a significant environmental impact, and I appreciate and respect my constituents who have been vocal in pushing for solutions to mitigate these impacts.

Our recent site visit also provided an opportunity to receive an update on the status of the proposed Steensby shipping route, as well as an update on ongoing work to address concerns in such areas as dust control.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by reaffirming my commitment to working with the community to ensure that the project benefits our people for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 509 – 6(2):
Appreciation of Elders in Nunavut**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first say that we heard yesterday that former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who

signed the *Nunavut Agreement*, has passed away, and I sit on the same board as his daughter, Caroline Mulroney, so my prayers go out to them.

I visit different communities and I try to visit our elders and they tell me many different things that they see. They always want me to do a good job and I really feel that.

During our visit to Cambridge Bay last month at the elder facility, John Kupeuna told me a good story on how he has served on boards and councils and how he started in Nunavut. It was very nice and we do a lot of hard work to get the money out to them. He says even though there's not that much money, he wants us to keep going and persevere.

Our elders give us many different comments like that, and I want to thank our elders because they encourage us to do our best. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements.
Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

**Member's Statement 510 – 6(2):
Kinngait Co-op Celebrates 65
Years of Business**

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to the people of Kimmirut and Kinngait.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that in the year 2024, the Co-op in Kinngait is celebrating their 65-year anniversary of operation. I'm very proud of that.

Kinngait is known internationally for their great artwork and printmaking, and

it has sustained the community ever since it started 65 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the Co-op store is open day to day and they have services available for the people of Kinngait. On top of that, I would like to express my pride because people in Kinngait get good dividends from their Co-op.

Carving and printmaking are very important to the Co-op, and there are many famous people like Kenokuak, Ashoona, Parr, and Pootoogook. Their works depict family and community life, and they keep their community prosperous.

I really thank the Kinngait Co-op for all the work they have done up to now and let us celebrate their 65th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

**Return to Oral Question 709 – 6(2):
Health Registries**

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to provide a response to a question I received on February 23, 2024 from MLA Brewster regarding an update on whether a memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been established with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) related to the collection of information regarding organ and tissue donation and, if so, if there is now

a registry of potential organ and tissue donors.

In November 2023 the CRA and Government of Nunavut signed a memorandum of understanding for the provision of information for the purpose of establishing or maintaining an organ and/or tissue donor registry.

Beginning with the 2022 tax year, Nunavut residents have had the option on their annual Canada Revenue Agency tax forms to indicate if they want to receive information about becoming an organ or tissue donor. The intent to donate box on tax returns indicates an intention to donate tissues or organs, but does not specify which organs, tissues, or blood products the individual intended for donation. With the memorandum of understanding signed, the secure transfer of the list of taxpayers within Nunavut who, as of June 2023, checked the intent to donate box on their 2022 tax return is underway and is anticipated to be completed by end of March 2024. The subsequent registry will be maintained and updated by the Department of Health.

Approximately 18 percent of Nunavut's respondents checked the intent to donate box on their tax return. It is important to note that even if an individual had checked this box, transplant programs solicit explicit consent from the family before any donation is considered by a clinical transplant program for a deceased member of the family. Nunavummiut's voluntary participation in this registry raises awareness and information on the value of Nunavummiut having discussion within their family and friends on the topic of donation. Donation is not limited to time

of death, as there are instances of living donors donating tissue and partial organs, such as liver or kidney, to another individual.

With Nunavut's location and surgical capacity, it is not feasible to have an organ and tissue donation program within the territory. Organs and tissues would not be viable, considering the transportation times from Nunavut to southern locations that offer transplantation. However, organ and tissue donation would be a viable option for Nunavummiut in a southern jurisdiction. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions.

(interpretation) Before we start, because there are many members who would like to ask questions, please keep your preambles short or go directly to your questions. Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Oral Questions.
Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 757 – 6(2): Igloolik Airport Terminal Building

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on questions that I asked the minister during our fall sitting concerning the need for infrastructure improvements at the Igloolik Airport.

As he recalls, I have told him that I have witnessed elders and disabled residents in wheelchairs that have severe difficulties as a consequence of the lack of ramps and other appropriate infrastructure.

The minister tabled his department's updated 20-year airport capital needs assessment. The report clearly indicates that Igloolik's airport requires an "airside accessibility ramp." What is the timeline for acquiring and installing a new airside accessibility ramp at the airport? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ramp is scheduled to be built in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Quassa.

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for clearly explaining that. The same document identified a number of other deficiencies at the airport, including the need for improvements to its taxiway, apron, and runway.

When I raised these issues with the minister during our fall sitting, he indicated that his department makes submissions to the federal Airport Capital Assistance Program.

Can the minister confirm today when his department will be making a submission to this federal program in respect to the

Igloolik Airport? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not heard from them yet and sometimes they are slow in responding, so I can't announce any dates right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. Maybe if you keep calling those offices or keep writing to them, they will respond quicker.

However, (interpretation ends) I recognize and understand that the Government of Nunavut does not have unlimited resources with which to pave all of our airports' runways.

Can the minister update the House today on his discussions with the federal Minister of Transport to improve the federal Airport Capital Assistance Program? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, we had an online conference with my other transportation ministers in Canada and the federal minister was also there. We discussed ACAP, which is an assistance

program for airports, and the federal government pays 100 percent when they help through that program. With that being the case, we wanted that to be continued. The delegates from the Northwest Territories and Yukon expressed the same things to the new federal minister. We tried to make him understand everything that we really need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 758 – 6(2): Security at Nunavut Airports

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

As the minister will recall, I recently wrote a letter to him and the Minister of Health concerning the issue of security at Nunavut airports and health centres.

There was a lot of discussion during the meeting of Committee of the Whole concerning security at health centres, and I hope that the Minister of Health will be replying to my letter in the near future.

Can the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation indicate when he will be replying to my letter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

(interpretation ends) As soon I can.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As soon as he can; I hope it's not going to be a month-long answer.

As I noted in my recent letter to the ministers, I have recently observed an increased security presence at the Rankin Inlet Airport.

Can the minister confirm what company has been awarded the contract to provide security at the Rankin Inlet Airport and can he indicate how many Inuit are employed by the company to provide frontline security services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We put new security in the Rankin Inlet Airport. We had to do it as soon as possible, so what we did was with the health centre in Rankin Inlet, the same company, I don't have the company's name, but that's the same company that's doing it now and, from what I understand, there are no Inuit employed at this time.

However, I want to assure this House that we are preparing a tender to provide adequate security in Rankin Inlet. We couldn't put it out for tender, but we are working on getting that tender out and hopefully it will attract local security companies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recall, I was proud to have voted in favour of funding to construct Chesterfield Inlet's new airport terminal building.

Can the minister confirm the extent to which enhanced security will be provided at airports in Nunavut's smaller communities, including Chesterfield Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am hoping that we don't have security across our airports. That is my goal, to keep the costs down and also knowing that in the airports, it's the friendliest place when you walk in. Whether you land in Chesterfield Inlet or Grise Fiord, you are welcomed in that community. I prefer that there be no security, but as times change, we will assess it. Right now I have no plans in terms of adding securities to small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 759 – 6(2): Search and Rescue Feasibility Study

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my question to the community and government services minister regarding the feasibility study for search and rescue.

I would like to know at the first place, Mr. Speaker, what has been done after the letter was distributed regarding the search and rescue prefeasibility studies. What has happened up to this day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for his question. It was being reviewed to see if it was feasible to provide air search and rescue services in Nunavut, but we were assessing it at the time. I gave the details to my colleagues last fall, if I remember correctly. Looking at the funding at the time, it was going to be too expensive, so we were unable to move forward with it and that's the case to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I am sorry that this program could not go ahead. If this went ahead during the winter session, we would have dealt with the estimated funding for this program.

If I can describe the air terminal in Sanirajak to the minister, the airstrip is 5,410 feet and 150 feet wide. I know the details. If the costs are going to be too high, then maybe the Department of Community and Government Services can take on that service on their own. Can you agree to consider providing operations and maintenance funding for Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The correspondence I sent to my colleagues on November 3 contained more detailed information, Mr. Speaker.

If we can find an airplane dedicated to search and rescue within Nunavut, we will need pilots and aircraft maintainers. Space would also be required for the aircraft. All of these things will have to be considered and how much it would cost to do that. We have delayed it for the time being and we would have to figure out whether we can move forward with it, but it's not within the current budget of the Department of Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you, Mr. Minister. I forgot to mention that in our community, there's a helicopter landing pad. It would be cheaper and perhaps you could look at that.

Last year in spring, our Member of Parliament, Lori Idlout, was able to come to Sanirajak. A concern raised by our community residents was how the federal government and the Government of Nunavut can provide support to Sanirajak. They were looking at that because the Sanirajak community is almost in the middle of that area.

Can the minister agree to look into whether you can transport by helicopter instead of by airplane since there is

already a helicopter landing pad in Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I can agree to a review so that everyone can have the same understanding as elected officials. Our Member of Parliament will also need to have an understanding of what this contains. I would like to make sure that we can have other options to look into and then once we get those options, we can make well-informed decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 760 – 6(2): Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Nunavut Consultations

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, I was very happy to hear the minister's recent statement in the House concerning the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's consultations on service in the north.

Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the minister's position that Nunavut needs reliable, affordable and high-quality telecommunications services.

Mr. Speaker, on December 21, 2023, the Government of Nunavut provided its formal submission to the Canadian

Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Nunavummiut who are following our proceedings today, can the minister highlight the government's main recommendations to the commission? 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. Mr. Speaker, in terms of what our recommendations are for Nunavut towards the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, we do want to see equitable access to broadband just as the rest of Canada enjoys, along with the speed of Internet. That's the main goal of what we want to see through that process and we will continue to push for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, I have been a strong advocate for actions to bridge the "digital divide" between Nunavut and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the minister previously indicated that his department has entered into a non-disclosure agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik concerning the government's plan to bring fibre to the territory. Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update today on the status of this partnership? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do still continue to have open dialogue and communication regarding partnerships on fibre. We do know that we have a proposal to bring fibre to Nunavut and we have dedicated funds through this House on that.

Mr. Speaker, I think the discussion is still open and so far right now, the Government of Nunavut's project is still led by us and there's no other partner other than the federal government's other funding commitments towards bringing Katittuq fibre to Iqaluit and Nunavut. Other than that, we are also engaging Inuit organizations and others on other potential fibre network routes that we would like to see in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recall, his department issued a request for proposals in July 2023 for the "installation and hosting of high-performance Starlink dishes in 24 communities for the Government of Nunavut."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm today how many new dishes have been installed in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be honest, I stand to be

corrected, but I believe there are dishes that have been set up in all 25 communities. I'll confirm that with the member. Thank you.

