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HANSARD

Thursday, June 1, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.

Speaker: The Honourable Nils Clarke

YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2017 Spring Sitting

SPEAKER — Hon. Nils Clarke, MLA, Riverdale North
DEPUTY SPEAKER and CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Don Hutton, MLA, Mayo-Tatchun
DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE — Ted Adel, MLA, Copperbelt North

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NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PORTFOLIO
Hon. Sandy Silver	Klondike	Premier Minister of the Executive Council Office; Finance
Hon. Ranj Pillai	Porter Creek South	Deputy Premier Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources; Economic Development; Minister responsible for the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation
Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee	Riverdale South	Government House Leader Minister of Education; Justice
Hon. John Streicker	Mount Lorne-Southern Lakes	Minister of Community Services; Minister responsible for the French Language Services Directorate; Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Lottery Commission
Hon. Pauline Frost	Vuntut Gwitchin	Minister of Health and Social Services; Environment; Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation
Hon. Richard Mostyn	Whitehorse West	Minister of Highways and Public Works; the Public Service Commission
Hon. Jeanie Dendys	Mountainview	Minister of Tourism and Culture; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board; Women's Directorate

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Brad Cathers	Lake Laberge	Patti McLeod	Watson Lake
Wade Istchenko	Kluane	Geraldine Van Bibber	Porter Creek North

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New Democratic Party

Liz Hanson	Leader of the Third Party Whitehorse Centre
Kate White	Third Party House Leader Takhini-Kopper King

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**Yukon Legislative Assembly
Whitehorse, Yukon
Thursday, June 1, 2017 — 1:00 p.m.**

Speaker: I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

Prayers

DAILY ROUTINE

Speaker: We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

TRIBUTES

In recognition of Pride Month

Hon. Mr. Streicker: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government in recognition of Pride Month, which is celebrated in June.

We celebrate the resilience and strength of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited community in June around the world and here in the Yukon. Queer Yukon has a lot to be proud of. Here in the Yukon, we began recognizing the rights of gay and lesbian couples 30 years ago. When the Yukon *Human Rights Act* was passed in 1987, it was one of the first in Canada to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. In 1990, Government of Yukon was the first government to provide benefits to same-sex couples in public sector collective agreements. In 1992, Yukon, through the Department of Community Services, we changed the definition of “spouse” in the *Employment Standards Act*. Yukon was the fourth jurisdiction in Canada to legalize same-sex marriage in 2004 when the denial of a marriage licence was successfully challenged in court.

In 2012, the Yukon Queer Film Alliance was established. I remember the first Out North Film Festival. In fact, I think that Debbie Thomas asked to borrow my button press to help advertise for the festival. That same year, the policy on sexual orientation and gender identity was established for Yukon schools, requiring schools to provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environment for all students.

In 2014, Yukon amended its *Vital Statistics Act* to allow same-sex parents to be named on their children’s birth certificates. Very recently, here in this Legislature, we have begun proposed amendments to the *Human Rights Act* and the *Vital Statistics Act* which permit people to change the sex on their registration of birth and allow for a person’s sex to be recorded as something other than male or female.

As part of our platform during the last election, we committed to conducting a legislative policy and practice review to ensure that the Yukon government meets rules and social standards for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and two-spirited people in a non-discriminatory fashion. These bills and commitments are our promise to queer Yukon and all Yukoners that ensuring a safer and inclusive society is a top priority.

Minister Dendys has let me know that the Women’s Directorate website, yukongenderequality.com, recently added additional sound stories to their site from local trans and LGBT activities, which provide great insights around these and other significant events.

Despite the progress we have seen in recent years, we know that there is still a long way to go, both in the Yukon and around the world. Across the globe, millions of members of the LGBT community face discrimination due to their sexual orientation or their gender. Trans people face unique discrimination, and there are noted barriers in medical care, mental health and economic activity, among others. Trans people also face disproportionate rates of violence.

Pride Month is not only about celebrating the impact of LGBTQ2S culture and community in Canada, but a day of remembrance of those in the community who we have lost due to acts of violence, marginalization, discrimination and ignorance.

I remember last year’s Pride parade fell just after the 2016 Orlando shootings. Minister Bev Brazier spoke so very movingly at the opening of the parade about compassion, hope, love and acceptance. I remember that the City of Whitehorse flew the transgender flag in front of City Hall, and that was the first time ever.