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

Question 761 – 6(2): Municipal Governance

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my constituents and all Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, the minister recently made a statement in the Legislative Assembly concerning the Nunavut Association of Municipalities.

As a former mayor, I appreciate the importance of the association as well as regional forums such as meetings of Kivalliq mayors.

As the minister noted in his statement, the annual meetings of the Nunavut Association of Municipalities provide an important opportunity for mayors to introduce and approve formal resolutions. However, I speak from experience when I say that there have been frustrations in finding out how the government has responded to the resolutions.

Will the minister commit to tabling the Government of Nunavut's response to the formal resolutions passed by the Nunavut Association of Municipalities at its most recent annual general meeting? (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 that question. Mr. Speaker, we are actively in ongoing engagement with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. It was great to participate in their annual general meeting and with that, I know they did pass resolutions and we will be responding on those. At the earliest opportunity, I want to bring it forward to my colleagues here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. I look forward to that.

(interpretation ends) The minister recently made a statement in the legislative concerning the support that his department has been providing to newly elected mayors and councillors following last fall's elections. I applaud the minister for being proactive.

Can the minister confirm when the orientation and training will be offered to the Naujaat and Coral Harbour councils? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to my colleague. I don't have that detail here, but I'll share that. I do know that the department has been providing support for orientation and training to members, but I don't

have that level of detail and bring forward the response to my colleague. Thank you.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you and look forward to that as well.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, the Hudson Bay Regional Roundtable is an initiative involving seven communities in the Kivalliq, a number of Manitoba communities and other partners.

As a former Mayor of Naujaat, I had the opportunity to participate in meetings of the roundtable prior to the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, there was recently a provincial general election in Manitoba and a new government is in office.

Can the minister update the House on work to restart activities of the Hudson Bay Regional Roundtable?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand that there is some level of great interest, especially in the Kivalliq, on that roundtable. It's my understanding that there has been a little bit of a hiatus on bringing those back, but if that work is bringing those things back together again, I think that's an area that my department continues to see if there are opportunities. As of now, I'm not aware of any new progress to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 762 – 6(2): Critical Minerals and the Draft Land Use Plan

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Mines.

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up today on issues that I raised during our fall sitting in relation to critical minerals.

As the minister is aware, information published by the government as part of this year's budget indicates that critical rare earth minerals are "crucial for a wide range of high-tech applications, including smartphones, electric vehicles, wind turbines, and various defence systems, due to their unique magnetic, luminescent, and electrochemical properties."

The budget documentation also indicates that Nunavut has "significant and untapped rare earth resources."

Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that Nunavut's current gold mines will eventually stop production, so it is essential that work begins now to develop sources of critical minerals in the territory.

Can the minister provide an update today on what actions his department is taking to work with the federal government in respect to its critical minerals strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for Canadian natural resources and I have been in meetings and to try to set up what we call regional roundtables, and that's the approach that Minister Wilkinson has done throughout the country where we look within the region where the critical minerals are and focus on that and have stakeholders go in. That work is still ongoing and something that I continue to work with Minister Wilkinson on this very important file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully we will see a strategy sometime soon.

Mr. Speaker, information published by the government as part of this year's budget indicates that the total value of mineral production in Nunavut was over \$2.2 billion in the year 2022.

Can the minister provide an estimate today as to what the potential benefit is to Nunavut's economy from the critical rare earth mineral sector? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The potential is very huge and there are explorations that are taking place and some of them are advancing more. Under the critical minerals, there are 31 critical minerals and each of those minerals has different... what the value of that critical mineral is. It's hard to predict in terms of how much more of

that it will be, but I would like to assure this House that it would be significant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I raised this issue during our recent fall sitting, I noted that serious concerns have been raised that the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan in its current form poses serious risks that critical rare earth mineral deposits could be stranded and unavailable for development.

The Department of Economic Development and Transportation shares responsibility for reviewing the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan. Can the minister indicate today what concerns he has with the draft Nunavut Land Use Plan and can he provide a clear timetable for when a decision will be made to approve the plan or to send it back for further work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Environment is the lead on this particular one. He recently had asked all the departments to provide their concerns and/or the good things about it and that work is ongoing. In discussions with my colleague, we're aiming to have our government along with the two signatories to reach a decision by spring of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 763 – 6(2): Nunavut Teacher Education Program Concerns

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College.

Mr. Speaker, a number of concerns regarding the Nunavut Teacher Education Program have been brought to my attention.

Mr. Speaker, ever since the program's affiliated university changed from McGill to other institutions, the program seems to have struggled. It no longer seems to be geared towards the learning needs of potential Inuit teachers. There are not enough instructors to deliver the program and there is very little support for students.

Can the minister clearly explain how the Nunavut Teacher Education Program is evaluated to determine if it is suitable for training Inuit teachers? 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 bringing the question to my attention. Mr. Speaker, Nunavut Arctic College supports the government's goal in creating a robust education system that will assist Nunavut in preparing for careers in the territory.

The Nunavut Teacher Education Program has been revised into a program that can allow Inuktitut language and culture in courses, with the aim of graduating more bilingual teachers for

the teachers across the Nunavut territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe we can look into it to see how it is determined that it is suitable for Inuit teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing of more and more Inuit students struggling with the Nunavut Teacher Education Program coursework and many of them are dropping out. Many of them are struggling with the coursework. None of them had struggled when it was under McGill University. A lot of students had more support.

Can the minister tell this House if he is aware of the high numbers of Inuit students dropping out of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program and, if he is, can he explain whether it is because they are struggling with the course delivery, the course materials, the instructors, or for other reasons? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there were a couple of questions in there, but to my knowledge, there are many factors that come into play that are outside of our control. There are daycare issues across Nunavut communities. There are financial issues with our students accessing additional resources to provide day-to-day lives. There are about 147 Nunavut teachers across the territory and we began with 157. We have seen just a minor drop

within our Nunavut Teacher Education Program and we have the Student Services Division that does everything it can to support students to stay in school.

In terms of the member's question if I'm aware of the level of teachers dropping out, whether due to instructors, we also have blended online learning where every community has a manager within the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, but the online portion is provided from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll speak with you again to discuss the barriers faced by the students.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Nunavut Teacher Education Program has gone through some changes in the past few years and I appreciate that the current laddering approach provides some flexibility for students to enter the teaching profession at different levels.

Can the minister clarify how Nunavut Arctic College works with the Department of Education to determine how many teachers and language specialists are needed to fill positions in Nunavut schools and what efforts are made to recruit and retain Inuit students into the Nunavut Teacher Education Program so that they will be able to fill those positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, we work alongside with the Department of Education. Nunavut Arctic College's main priority and goal is for our students to graduate at Nunavut Arctic College and we work with the Department of Education to place our students into schools for practicum. That takes place, to my knowledge, from January to May for their final year of studies. There are many other factors. We get assistance from the Department of Education. For example, students are eligible for the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 764 – 6(2): Linesman Position for Arviat

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we had a good blizzard here last night. Even under Arviat's standards, it was a real blizzard in the evening.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Savikataaq: It reminds me of all the blizzard days we get in Arviat.

Mr. Speaker, this past winter, we had a few long many-day blizzards in Arviat. The power went out. There were

approximately, I believe, 40 houses with no power for approximately four or five days. The problem was that there was no linesman available to come in. There was no power at the airport, so the planes couldn't come in, unless it was daytime. There was no power at the bulk fuel storage, the gas station, so nobody could buy fuel or gasoline.

I'll ask the minister if there are any plans to alleviate Arviarmiut that do need a linesman to station a linesman in Arviat. 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 was aware of the power outages in Arviat. At the time, I wasn't the minister, so I'm not aware of the detailed operational nature of the response, but I know that it did cause some hardship in terms of the outage and I do regret that anytime that we have power outages in terms of inclement weather. We had some here, as the member mentioned yesterday, here in Iqaluit.

Anytime that there's a power outage, the Qulliq Energy Corporation makes efforts to get power restored as soon as possible. We understand how important electricity is, especially in the colder winter months, and the potential for damage to homes or any other properties is very evident to us, so we make every effort to restore the power as soon as possible, subject to weather and other contributing factors. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister did not answer my question. I asked if there are plans to put a linesman in Arviat. The minister talked about how important power source is, how hardship it is when houses might freeze up in the winter when it's cold, and I didn't ask those questions. I was there in Arviat. I saw the hardships. I saw the people. Because there were no linesmen to reconnect the power, the people were out of fuel in their house. Others had no power in their house; they were freezing up.

Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation has a staff house in Arviat that has been vacant as a staff house for 10 to 20 years. It is used for when the linesmen do come in and they stay there instead of the hotel, so staff housing is not an issue.

I'll ask the minister again, as my constituents have been concerned. They do suffer and I have been asked and the Hamlet of Arviat also asked to get a linesman put in there. I'll ask the minister again: what are his plans for putting a linesperson in Arviat? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the question, I believe it was phrased as what are my plans for stationing a staff member in Arviat. Just to clarify, as minister, I'm not responsible for telling the corporation to put a staff member here or put a

mechanic here. That's way beyond, as I understand it, the minister's role. The president of the Qulliq Energy Corporation is responsible along with the board of directors for operational matters.

In terms of the detailed question regarding, I believe, one position, the member is asking about one position within an approximate team of about 200 employees that the Qulliq Energy Corporation has, I can ask for that detailed information and commit to getting back to the member, but I don't have that here in front of me right now. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only asked about the linesman. I don't believe there are 200 linesmen within Nunavut, but I could be wrong. There could be 200 linesmen within Nunavut. I didn't ask about all of the other stuff. I just asked about the linesman being stationed in Arviat.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the comment before about there's not enough work in Arviat to have a linesperson there, but the work would be in other communities too. I know for a fact that there are linesmen in Rankin Inlet that work in other communities, as when the power goes off in Arviat and there are issues with the lines, we have to wait until a linesperson comes in from Rankin Inlet to deal with the problem.

Just to make it clear to the minister, unless there are 200 linesmen, I'm asking about a position and have an empty, heated staff house that is

unoccupied most of the time, so housing is not an issue. I'm aware that the minister will not direct one mechanic there, one linesman there, but the minister is responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation or is supposed to be. Will the minister have his staff look into the feasibility of stationing a linesperson in Arviat? Arviat is fairly big now, so will the minister commit to looking into that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

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

Question 765 – 6(2): Municipal Supervision Orders

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services. There have already been questions posed to him.

Nonetheless, I first want to wish good day to everyone in Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq, along with Nunavummiut who are listening to our proceedings.

Earlier I announced to the residents of Clyde River via their local radio to deal properly with the subject I am going to ask today based on the reasons for the previous work. It is surrounding the hamlet operations in Clyde River, where the minister has provided supervised operations and that is my foundation for

the following questions. It's about the affairs of the Hamlet of Clyde River being placed under supervision.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my question because the minister has signed an order to place the affairs of the Hamlet of Clyde River under supervision and appointed a supervisor. This order was published yesterday in the *Nunavut Gazette* and is now public information. That's why I'm asking the question, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) I recognize that this order was made at the request of the hamlet council. Nonetheless, this is a serious matter and the people of Clyde River need to have a clear understanding of the situation.

As the minister is aware, section 191.1 of the *Hamlets Act* states that:

“The Minister may, by order, place the affairs of the municipal corporation under supervision, and appoint a supervisor of the affairs of the municipal corporation, if the Minister has reason to believe that a municipal corporation is in financial or operational difficulty; the council has failed to perform a duty required of it by this Act or any other Act; or it is in the best interests of the municipal corporation that its affairs be supervised.”

Can the minister clearly explain what factors required him to place the affairs of the hamlet under supervision?

(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. Mr. Speaker, my department is committed to ensuring that the operations of municipal services in accordance with the *Hamlets Act* are going through as intended.

Mr. Speaker, again, this was requested through a formal motion of the council on January 16, 2024. They requested a supervisor to be appointed under section 191.1 of the Act. Mr. Speaker, since we are two levels of government, and local government and hamlets manage their own affairs and if there are issues with their day-to-day operations, and if they can't maintain certain functions that their residents need, they can request that hands-on support from the department. This is what has happened here and we had to execute a supervision order and appoint someone to come in and support the hamlet through this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for clearly explaining that. I have seen the motion that was referenced. I have received a copy of it. I just wanted to make sure that everybody in Clyde River and we all understand it the same way. When people start talking about it in different ways, then misinformation spreads.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, municipal elections were held a few months ago. (interpretation) Can the minister confirm that the current mayor and members of council will remain in

office during the period of supervision?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the member's question, yes, the mayor and council will stay as such while the appointed supervisor is there to help them run the organization properly. The supervisor is there just to help the community and that's because the council requested a supervisor be appointed under a motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that we wouldn't want the municipality at risk and I know that we don't want to be overly concerned.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, he has also signed an order to place the affairs of the Municipality of Kinngait under supervision.

Can the minister clarify which other Nunavut communities are in financial or operational difficulty and may need to be placed under supervision?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two municipalities have been placed under order and they have requested to do so, but at this time, I can't tell you which

other communities have been placed under order. I do know that the hamlet councils or municipalities do diligent work in trying to run their business and we try to provide support to the municipalities. If the Department of Community and Government Services is required to do so, the municipalities can request for help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 766 – 6(2): Grizzly Bear Management

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

My questions today are for the Minister of Environment, and they concern the issue of grizzly bear management in the Kitikmeot.

As the minister will recall, the Kugluktuk Angoniatit (interpretation ends) Hunters and Trappers Organization (interpretation) recently submitted a proposal to the (interpretation ends) Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (interpretation) for five additional grizzly bear sport hunt tags.

The submission was scheduled to be considered at the (interpretation ends) Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (interpretation) meeting of November 29, 2023.

Can the minister confirm what decision has been made by the (interpretation ends) Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (interpretation) in response to the

HTO's request? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, member, for that question. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the member's question around the grizzly bears within the western part of Nunavut, the Department of Environment has done a study in regard to the vicinity around Kugluktuk and we can expect to have a report by the spring of 2023.

For the member's questions around the co-management partners, I do not have that level of detail in front of me and I'll commit to getting back to the member as soon as I can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank the minister for his response. For the record, can the minister indicate if his department supported the HTO's request? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the co-management partner with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's submission, the Department of Environment will provide whether they support or not support the information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, his department's business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal year is to "finalize the survey of the Kitikmeot region grizzly bear [population] to estimate distribution and density." Can the minister describe how his department will be working with the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization on this initiative? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Mr. Qavvik.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, my department initiated the grizzly bear density study in September 2021 and that we are to resample the 2008-09 survey area in the vicinity of Kugluktuk. The final report encompassing all three years of study from 2021, '22, and '23 is anticipated for spring 2025 and will be shared with co-management partners.

Despite the absence of statistical significance, local knowledge supports that the grizzly bear population increased in the area and is consistent with field observations by hunters and biologists.

The Department of Environment will work with the Kugluktuk Angoniatit Hunters and Trappers Organization to conduct the report and work with the community to identify the sport hunting that is impacting the western communities of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 767 – 6(2): Rankin Inlet
Long-term Care Facility**

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions today to the Minister responsible for Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, on this previous Tuesday in a response regarding the elders' facility that's being constructed in Rankin Inlet, the minister stated that "the current status of that project sits at 90 percent..." Mr. Speaker, that's the same level of completion that was announced last October. I would like to get the minister to describe what work has been done to date since then. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have to take that question as notice because I don't have the details. Thank you.

Speaker: Question taken as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

**Question 768 – 6(2): Iqaluit Housing
Initiatives**

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to extend my gratitude to those city workers and others that have been working so hard to keep us safe and clear our streets...

>> *Applause*

...as well as to the public servants, technical team and others who scrambled in to come and join us and

make sure that our sitting happens today. Apparently, the city has reopened as of three o'clock.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As the minister will recall, the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a request for proposals in November 2023 for the design and construction of a residential multiplex in Iqaluit. Earlier this month, the Nunavut Housing Corporation cancelled the request for proposals "due to budgetary constraints."

Can the minister clarify if the Nunavut Housing Corporation will reissue the request for proposals or will it enter into a negotiation process with NCC Development under the Nunavut 3000 Plan to move the project forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that happened; that we couldn't carry through with the high cost of the tendering process. Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to get into another negotiation with another company immediately after a high bid. Mr. Speaker, we're looking at what options we do have on that matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to hearing more about that once the decisions have been made.

The Nunavut 3000 Plan indicates that Iqaluit has been identified to receive a total of 610 new units over the life of the plan. These include 320 new public housing units, 170 new affordable housing units, and 120 new market housing units.

As the minister will recall, I recently asked questions to the Minister of Community and Government Services concerning his department's work to review the territorial *Planning Act*. At that time, I noted that Iqaluit City Council has been considering a "Private Sector Land Development Proposal Strategy" that may ultimately result in the construction of 40 to 60 new single-family homes in the community. These discussions have also considered the extent to which the project will focus on Inuit-purposed housing.

Can the minister clarify if these units are considered part of the Nunavut 3000 allocation for Iqaluit and, if they are, can he clarify if they are considered to be "affordable housing units" or "market housing units"? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Nunavut 3000 project, it includes all housing that is being built by the Government of Nunavut or the private sector. In working with the private sector, that number of Nunavut 3000 includes every house that will be built within Nunavut, regardless of who builds it.

In terms of whether some of those units will become private market or affordable

housing, it's yet to be seen, but we are encouraged to see that there is a market out there or companies out there that are looking at increasing the number of houses that are available in Iqaluit and elsewhere. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was happy to hear the minister confirm that work is underway to appoint a new board of directors for the Iqaluit Housing Authority.

In order for Nunavut 3000 to succeed, we need trust and partnership between all stakeholders, including the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Iqaluit Housing Authority, and the city council.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is well aware that I firmly believe that representation matters when it comes to boards such as this. Can he assure me that the new board will be reflective of Iqaluit's population and can he assure me that one of the criteria that will be used in appointing board members is their actual lived experience in the public housing system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate that question, Mr. Speaker. It is very important that all communities have housing boards and directors that are representative of the community. Mr. Speaker, there is a committee that is taking a look currently at potential candidates and/or final appointments of

these individuals. I'm very hopeful that it will be reflective of the community as a whole, which also includes people who are in the housing system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Everyone asked questions and we still have time left over. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 769 – 6(2): Therapeutic Justice Program

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me again. For my next round of questions, I'll give the Minister responsible for Mines a break and ask the Minister of Justice a question now.

Mr. Speaker, the minister did a minister's statement last week on the Therapeutic Justice Program. He mentioned that they use *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* knowledge, principles, and values. "At the end of 2023, the program had received 45 clients...the most since its creation in 2019."

I will quote one last thing here. "The Therapeutic Justice Program is a successful example of how the justice system in Nunavut can evolve and grow to better represent Inuit culture and values through community-centred and supported healing. It is our hope that the continued success of this and similar community-based justice programs will make a lasting positive impact on the lives of all Nunavummiut."

Mr. Speaker, since this is such a successful program, I'm wondering: are there plans in place to expand to other

communities besides the two? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for asking on this wonderful program and that's something that I continue to pursue is to find more funding, whether it's through the federal government or through Nunavut Tunngavik or internally too, and I am looking at all those options in terms of trying to expand it to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. It's to my understanding that this has been a successful program for a few years now. I'm kind of surprised that there aren't any further plans or better planning up to date now to get to the next community. I'm wondering: when will we see some more traction to expand to other communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a specific plan in terms of when the expansion will be. I know that this is part of our business plan and once the Department of Justice is at the witness table, I'll be happy to provide more details on this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm wondering if the minister has an idea of which communities he would like to expand to next. I believe Baker Lake would be a very good spot to go to next. I'm wondering what the minister has in mind. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a plan in terms of which community. The Community Justice Division, who oversees this, does a very wonderful job in terms of getting all the information and seeing where the needs are, which communities need it the most, and I will trust their knowledge in terms of where they should go. This is one that instead of going through the court system, they have this option. I just wish we can do that to every community, but right now, I don't. It's one that if there is the next community that it's going to be going to, I'll rely on my staff that knows which communities will need this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 770 – 6(2): Public Safety in Pond Inlet

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me again. I also have questions for the (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice (interpretation) today.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions will be concerning the importance of issues of public safety in Pond Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I recently had the opportunity to table his reply to my letter of July 27, 2023, which identified an increase of alcohol-related incidents and the need for additional Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer positions in Pond Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, the minister's reply to my correspondence indicated that his department acknowledges the rise in alcohol-related incidents and has approved funding for an additional Royal Canadian Mounted Police position in Pond Inlet. Mr. Speaker, this is positive news and I applaud the minister and his department for actions on my concerns.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the additional Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer position will be filled at the beginning of the upcoming 2024-25 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The plan is to fill the position for this fiscal year, 2024-25. The RCMP's recruitment and the determination of work such as staff housing and that will need to be taken into factor in terms of when the timing will be, but I want to ensure that for those new members, we would like to have them as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The availability of

housing is quite crucial, but before I proceed further, I would like to welcome our Mayor, Joshua Arreak, whom I will recognize at the appropriate time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, his department recently provided community reports produced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to myself and a number of my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the monthly reports contained statistics and provided updates and insight on the work of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the department and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for their ongoing efforts to track incidents and keep us informed about their work in our communities.