I remember that the RCMP were out again in red serge handing out Pride water bottles, making sure we were safe and hydrated. I remember the amazing float made by the folks at YuKconstruct. I remember members of this Legislature being in the Pride parade, including the Hon. Premier, who was sporting a very colourful umbrella.

I remember talking with Stephanie Hammond about how the work of Queer Yukon had made the parade so successful. This year, by the way, it will be on Saturday, June 10 at noon, starting from the top of Main Street by the United Church.

Queer Yukon made that parade into a beacon, into an afternoon of real inclusion and not just for the LGBTQ2S community, but for all Yukoners, in a really strong way. The way in which that group that has been marginalized embraced inclusion and allowed all Yukoners to take part, however they have been marginalized, has really made a difference.

I thank Queer Yukon and many other organizations and volunteers who worked tirelessly for diversity and inclusion. You make the Yukon a better place.

I wonder if we might please welcome to the Legislature Alex Hill from the Women’s Directorate today.

Applause

Ms. Van Bibber: Thank you to the member opposite for that beautiful tribute. I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to Pride Month in Yukon and across Canada. As a society, we have come a long way on our journey to equality. June is an important month to come together in celebration and raise more awareness of this journey.

For the second year in Canada, we will celebrate across all jurisdictions through a number of events and parades spanning the month of June. Also education in tolerance and

acceptance are essential. Unfortunately, homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism do exist and we must continue to take steps as a community to eliminate them.

Here in Yukon, the LGBTQ2S community activists and allies alike come together for the annual Pride parade this year on June 10 accompanied by a community picnic and dance. The parade will gather at the Whitehorse United Church at 12:30 p.m. and follow Main Street to the Millennium Trail, making its way to Rotary Park. It gets underway at 1:00 p.m. and all are welcome to participate. Immediately following the parade is the PSAC Pride picnic in the park.

On June 11, the Pride Paddle will take place from Rotary Park to the Takhini River bridge.

I encourage everyone to share in the upcoming festivities and stand up against discrimination and violence in all its forms. I am happy to stand today to celebrate and congratulate the LGBTQ2S community and all its friends and allies in the Yukon.

Ms. White: I rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to celebrate Pride Month. When we look across the planet at the parades, festivities and events organized to celebrate the diversity within our communities by taking a positive stance against discrimination and violence toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited people and any person who self-identifies as gender-variant, it's important to remember how we got here.

These events promote self-affirmation, dignity, equality and human rights and increase the visibility of this community as a social group. These events build community and celebrate sexual diversity and gender-variance. Mr. Speaker, it's about pride as opposed to shame and social stigma.

It's easy for me in 2017, as a cisgender woman, to forget about the brutal past faced by members of this community, but forgetting lets us off the hook. Mr. Speaker, we must remember that the Toronto bathhouse raid happened on February 5, 1981, where patrons were mocked, humiliated and arrested by the hundreds. Lives were ruined on that day and an apology was only issued last year by the Toronto police.

It was only in 1987 that homosexuality stopped being classified as a mental disorder in the United States. Right now, homosexuality is still a crime in 76 countries. It could be argued that we in Canada dragged our feet because, although we became the fourth country outside of Europe to legalize same-sex marriage, it wasn't until July 20, 2004 — 13 short years ago. As history often shows us, it was one push too far that helped us to get to where we are today.

Very few establishments in the United States welcomed openly gay people in the 1950s and the 1960s, and those that did were often bars. At that time, the Stonewall Inn was the place to be, mostly because they allowed dancing. It catered to an assortment of patrons and was known to be popular among the poorest and most marginalized people in the gay community — the drag queens, transgender people, effeminate young men, butch lesbians, male prostitutes and homeless youth.

Police raids on gay bars were routine in the 1960s, but in the early morning hours of Saturday, June 28, 1969, officers quickly lost control of the situation at the Stonewall Inn. The raid did not go as planned. Michael Fader was there, and he explained it this way: We all had a collective feeling like we'd had enough of this kind of stuff. "It wasn't anything tangible anybody said to anyone else, it was just kind of like everything over the years had come to a head on that one particular night in the one particular place, and it was not an organized demonstration.