Can the minister confirm that his department will continue to provide these important reports on a monthly basis to all Members of the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, our department is planning to continue to provide the monthly updates. They do this to the hamlets and councils and when they do provide those, my plan is to provide it to all Members of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members, be aware that the time allotted for question period is now over. Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): I seek unanimous consent to return to (interpretation ends) Item 5. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is asking to return to Item 5 in the *Orders of the Day*. Are there any nays? There are none. Please proceed, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome our Mayor, Joshua Arreak, to the House. He is on a trip here and has come to observe the proceedings. Welcome. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your House, Mr. Arreak.

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. Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 246 – 6(2): 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the 2022-23 Annual Report of the *Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

October 2023 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Tabled Document 247 – 6(2): 2021-2022 Annual Report – Natural Resources Conservation Trust Fund

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Daniel Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the 2021-22 Annual Report of the Natural Resources Conservation Trust Fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Tabled Document 250 – 6(2): Sport and Recreation Division 2021-2022 Impact Report

Speaker: Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the Sport and Recreation Division 2021-22 Impact Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 248 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Response/2023 Report of the Auditor General of Canada: COVID-19 Vaccines in Nunavut

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

Tabled Document 249 – 6(2): FPT Ministers of Health Meetings – October 2023 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Tabled Document 251 – 6(2): Mine Training Strategy

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table two documents today:

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): I am pleased to table the Mine Training Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

- First, the Government of Nunavut's Response to the Standing Committee Report on the Review of the 2023 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut on COVID-19 Vaccines in Nunavut; and
- Secondly, information from the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Health meetings held in

Speaker: Item 15. Notices of Motions. I recognize the Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Item 15: Notices of Motions

Motion 030 – 6(2): Appointment to the Executive Council of Nunavut – Notice

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I give notice that on Monday, March 4, 2024, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Aggu, that the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of Nunavut that Karen Nutarak, Member for Tununiq, be appointed to the Executive Council of Nunavut.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Item 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17. Motions. Item 18. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 37, 38, 39, and 40 with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 29 – 6(2), the committee will remain in session until it reports itself out.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>> *House recessed at 15:29 and Committee resumed at 15:55*

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, followed by the Department of Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree that we proceed 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 with you? Minister Main.

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

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

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Just for the record, minister, if you could please introduce your officials.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We have Deputy Minister Megan Hunt on my right, your left, and Greg

Babstock, Executive Director of Corporate Services, my left, your right. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Main. As of yesterday, we left off still with the Department of Health, page H-6. Health Care Service Delivery. Amount being appropriated, \$422,055,000. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to comment on the physicians and nurses in Kugluktuk. As we know, we would like our elders to have good health care. Sometimes when they have an illness, it's hard for them to be seen by a physician because the physician is not always in the community. He or she goes in and out of the community.

What I would like to see, perhaps, is if the physician is staying in the community for work, then when it's time for the physician to go and have the replacement come in prior to the current physician leaving the community. With respect to health care in Kugluktuk, when we have no physicians or doctors, it's very hard for the community, especially when the elders are very sick and ill and they have to be flown out of the community because it's very exhausting for the elders when they need to be sent out due to their health.

As we all know, elders are very fatigued and they are easy to tire. I would like to ask the minister if each community would have a position on a rotational basis or perhaps if there is a physician that is always in the community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also thank you for bringing this up. For physicians and doctor visits to the communities and how long they should be in the communities, it just follows the population numbers in the community. That's how it is set up. Some communities mostly have doctors in the community due to the size of the community and some communities just get visiting doctors. If the Department of Health has a doctor on staff, as doctors do whatever they want, and if the doctor expresses a desire to move to Kugluktuk and stay there because of not wanting to travel around anymore and wishes to live in this community, we would support that. It would have to be up to the doctor to say that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the nurses in the community, recently about two or three weeks ago, I heard that a nurse from the south wanted to come to the community of Kugluktuk to work in the medical field. How does that work out? If a health care worker wants to move into a community from the south, what's the procedure for that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for sharing that information with me regarding that interest. It's good news anytime we have a qualified or licenced professional interested in coming to Nunavut and

living and working in one of our beautiful communities.

We do have measures that we brought in to make Nunavut more competitive, to make it a better place to work in terms of the department, but we have also been working internally on our human resource processes. If you will allow, Mr. Chairman, I would like to have my deputy provide some information about what we have been doing there. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you and thank you to the member for the question. I'm also pleased to hear that you're hearing of health care professionals like nurses who have an interest in coming to work in the territory and specifically your community.

Part of our processes is that we have a nurse recruitment team, so interested nurses can connect in with our recruitment team. They will then have an opportunity to go through a screening process. We also want to make sure that they have knowledge and understanding of the territory and the potential communities that they have an interest in.

We have started doing some recruitment fairs, some of them virtual, some of them in different provinces and territories. We have a number of open competitions for any positions that a nurse may be interested in posted also on our website. They can also go to our Nunavut Nurses website that has all of our positions posted as well.

If you hear of someone that's interested, happy to have that information passed along to our HR department so that they can follow up and make sure that we are doing that in a timely way. Any time we hear of a nurse who may have interest, we have a number of different avenues or mechanism to make sure that we can engage with them quickly. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's also the case for a physician. For example, before I became an MLA myself a few years back, I had a doctor that I was seeing for my health and I had asked for the doctor's phone number once he was leaving the community.

When the time came after the doctor had left, I phoned him up and asked him why he was not coming back to the community to work. His answer was that he was not referred or didn't get a response from the medical team in the community he asked to come back.

What is the procedure for a physician to come back into a community to work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman I would like my deputy minister to respond to that, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you and thank you for your question. Part of our process for physicians in the territory goes through our medical affairs department.

Physicians who are licensed in territory, who would like to work or continue working in the territory, our medical affairs department will work with them to renew their contract.

I don't know the specifics about your experience. I'm sorry I can't offer a specific answer to why that particular physician's contract may not have been renewed. There may be many scenarios. Sometimes physicians choose not to renew their contracts. There may be other issues, but we definitely work very diligently to offer different arrangements so that we can not only keep the valued physicians that we have here in the territory but also recruit other physicians into the territory to support communities. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for that. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had to keep in mind to continue to speak with the doctor, but I have not heard back from him for a couple of years, probably three years.

As well, I wanted to make a comment. When the patient goes to the health centre, they have no one to interpret for them, especially for medical terms. This was mentioned the other day and they are called clerk interpreters. We have no one in Kugluktuk to fill that position. Perhaps other small communities are in that situation as well, but I'm not sure.

However, it's very important for elders in Kugluktuk to have a qualified interpreter who knows medical terminology. As we all know, medications are very strong in some

cases and when the elders are not sure about the medication, they become worried because they're not sure how to go about it.

What I would like to ask is: when the nurses are working with the patient, do they require an interpreter in the health centre? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, and anytime there is a language barrier, there would need to be steps taken to make sure that that is overcome. If you have a nurse who cannot speak Inuinnaqtun and then you have a client who is an Inuinnaqtun speaker, you would need a bridge between them. That could be the clerk interpreter and in our exchange in the House recently, I mentioned that although they do only work from 8:30 to 5 from Monday to Friday, the health centre does have the ability to call them in to interpret during emergencies.

In addition, we have a phone-based interpreting service that's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and that's called CanTalk. It's over the phone and it's a bit more awkward as opposed to being in face-to-face communication, but our experience is that the CanTalk service does work well with scheduled appointments and it can also be a support during emergency visits.

We want to make sure that we are meeting the language needs of Nunavummiut and in Kugluktuk's case with regard to the clerk interpreter position, we have had some difficulty

filling that position due to the language requirements around the job and the fact that many applicants, I believe, did not meet the language requirements.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once I return to my constituents, I would want to speak to the nurse-in-charge to discuss this matter as to whether they do have a qualified interpreter because the patients, especially the elders, have a hard time understanding when they don't speak the English language and there's a language barrier, as we know.

Also, once the health centre is closed from 9 to 5, in the evenings or the weekends, the patients also have an emergency sometimes during the night and might need to be seen by a physician or a nurse. When they try to call the on-call nurse to be seen at the health centre, we had a case where a patient had fallen on the floor and couldn't get up and had called the on-call nurse and the nurse that was on call said, "I can't go and pick you up." She had said that they need to speak to the on-call housing staff. That's how the process went where the patient had to call the on-call housing staff.

Just recently, prior to coming to the sitting, I was speaking with the mayor and council of our community. What they were trying to propose is to get a position so that there is a 24-hour paramedic on call because we have an ambulance in the community that should be utilized by the patients who need to see the on-call nurse. I can't foresee that

yet because it's still in discussion. That's what I would like to do when I get back to my constituency.

I have another question for the minister. A nurse would like to move to Kugluktuk and work in the community. What is the difference between a practising paramedic and a nurse as health centre staff? If the nurse wanted to become a paramedic, would they have to be trained as a paramedic outside of the community? That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the issue around ground transportation that the member mentioned, there are a number of communities that have the stretcher service. There are only a few, I believe, that have an actual paramedic along the lines of an ambulance service. It is mostly transport to and from the health centre, either from the health centre to a medevac plane or during emergencies. That's something that, from the department's position, we are interested to support, whether it's the hamlet or a private business that wants to offer that.

In terms of the questions around a nurse and a paramedic, it would be possible for a nurse to be certified as a paramedic as well through additional schooling. The basic distinction between a nurse and a paramedic is that a paramedic is specialized in stabilizing people for transport and specialized in emergency treatments, and depending on where they are specialized, a nurse can have a much larger scope in terms of the things that they can do like prescribing medication,

for example. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next name I have on my list: Mr. Simailak. Sorry, your time has run out, Mr. Anavilok. My apologies. Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

Looking at this budget, let's all look at the medical transportation here. It is budgeted at \$31,977,000. There's somewhat of an increase in other items. What constitutes to this same budget from this fiscal year to the fiscal year of 2026-27 and then it remains the same? Could the minister elaborate on why this budget of medical transportation remains the same? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe Mr. Babstock would be the best one to respond to this question, if it's okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for the question. Every year, we go through a process to try to identify those items that need to be adjusted and we prepare business cases to see those budget line items adjusted appropriately.

While we're in discussions with Indigenous Services Canada around our Non-Insured Health Benefits, we absolutely have every intention of seeing the 100 percent coverage of NIHB-

eligible air transportation coverage, which in essence means that we don't need to increase that budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you. Indigenous Services Canada then, is that the reason why that arrangement is as Mr. Babstock stated, that Indigenous Services Canada is providing that service? Is that one of the reasons how I understand travel here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Maybe Mr. Babstock can clarify his response. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Babstock.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the coverage for NIHB-eligible air expenses is the responsibility of the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, medical travel to south has to be serviced properly. I want to use this example. An elder was travelling to the south and while in the south, the elder didn't have an appointment at all. The elder spent time at the boarding home and only until he had called that he was there properly and was suddenly sent home and told that he will be back after three months. This is

one of those things that I wanted to mention that is here.

Medical travel, as I mentioned, has an impact for our clients. As the minister mentioned earlier, positions will be placed down in Ottawa for travel and so forth. For this reason, can you create full-time positions that focus on appointments? Perhaps that would reduce the costs you incur. Can you look at creating a position solely dedicated to appointments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) With regard to the scenario where there was a traveller who evidently didn't need to travel, that's not something that we see frequently, but there are coordination issues that do come up periodically, and it's regrettable that that elder in that case had to travel for no good reason. We are streamlining things with the use of the Nomadis software now in terms of booking and coordination. There's a lot better communication in terms of traveller names, dates, etcetera.

I think the question was around case management, if I understand it correctly. We do have a case management function set up, but there is always room for improvement and that's part of the Medical Travel Policy review that we have committed to in terms of looking at how we can improve and what we need to improve. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernek.

Mr. Kaernek: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) As I mentioned, when you have an appointment set in a southern institute, I didn't mention the administration. You mentioned that you will have personnel at Larga towards this. Have you looked at other means of how to care for the patients?

In Ottawa too, they have different regulations compared to Nunavut. Perhaps you can create interpreter positions. You mentioned Ottawa...bear with me. At Ottawa Health Services, will there be Inuit in these positions? Looking at the total number of Inuit positions in the professional category on page 157, it mentions that you have 22 professional positions. Can you look into this for the reason that there are Inuit who are coming from Nunavut who travel down? How have you looked into this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of the social worker position, that's the first one that we have established and it's exciting. We are looking to expand that to other boarding homes.

The language side, which I believe is the question, so there are a few things at Larga Baffin in Ottawa. The contractor themselves employ bilingual staff who are on duty from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Through Ottawa Health Services Network Inc., there is an interpreter available on site to assist clients with medical interpretive services, Monday to Friday, 9 to 5.

We're always looking for ways to better serve Nunavummiut, including where we need to add more language supports. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was good news, as I always think you need good service with patients at Larga. Now, then for the other boarding homes in Yellowknife, Edmonton, and Winnipeg, you mentioned that you intend to establish them. Is there a schedule or a timeline for that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have a timeline as to when we would be establishing more boarding homes, but the staff we have here have different roles and responsibilities and sometimes one individual has many responsibilities. I can't say exactly when that will be at this time, but sooner would be better than later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Thank you. Yes, if it's much sooner, it would be great.

Now, on page 152 of your objectives, the last paragraph states that you want (interpretation ends) "To expand opportunities, training, and formal recognition for Inuit to provide culturally- and logistically-relevant programs and services." (interpretation)

Can you explain that to me? Is it referring to services here in Nunavut or in the south? Can you explain where these programs and services will be delivered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) If I'm following correctly, your question is about Inuit employment initiatives. Yes, thank you. There are a number of different programs that we support as part of our Inuit employment plan.

We have the basic radiology technician program, which is a large undertaking. We have 47 students active in that right now and 32 have already completed. That program trains Inuit health employees on X-rays and it has been a success.

We also support more Inuit getting into mental health work through our paraprofessional program.

We also offer medical interpreting modules from our partners at Nunavut Arctic College to our staff. Nunavut Arctic College allows health staff to enrol into modules through that course. We really appreciate that.

We also have the educational upgrade program where you take part in the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program, Amaaqtaarniq Education Program, as well as the Career Broadening Program.

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

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, looking at the language legislation, I understand we try to abide by the legislation. The minister mentioned mental health. The mental health and addictions report is provided through Inuusivut. As you have also stated, minister, you have looked into mental health.

Now that you have looked at the mental health program for Inuit, what if the elder had no certification, but if an elder is really good at dealing with mental health or counselling people, could you look at the ability of the elder to be able to help with people with mental health issues? Would you be willing to start working on that? For example, you can initiate this in Igloolik and Sanirajak so that the elders can work when there are hardly any employment opportunities. Do you have any plans such as that or can you elaborate further on your plans on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

We seem to be experiencing some technical difficulties, so just give me a second.

Thank you. Minister Main, please.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although we are in support of elders being included in mental health work, (interpretation ends) I think one of the great things about the new *Mental Health Act* is the ability to involve more family members when it comes to mental health care, as well as allow for more treatment or care to be provided at the community level, specifically through community-assisted treatment orders.

We're really excited about that piece of legislation coming into force. Once it's into force, there will be, as I understand it, the ability to include elders or people who are known to have ability to assist with personal issues in community-assisted treatment orders. That's something that's coming closer with every passing day.

We're also looking at how, with regard to our Healing by Talking program, which is seeing more and more uptake each year. How can we include elders as part of that? It would be a separate stream, like a non-clinical or an Inuit-specific stream for counselling, but the member raises some really good suggestions, but at the same time, on the department's shoulders, we have to make sure that whoever is providing care or whoever is interacting with a client that they have the ability, that the care they provide is going to be safe.

There are potential benefits, but then there are potential barriers that we need to work through in terms of who can provide this service and who says which elder is qualified to provide the service. Those are kind of the big questions we would have to answer. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In looking at this, I know that the elders are very good counsellors. The mental health officer reports to Inuusivut and I believe it's under your department. That's why I alluded to it. The Inuit way of traditional counselling is different and unique from anywhere else. I just wanted to make a comment on that.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I'm just providing you some issues that the department can consider and when the mental health legislation was passed in Nunavut, we were so happy to see more Inuit in the mental health field so that they can provide more services to the Inuit who require help and how we can provide more services to them. For Inuit employment of the government, your objective is around 85 percent. We can get closer to it by going this route and it would be ideal to review the Inuit Employment Plan.

I'm just providing some issues for the department to consider and I will conclude with that. Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Regarding the role of elders and positions for elders, if you will allow my deputy to add a bit more information. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Go ahead, please, Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for the question. I'm really glad to hear that we're talking about this here. One of the areas that we put funding aside for this year is specifically to work to develop the role and functions of elders as part of the team-based care model. That is something that we're really excited about this year and then our ability to look at how we implement and roll that out, but also how we continue to support our Inuit organizations at the community level.

Of course, with our healing centre that is being built and will be operational in the next couple of years, ensuring that that important role of elders and knowledge keepers is foundational and interwoven into the fabric of those operating models. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation) Mr. Kaerner, are you done? (interpretation ends) Next name I have on my list: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one topic that I would like to bring up for discussion. I would like to refer to a news article from March 2023, which followed the RCMP warning the public about black crack cocaine being distributed in Iqaluit, causing seizures and other significant health concerns. However, as far as I can recall, no information was made public about how many people were admitted to the QGH due to seizures or overdoses.

During last summer's crime season, also known as summer, the city had a constant sound of sirens and not just RCMP and firetrucks, but emergency responders and ambulances were quite busy. The ambulance and first responders' job was complicated further due to the number of calls related to drug overdoses. If I recall correctly, they have received as many as four overdose calls in one day, causing them to prioritize who to pick up and when. Ever since last summer's heightened crime stats, there was a lot of discussion around the community about the rate of hard drugs in our community, not just at night but in broad daylight. There has never been any real information being provided to the public.

I guess the first question I would like to ask: does the QGH, Qikiqtani General Hospital, monitor patients who come in with drug-related complications or overdoses? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm assuming the member is asking about monitoring statistics of the overdose or drug-induced issues. My deputy would be able to add more information on this. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone. My apologies. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the member for the question. We do track all reasons for why an individual or a patient would be seeking health care, so that is information that we do have.

I would also say that at times, information can look different depending on what the presentation of an individual in a clinical setting is. If it's confirmed related to a toxic drug supply or other substance, then we would have information related to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ms. Hunt, for elaborating. I'll return to that topic.

What we found out last summer when the RCMP also released information about drug-related charges being laid due to drug busts, we also found out that these hard, illicit drugs aren't just an

Iqaluit problem but it's also spilling over into the communities as well. I'm glad that the hospital does have the ability to track all of the health-related matters that come through the hospital.

The next question I would like to ask: do community health centres also have that same ability and have they specifically been tracking and monitoring patients who come in with drug-related health problems? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There's data collection that happens for any patient. I think the question is, for the department, it's a question of how do we manage that data and how do we use that data. It's specifically through the Health Information Unit where we have been adding more and more capacity so that we can collect our data better, Nunavummiut's data. It doesn't belong to us. In many cases, it belongs to the individual. How can we use it in terms of things like informing business cases, informing requests for new staff positions, informing our work with boarding homes and scheduled airline service? There's a lot of room for growth in terms of how we use data.

The member asked a really good question on the hard drugs piece. It is tracked, but off the top of my head, if you ask me for a percentage or rate, I don't have that here. We can commit to going back following this and look at what the trend is specifically here in Iqaluit as well as other communities because we have seen overdoses in other communities unfortunately and seeing what can be shared following this.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's response and the commitment to provide this information to the committee once it's available. I don't have any further questions; I just wanted to thank the minister for that comment. I'll pick up on this topic once that information is provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. If I could just supplement one of your earlier questions, I thought you would get on to it, but when there are a series of events, whether it be the Qikiqtani General Hospital here or in a community where hard drugs are suspected, what type of communication occurs with the Department of Justice? Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think that would be best answered by my deputy. She has a much better understanding of how information flows within the department as well as to our community-based partners. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. Thank you for the question. Often it may come through Health to Justice; sometimes it comes through Justice to Health or through our multi-agency or departmental table. If there are concerns or information about risks to health that are in relation to a higher proportion or a concern around the types of drugs in a community, it

will be something that comes usually through that multi-departmental table or through Justice to Health. Often it will go directly to the hospital or be communicated so that our operations team can be communicating with our health centres. Otherwise, it will go from our health centres through our communication channels if we're seeing these kinds of events or concerns.

For example, if we have a number of individuals who may come through the emergency department to be treated for a toxic event because of drugs, we will often be able to have those conversations at those multi-departmental tables so that there is a level of communication, but also it gives us the ability to be thinking about prevention initiatives that can be done and communication that can be done around health promotion to be able to support increased education and also safety to community members. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for that, Ms. Hunt. Just to follow up, are you aware of any circumstances where that type of communication has occurred, or is it just the policy or the structure of it is there but it hasn't actually been utilized? Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: That structure, as you say, is in place. The specifics around what communication has happened are usually at the ADM or operations level, and I would be happy to look into that further to provide specifics around communications that have occurred. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Hunt. The next name I have on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I plan to focus on medical travel, oral health, elder care, and then midwifery, if I have time.

However, I would like to continue this line of questioning. I think now is a good time to remind the public that Naloxone or NARCAN is available over the counter through pharmacies all across the country. I believe people can get it without a prescription. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Correct, it is available without a prescription. We have it available at our community health centres and it is also available through pharmacies if you have one in your community. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the public's knowledge, does an individual who wants to access Naloxone have to give any explanation about why they want Naloxone? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take a moment then to say to the public that if you know people

around you are doing drugs or if you are doing opioids, I encourage you wholeheartedly to avail yourself of the opportunity to pick up a Naloxone kit. I do believe that it's covered by Non-Insured Health Benefits as well. The minister is nodding, so please, by all means, arm yourself with Naloxone for yourself and for the people around you.

I would like to move back to the questions about surveillance related to potential drug overdoses and overdoses and just a follow-up question about whether or not when a presents to a health centre or to the Qikiqtani General Hospital with an apparent or active drug overdose. Are they referred to mental health or anybody else following that visit? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that referrals could be made to mental health, but it would have to involve a desire from the individual to avail themselves of the service. A referral could be made, but in terms of setting up an appointment or going to the walk-in clinic here that we have in Iqaluit, for example, it would be ultimately up to the individual in terms of whether they choose to do follow-up and take the referral. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Qikiqtani General Hospital offer any sort of treatment program for somebody to detox from opioids? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm going to let my deputy add to this. We can support individuals who are going through withdrawal on a time-limited or with specific cases. She knows more of the details. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. Thank you for the question. Definitely, there are ways that health care professionals can offer different treatment options to patients. There would be a discussion that the health care provider would have with the patient so that they could make the appropriate and safest decision around the types of medications or other treatments that would be offered to support them as part of their detox process. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is methamphetamine in the same class of drugs as the opioids that we're talking about? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm not sure if I understand the question. I mean, there are all kinds of different substances that people could have ingested or used. The treatment for the reaction depends on the clinician's assessment, what substance is involved, and there are clinical directives or clinical authorities that issue guidance

on these. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to know whether or not all classes of drugs are captured within the surveillance that occurs when somebody presents having overdosed or come close to overdosing. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My deputy minister would like to respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. *Qujannamiik* to the member for the question. I think I understand what you're asking. Would all types of substances be something that are tracked? I don't think it's a yes or no because you may not know what kind of substance is being used, so it may not be tracked in that way.

What I can say is that as we are continuing to build out the functionality in MEDITECH, it gives us an ability as we capture and gather more information to be able to consider those kinds of things, but you're not always aware as a health care provider what substance may have been used, so that might not be exactly what's tracked or identified within the personal health record. It may be something more general or more specific. Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Knowing that illicit drug use has been on the rise for a number of years now and it's becoming very apparent in many communities, what we know is that there is a risk of people who are pregnant ingesting those illicit drugs. Anybody in my generation might remember the epidemic of what was called "crack babies" in the '80s and I'm sure there is better terminology that's escaping me now. However, I think it is really important for us to be reassured that any instances of infants being born addicted to these illicit drugs are being not only treated but also tracked by surveillance as well as by a health care plan specifically for those infants. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of those supports for the expecting mother, it is something that can be offered. It's not a huge volume that we see of this, but we see more issues around alcohol use in pregnancy, which is also very concerning in terms of how do we support the expectant mother and how do we deal with any resulting issues in the infant following birth. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure that I heard a response to whether or not the incidents are being tracked. The minister did state that there's more of a prevalence of alcohol use. However, I think it is very important to be assured that these instances are being tracked as it may

become an emerging issue and certainly has long-term impacts and impacts on other data points, such as sudden infant death syndrome. If I could get reassurance, it would be great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) These types of instances are tracked and where required, they are also reported. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll move back to medical travel, the discussion earlier. Just to begin, are we all caught up in terms of the backlog that was created due to COVID? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No, there's still an element of backlog that we are working through. In some areas, it's more apparent than others, but we're still bouncing back or seeing increased volume in some areas. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. To the department's knowledge, is this backlog contributing to mortality at the moment? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I am not able to answer that question right now in terms of statistical analysis or significant trends that have been noted in terms of mortality. If there is any information that is produced or definitive trends that are noted, I can commit to sharing those back with the committees as part of our follow-up exercise from this meeting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Main, can you just let us know whether or not these wait times are in-territory health care or if they're for out-of-territory and whether or not one cohort is a larger concern than the other? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's a combination; some of them are in-territory and some are out-of-territory. Things like major surgeries, orthopedic surgery, those are areas of long waitlists in some parts of the country, and we're dependent on working with our partners in Ontario, Manitoba, or Alberta in terms of those major surgical procedures. There's also an element of backlog here in the territory in terms of things like dental care. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the minister could tell us what the agreements are in place to

ensure that Nunavummiut are set as priorities, especially in other jurisdictions. I know that some jurisdictions have excruciatingly long wait times. However, Nunavummiut are actually accessing some really important services ahead of those provincial wait times because of agreements. If you could just talk about that, I would appreciate that.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The member makes a good point where we do have in some cases the ability to access services quicker than we would if we were put on the wait list. With residents of a jurisdiction, it depends on the procedure, though, or the specific need as to whether Nunavummiut can get priority access.

The relationship that we have with our receiving jurisdictions in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and also the Northwest Territories is an important one. It's one that as health minister, I take it seriously. In terms of Minister Jones in Ontario, in terms of Minister LaGrange in Alberta, as well as the others, when we have federal-provincial-territorial meetings, I take the time to express my thanks to them for continuing to receive and provide high-quality care to Nunavummiut and that relationship can be very important when we run into issues. If Nunavummiut are running into issues in let's say, for example, Manitoba, then I need to be able to bring those to the ministers' attention and work through them. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does every jurisdiction actually honour those agreements that are in place or does the department run into problems? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main: Our experience has been that those agreements are honoured quite consistently. We haven't had to take additional steps in very many cases. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has any jurisdiction actually refused to or stopped taking our clients for any period of time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We had one occurrence where it was around capacity within the province of Manitoba where some pediatric clients were being sent off to other health care facilities, and it was one that was tied to the existing capacity within Winnipeg. It wasn't a refusal to receive our patients, but it was an inability to accommodate them within the city of Winnipeg, which created issues for us and for our clients in terms of support services being available in terms of where they were sent. That's one occurrence that comes to mind. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel like I'm far enough away from my work at travel programs to focus a little bit on medical travel.

The issue of clients receiving very short notice for medical travel comes up really often. I just want to give the opportunity for the public's knowledge about why something like that might happen. I know that some of the examples might be that an appointment suddenly opens up down south where there's a long waiting list, and if a client has agreed to pack up and go if an appointment opens up, then that's great. However, sometimes that doesn't get communicated to them in advance of that. If the minister could talk a little bit about that, I think it would alleviate a lot of concerns and questions that people have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for raising that. There can be any number of contributing factors to late bookings or late provision of a travel itinerary to a client. The member mentioned an example where a spot on a waitlist opens up. That could be a scenario. Another scenario could be that test results come in that are concerning and require immediate follow-up. That could see a client sent for additional care or additional tests on very short notice. There are a number of different scenarios that can be at play.

We do recognize the stress that it puts on the traveller as well as the staff in terms of the last-minute bookings. Where they

can be avoided and where we can provide more advance notice, that's something that we want to establish through our new policy in terms of benchmarking, setting clear expectations as to how many days in advance travellers can expect their itineraries. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have very little time, so I'll move on to elder care. Do all Nunavut elders placed in the south have an up-to-date plan of return, setting out the services that they need in order to return home, even if those services don't currently exist? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) My understanding is that elders currently placed outside of Nunavut have plans of care that are developed but not necessarily plans of return. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, will you commit to implementing development of plans of return for every single elder that's out of the territory now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

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

(interpretation ends) In terms of the plans of return for elders placed outside and committing to develop one for each elder, there are some individuals placed out of Nunavut who don't have a desire to return and who are satisfied with the care that they're receiving. In that case, it would be inappropriate, I think, to impose that on them.

In terms of the work that we're doing to develop more capacity here in the territory, we can anticipate that we will see more elders coming back to Nunavut. The elders or their guardians have the right to ask for those types of plans to be put in place, so that's something that we offer through our dedicated staff in the long-term care shop. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just move on to a question about supporting elders in place. Is there a system in place to support families who provide elder care similar to the foster care system for children? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My apologies; I didn't catch the question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster, can you repeat your question, please.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a system in place to support families who provide elder care

similar to the foster care system for children? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Currently, no, we don't have kind of network of programs and services that would support that.

In terms of the work on the seniors strategy that's being led by Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and the desire from many families and elders to age in place, to stay in their home community for longer periods of time, that's precisely where I think services and supports need to go.

The long-term care function is amazing and it's beneficial. It's also incredibly expensive. It's all money well spent, it's very important, but the high cost of long-term care on a per bed basis means that it could very well make financial as well as common sense in terms of looking at how we can support family caregivers. Is it a daily stipend or is it a weekly stipend that we could provide to them? It's something that we have heard directly from family members who tell our staff, "I can't care for my family member because I have to work. I have to feed myself."

Recognizing the value of the care that they're providing as well as potential net savings to the government and the ability for elders to stay in their home communities longer, it's a strong potential business case. I'm looking at Mr. Business Case here, but there is a strong potential business case for those types of supports. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since it is tax season, I'll just mention that there is a Canadian caregiver amount that's available to caregivers of seniors who make around \$20,000 or less. I think it was about \$21,000 last year and it changes every year. If people do their income taxes, it hinges on the senior or elder doing their taxes as well as the caregiver. I can't say enough how important it would be to be able to support people who are caring for elders so that they can age in place at home safely and with enhanced support.

My last question that I'm allowed because my time is up: what training is being offered to elder caregivers to enhance community ability to care for persons with chronic medical needs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The new Personal Support Worker Program that's being rolled out through our partners at Nunavut Arctic College is the primary training avenue for personal support workers that would be employed at a long-term care home or our elders' homes. In terms of expanding that and opening it up to family members, it's a possibility.

We are in, I want to say, catch-up mode in terms of we had many training sessions or courses that got delayed or derailed by COVID. In terms of the home care workforce, we are working closely with Nunavut Arctic College to roll that program out and see more and more certifications through it. As we get

rolling on that, opening it up to family members is a possibility. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster, your time has expired, but I have no more names on my list and you have indicated that you have a couple more questions, so I will allow, but I will ask the member and the minister both to get to your point fairly quickly in your question and the responses. Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate that. Just really quickly, it seems to me that what's really important is to have a commitment to the principle of aging in community and I think that that's what the Elder Care Strategy is supposed to be moving towards. The minister just mentioned a number of trainings for potential employees.

However, I just would like to hear more about what has been achieved this year towards advancing that goal that is really outside of the work that has always done or that's kind of the norm, so focusing again on how community members are being supported to support their family members, especially in the knowledge that there are many community members who are caring for elders at home without any respite. That often puts elders at risk for abuse because the people are setting aside their own lives and maybe not having the time to be able to focus on themselves and their own well-being. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

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

The member makes an important point in terms the ability for respite is very important. Burnout is very real, especially if the care duties fall upon a small number of folks. That's where our home care teams in each community can give that respite time.

In terms of the Personal Support Worker Certificate program that I talked about earlier, so we have the first full-time in-person cohort of this new program. It launched in January in Rankin Inlet. However, there is also an online or a hybrid model delivery that's currently happening and we have 22 students in that. Like I mentioned, we want to get rolling on this and deliver it to more people across Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a number of questions around elder care. However, I do also want to focus on oral health and I'll just begin by asking: how many children are on the wait list for dental surgery? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We do have this information. We're just pulling it out of a binder here, if you will bear with me.

In terms of the general anesthetic pediatric wait list, the current wait list sits at 723. We have been making progress in terms of addressing this wait list, it's a concern for us, and we have been working with new providers specifically so we can cut down wait

times and treat more children.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman. What's being done to help
these children manage any dental pain
that they have while they're on the wait
list? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)
That would be handled through their
health care provider. In terms of dealing
with any symptoms, it would be between
the child's guardian seeking care and
obtaining support through their local
health facility. (interpretation) Thank
you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman. Thank you, minister. What
avenue does a parent or other advocate
of a child have if the interventions that
they attempt with the health centre or
other health care providers to provide
that pain relief while the child is waiting,
what steps can an advocate take in order
to access either quicker care or a way to
alleviate a child's pain? Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)
The first stop would be to the health care
provider that is available. If the parent or
guardian is not satisfied with the service
that is being provided, then they have the

opportunity to ability to ask for a second
opinion or ask for a different provider. If
they're concerned, they could also
persist. They could also flag it through
the Office of Patient Relations in terms
of seeing timely treatment.

In 2023, approximately 1,000 children
were treated using general anesthetic
services. We have been able to provide
care to more children through additional
days that we have secured with our
partners and also branching out to new
service providers. (interpretation) Thank
you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman. I'm just looking at the
business plan. Am I correct in thinking
that the Oral Health Program actually
underspent in 2023-24 or is it a request
for more funding? Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends)
In terms of that Vote 4 funding under the
Territorial Health Investment Fund, we
had some staffing vacancies there that
resulted in the underspending. We have
every intention of using the dollars
available to provide the service to
Nunavummiut. We know it's needed.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman. How did these vacancies
impact the preventative services of the
dental services and specialist

appointments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Depending on the community, the impact is very real. We rely on community oral health coordinators to lead educational efforts, awareness efforts, follow initiatives and also support better oral health in their community.

It's an important role, and we make efforts to ensure that those positions are filled and that staff are retained. The program is important. We are also working on the reorganization of our dental programs and management, which is starting to see some benefits. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many communities have a PY or a person-year dedicated to oral health coordinators and how many positions are there and what is the vacancy rate? I suppose you have tell us which communities don't have oral health coordinators or which communities do have oral health coordinators, just so we know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We'll look for it, I'm not sure that we have that level of detail with us here today. There is a position in every

community, oral health. I'm not sure if we have the detailed staffing census. We don't have it here today in terms of our community-by-community staffing status. We have lists of screening and treatment trips, but I understand that's not what the member is looking for. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we know is that prevention is key, what we don't want is for children to have to need dental surgery. However, what we do know is that we've got over 700 children who are currently awaiting dental surgery now. What we know about oral health is that oral health contributes to poor nutrition status and poor sleep and all sorts of determinates of the child's health.

In the absence of being able to tell me how many oral health coordinators there are, perhaps the minister can tell us what is an extra or additional programming or help is available to family members who are caring for children who are on this wait list because of their poor dental health or oral health to ensure that the rest of their health status isn't impacted by that long wait? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just to add to my earlier response, we do actually have the information around the staffing, so I apologize.

As of December 2023, there are 13 community oral health coordinators in

13 communities. I won't list them off in the interest of time. In two communities, community health representatives take on dual roles as community oral health coordinators. Also, as of December 2023, there are 10 vacant positions.

In terms of the question and additional supports around health impacts due to oral health, it's very true that oral health has a big impact on the rest of the body. It is frustrating to see the rates of consumption of pop in Nunavut. It's something that is absolutely, from a health perspective, useless. The department is working and our contractors are working to support good oral health, but there are forces at play that are working in the exact opposite direction in terms of pushing more pop into more households, cheaper and more accessible on a daily basis. It can be frustrating for those in the dental field to see.

I apologize; I'm rambling. The Non-Insured Health Benefits dental service contract has recently seen increased days allocated to it, so that's a positive thing for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it would be really important and very impactful to consider giving the opportunity for those families who are on the wait-list to avail of a healthy food basket from time to time that is filled with food that is easily consumable by a child who has major oral health issues that are contributing to their need to have surgery while they are waiting because what we know is that the healthier a person is before they go

into surgery, the better the outcomes are. With that, I'll stop, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. That was just a comment. I have no more names on my list. We're on Health Care Service Delivery. Page H-6. Amount being appropriated, \$422,055,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to page H-3. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$520,292,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree that we have concluded with the review of the Department of Health?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Some brief closing comments, minister. Go ahead.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks so much to committee members for their scrutiny and questions. It really is an important exercise for the department and I appreciate all the suggestions as well as the questions and areas of focus.

I would like to thank the two staff next to me as well as all the staff who support us as a team. It's an honour to work with such dedicated employees in the Department of Health. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Main. You and your officials can be excused

from the witness table. I'll ask members to remain in their seats. We're going to proceed directly with opening comments for Community and Government Services.

Thank you. Minister Joanase, are you prepared to do your opening comments? Please proceed.

Bill 37 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2024-2025 – Community and Government Services – Consideration in Committee

Hon. David Joanase: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I am pleased to join you today to review the main estimates and business plan for the Department of Community and Government Services.

As a service department, Community and Government Services provides a wide range of programs and services to support local governments, non-profit organizations, and Government of Nunavut departments and agencies as we pursue the priorities of the *Katujjiluta* mandate.

For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the Department of Community and Government Services proposed operations and maintenance budget is \$309,653,000. This is a net increase of \$15,856,000, or 5.12 percent, from last year's budget of \$293,797,000, to ensure the Department of Community and Government Services can continue to provide essential services to our client departments, local governments, and non-government organizations.

(interpretation ends) The department provides services through six different sections, each responsible for planning and managing various components of the Government of Nunavut's mandate and priorities.

Directorate Branch

The Directorate Branch includes the Office of the Deputy Minister and the department's Policy and Consumer Affairs divisions. The deputy minister's office is responsible for providing direction to the department and includes the Policy and Consumer Affairs Division, which provides strategic oversight on departmental policy, legislation as well as territorial consumer protection.

The proposed operating budget for the Directorate Branch is \$2,337,000. This is a decrease from the previous year's approved budget due to an internal realignment of corporate functions and resources being reallocated to the newly formed Corporate Services Branch.

Corporate Service Branch

The new Corporate Service Branch was created by consolidating many of the services the department provides to government departments and the respective branches of Community and Government Services, including:

- Financial Services,
- Human Resources,
- Procurement Logistics, Contract Support, and
- Federal Contributions and Relations

The Corporate Services Branch's proposed 2024-25 operating budget is

\$12,583,000. This budget supports the department in maintaining effective strategic financial management, the development of human resource initiatives, the management of federal capital funding agreements, and the provision of government-wide procurement and logistics services.

Local Government Services

The Local Government Services Branch provides financial and administrative support to enhance the quality and sustainability of municipal programs and services in Nunavut's 25 communities.

The total proposed operations and maintenance budget for the Local Government Branch in 2024-25 is \$103,871,000. This is an 8.40 percent increase beyond the \$95,146,000 budget approved for the Local Government Branch in 2023-24. The increases proposed for the Local Government Branch in 2024-25 are being driven by the following factors and initiatives:

- A \$619,000 increase to help ensure sport participants are protected from abuse in all forms.
- A \$3.6 million increase to the Municipal Funding Program to ensure municipal corporations have the financial resources necessary to staff key positions and meet the growing demands for municipal programs and services. Subject to approval by the Assembly, 2024-25 will also mark the sixth consecutive year the department has increased its investment into municipalities through the Municipal Funding Program.

- A \$1,920,000 increase to the Grant in Lieu of Taxes Program provided to the City of Iqaluit in place of taxes paid on assets owned by the Government of Nunavut. \$1,600,000 of the department's proposed increase to this program is driven by an administrative change that assigns responsibility for taxes assessed to the Nunavut Housing Corporation to the Department of Community and Government Services.
- \$856,000 to accommodate the change in pay rate for Government of Nunavut employees working in the Local Government Branch. The increase results from the new collective agreement between the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Employees Union.

Mr. Chairman, of the \$103,871,000 proposed by the department toward the Local Government Branch in 2024-25, \$85,847,000 of this amount is grants and contribution funding for municipalities, non-profit organizations, and in some cases, individuals. These organizations and individuals use this funding to offset operational costs and support delivering programs and services to Nunavummiut. I am happy to advise members that my department has completed a report on the administration of our grants and contributions program for the fiscal year 2022-23 and I look forward to sharing this report with members.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the financial support provided to municipal corporations and non-profit organizations through grants and contributions programs, Community and Government Services also provides support directly to stakeholders,

including municipal officials and administrators.

Local Government divisions work directly with municipal councils and administrators to ensure they are operating within the relevant legislation and implementing best practices in important areas, including:

- orientation of municipal councils to their powers and responsibilities under the relevant legislation
- monitoring and oversight of financial management practices
- introduction and implementation of asset management programs
- identification of municipal infrastructure priorities
- maintaining emergency preparedness and response plans
- accessing departmental programs and services

Mr. Chairman, the Local Government Branch continues to utilize online platforms introduced during the pandemic to find a service-oriented balance and supplement traditional “face to face” and “boots on the ground” delivery models. The Local Government Branch persists in its pursuit to build and maintain important relationships with municipalities.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, the department transferred the Nunavut Fire Marshal’s Office from the Safety Services Division of Infrastructure to the Nunavut Emergency Management Division of Local Government. The

reorganization has enhanced our preparedness and response capabilities. This transformation aims to integrate and streamline various emergency management functions under a unified umbrella, ensuring a more coordinated and efficient response to critical incidents and fires.

Information Management and Technology

Mr. Chairman, the department’s Information Management and Technology Branch manages the Government of Nunavut’s core network and communications services. These responsibilities include managing the existing and emerging hardware and software needs of client departments and maintaining the security of Government of Nunavut records and systems.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Community and Government Services’ Information Management and Technology Branch proposed operations and maintenance budget for 2024-25 is \$53,142,000. This amount is a net increase of \$1,374,000 from 2023-24.

Additional funding proposed under the Information Management and Technology Branch in 2024-25 will support work in the following areas.

- \$1,050,000 to accommodate increasing software licensing costs for the Government of Nunavut users.
- \$171,000 to support the management of fibre telecommunications.
- \$324,000 to accommodate the change in pay rate for Government

of Nunavut employees working in the Information Management and Technology Branch. This increase results from the new collective agreement between the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Employees Union.

Mr. Chairman, in early 2023, the Qulliq Energy Corporation suffered a cyber-attack that resulted in the Information Management/Information Technology Branch taking over security of their existing network. Ultimately, to ensure the ongoing services necessary to maintain the network of the utility firm, each of the firm's four business unit offices were brought onto the Government of Nunavut's secure network. In 2024-25, it is expected that the remainder of the utility firm's network will be transferred to the core business network to ensure ongoing network security and integrity. The costs associated with bringing the utility firm on the network will result in eight new positions that will be charged back to the Qulliq Energy Corporation, therefore no financial impact to the main estimates for 2024-25.

Mr. Chairman, information technology is critical to the effective delivery of government programs and services to Nunavummiut. The 2.59 percent funding increase proposed for the department's Information Management and Technology Branch as part of the 2024-25 main estimates will help ensure the department has the resources necessary to maintain and enhance critical network services throughout the territory.

Infrastructure Branch

Mr. Chairman, *Katujjiluta* identifies ambitious goals for our government, including the construction of housing and long-term care centres.

The Infrastructure Branch of the Department of Community and Government Services provides a comprehensive suite of services to all Government of Nunavut departments. These services include the development and oversight of technical standards, capital planning, project management, ongoing building maintenance, inspections, and oversight of all properties and assets owned or leased by the Government of Nunavut.

In addition to facility management functions and oversight of planning, design, and construction of Government of Nunavut capital projects, the Infrastructure Branch is responsible for managing over 750,000 square feet of leased office and warehouse space across the territory.

The proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget for the Infrastructure Branch is \$137,720,000. This is a 3.26 percent increase from the prior year driven primarily by forced growth in the following areas:

- \$4.5 million to accommodate increasing facility operating costs for Government of Nunavut buildings, such as schools, health centres, offices, warehouses, and other Government of Nunavut assets.
- A proposed increase of \$517,000 is required for the Real Property Division to cover rising operating

costs, property taxes, insurance, and utility rates for Government of Nunavut leased office or warehouse space.

- A proposed \$903,000 for six new safety services positions will support the housing growth of Nunavut 3000 and other *Katujjiluta* mandate infrastructure priorities.
- A proposed increase of \$344,000 for the Real Property Division to secure leased space for new person years approved in the 2024-25 budget.
- \$557,000 to accommodate the change in the pay rate for Government of Nunavut employees working in the Infrastructure Branch. Of course, this increase results from the new collective agreement between the Government of Nunavut and the Nunavut Employees Union.

Mr. Chairman, the department's Infrastructure Branch is responsible for ensuring buildings in Nunavut comply with the national codes and regulations established to maximize the useful life of the buildings and to ensure they are safe for occupancy.

In 2022-23 this work included 230 community visits to complete 2,984 inspections across the territory. I anticipate these numbers will increase in 2024-25 and in the future as we pursue the priorities of the *Katujjiluta* mandate and as many of the projects delayed during the pandemic are reinitiated.

Mr. Chairman, the proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget for the Infrastructure Branch is \$137,720,000, including an additional

\$4,495,000 beyond the branch's approved 2023-24 budget. Approval of these funds will ensure the Infrastructure Branch has the resources to address increasing operational costs during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Petroleum Products Division

The Petroleum Products Division purchases, stores, and distributes fuel to Nunavut's public, businesses, airlines, and governments. Petroleum products purchased by the division in one year are delivered to communities and sold throughout the following year.

During the 2023 fall sitting, the assent of Bill 30, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*, increased the authorized limit of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund to \$350 million. Raising the authorized limit provides the Government of Nunavut with the purchasing power to secure annual fuel supply and to purchase fuel when market conditions are favourable and avoid unnecessary cost increases to Nunavummiut.

The Petroleum Products Division continues to provide Nunavummiut with fuel prices that are among the lowest in Canada. In 2024-25 the division will manage bulk fuel purchase, plan, and deliver the 2024 fall resupply and continue to assess long-term fuel storage capacity needs in communities.

Conclusion

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. I am proud to be the minister of a department that will play an essential part in pursuing *Katujjiluta*'s priorities and

building healthy, safe communities in Nunavut. I look forward to our discussion and it will be my pleasure to take any questions from the committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Is the chair of the standing committee prepared to provide opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Community and Government Services. The department's proposed 2024-25 operations and maintenance budget is \$309,653,000. This represents a 5.4 percent increase from the 2023-24 main estimates. The number of departmental positions has increased from 468.0 to 480.0, which represents an increase of 2.6 percent.

The Department of Community and Government Services has 6 branches and 25 divisions. This is an increase of one branch and three divisions from the 2023-24 fiscal year. A new "Corporate Services" branch has been created. This branch includes five divisions, including a new "Assistant Deputy Minister - Corporate Services" division and a new "Federal Contributions and Relations" division. The department's 2023-24 main estimates included a "finance and procurement" division in its Directorate Branch. The department's draft 2024-25 main estimates indicate that the division has been split into a "financial services" division and a "procurement" division, both of which are now in its "corporate

services" branch. The standing committee encourages the minister to ensure that his department's 2025-26 business plan includes a detailed update on the status of this reorganization.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee.

Ministerial Mandate Letters were tabled in the Legislative Assembly at its sitting of November 8, 2022. The Minister of Community and Government Services' Mandate Letter indicates that one of the department's priorities is to "work closely with the departments of Economic Development and Transportation, Human Resources and Finance to develop options, a work plan and a timeline for the realignment of Economic Development and Transportation and Community and Government Services." The standing committee looks forward to being updated on an ongoing basis on the status of this work.

The government's most recent quarterly employment report indicates that the majority of the department's positions in its decentralized Pond Inlet and Kinngait offices are vacant. This has been a long-standing issue for the department. The extent to which the government's "realignment" of the department will include a review of its decentralized positions is unclear.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include approximately \$81.3 million in funding for a number of different programs that support municipalities. The standing committee continues to encourage the minister to

table an annual report in the Legislative Assembly on the administration of his department's grants and contribution programs.

The department's proposed 2024-25 main estimates include approximately \$4.2 million in funding for a number of different programs that support sports and recreation. The department's Sport and Recreation Grants and Contributions Policy sunsets on September 30, 2026. The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that it has been working to "develop an evaluation matrix to monitor progress of the Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Framework and Action Plan" and that "the draft evaluation and reporting templates are complete and will be finalized by March 31, 2024."

The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year is to "commence review of the *Hamlets Act* and the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act* to highlight key focal points to consider during the consultation process." The standing committee encourages the department to consult closely with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities and the Nunavut Association of Municipal Administrators on this initiative.

The *Emergency Measures Act* was passed by the Second Legislative Assembly in 2007. Sections 5 to 9 of the legislation provide for the preparation of "emergency management programs" on the part of government institutions and municipal councils. However, although it has been almost two decades since the legislation was passed, these provisions have still not been brought into force. On

November 17, 2022 the department issued Request for Proposals 2022-69: Emergency Response and Business Continuity Planning. The request for proposals closed on December 15, 2022. The standing committee will continue to monitor progress in this area.

In recent years, the department's annual capital estimates have included a number of "funding bundles" for infrastructure related to water, wastewater, and solid waste. The Government of Nunavut Drinking Water Strategic Framework was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on May 29, 2023. The department's draft 2024-26 business plan indicates that it will "continue to work with the Department of Health on the Drinking Water Strategic Framework Action Plan to develop options for the Drinking Water Regulations based on the framework developed in 2022-2023."

A new *Building Code Act* was passed by the Third Legislative Assembly in 2012. Members continue to raise a number of concerns regarding the administration of the legislation as it applies to regulatory requirements in respect to small-scale projects undertaken by homeowners. These concerns have related to such matters as the availability of inspectors in smaller communities. The department's 2022-26 business plan indicated that one of its priorities was to "continue with the strategic review and study on the impacts of the adoption of Nunavut-specific modifications as they apply to existing Nunavut building codes and the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings." Members continue to encourage the minister and department to review the legislation with the goal of making it more suitable to Nunavut's circumstances.

On June 28, 2022, the department issued Request for Proposals 2022-50: Executive Oversight and Corporate Services of the Petroleum Products Division.” The request for proposals closed on August 5, 2022. The standing committee encourages the minister to table the results of this study at the earliest opportunity. The 2021-22 Annual Report of the Petroleum Products Division was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on October 23, 2023. The 2022-23 annual report has not yet been tabled. It is the standing committee’s understanding that the 2022-23 Public Accounts have been delayed as a consequence of the Department of Community and Government Services’ ongoing audit of the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund.

That concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2024-25 Main Estimates and 2024-26 Business Plan of the Department of Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to report progress.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. It’s not subject to debate. All those in favour. Motion carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker.

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

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been

reviewing Bill 37 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I request 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. David Akeeagok. The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: 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 of the Day* for March 2:

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 >>*House adjourned at 18:12*
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 Saturday, March 2, at 10 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