Everyone in the crowd felt that we were never going to go back. It was like the last straw. It was time to reclaim something that had always been taken from us. All kinds of people, all different reasons, but mostly it was total outrage, anger, sorrow, everything combined, and everything just kind of ran its course. It was the police who were doing most of the destruction. We were really trying to get back in and break free. And we felt that we had freedom at last, or freedom to at least show that we demanded freedom. We weren't going to be walking meekly in the night and letting them shove us around — it's like standing your ground for the first time and in a really strong way, and that's what caught the police by surprise. There was something in the air, freedom a long time overdue, and we're going to fight for it. It took different forms, but the bottom line was, we weren't going to go away. And we didn't."

The riot escalated in violence, mostly police against bystanders, and it lasted for two long nights. Mr. Speaker, it was as though a phoenix rose from the aftermath of all that violence because the gay community began to organize. June 28, 1970 marked the first anniversary of the Stonewall riots with an assembly on Christopher Street. It became known as the Christopher Street Liberation Day. The march in New York covered three miles, from Christopher Street to Central Park. There were simultaneous gay pride marches in Los Angeles and Chicago. These were the first gay pride marches in the history of the world.

In 1971, with growing support, gay pride went international, with marches in Boston, Dallas, Milwaukee, London, Paris, West Berlin and Stockholm. Today, almost 50 years later, as we celebrate pride through Queer Yukon's fun-filled events, let us remember the heritage of the Stonewall riots. Let us remember that across the world, pride is still, at its core, an act of rebellion against injustice, and let us remember that here at home, members of the queer community still face discrimination and still face violence. While the fight for equality may not look the same today as it did in 1969, the fight is far from over.

Please consider joining in. You will see, thanks to Queer Yukon, that it's a hell of a fun fight to fight. Don't miss out on the Pride parade that we have heard about or the barbecue that follows, and certainly don't miss out on the gin and jazz party. It promises to be the second-biggest event of the year — sadly, second after my 40th birthday party — and don't forget the Pride Paddle on Sunday. If you are looking for more information, you can check out Queer Yukon. The community

is really accessible, so if people haven't been before and they would like to go, it's fantastic.

In recognition of Victims and Survivors of Crime Week

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Liberal government and the NDP caucus in recognition of national Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, occurring this year from May 28 to June 3.

This week is an annual outreach initiative to raise awareness about the issues facing victims and survivors of crime across the country. The theme this year is "Empowering Resilience" — a very relevant theme for our community, considering what has been taking place here in Whitehorse this week.

We have been witness to the incredible strength of the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls who came to speak to the national inquiry this week. These families are telling the stories of the women and girls they have lost and about the difficult and tragic circumstances that led up to their heartbreaking realities.

I wish today to honour those family members for their resilience, for their strength and bravery, and for their advocacy on behalf of their loved ones. I know that, as a community and as a nation, we are looking to this inquiry for many things. It is our utmost hope that it will be successful and that, as a result of their courage this week, the families are feeling support and comfort.

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week is also an opportunity to recognize the countless dedicated professionals, volunteers and service providers who collaboratively work for the well-being of victims and their families. The Victim Services branch of the Department of Justice is but one example of the many agencies who commit to providing resources to victims. I'm proud to say that the team at Victim Services works diligently to create compassionate, respectful and accessible resources for all victims of crime in the territory.

This week, Whitehorse also hosted a conference about re-visioning justice. An amazing array of speakers and panel members made presentations and listened to our community about their concerns. Very relevant and important issues were brought forward for discussion. The Department of Justice and our broader community were honoured to participate in this conference.

There are many organizations in the Yukon that provide support to victims of crime, including three women's shelters, local counsellors and health supports, and many of Yukon's women's organizations. Thank you to each of these organizations and agencies for their dedication to our citizens. In honour of this week, the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre is hosting a series of events, and you can find more information about those on their Facebook page.

Officially, we stand up and recognize the experiences of victims and survivors and their families once a year, but victimization is something that happens every day and needs to be acknowledged by our society. Victims live with their

reality on a daily basis and, as a community, we need to recognize their strength in moving forward and provide the support and compassion they deserve. If communities, citizens and governments continue to work together, the support system will keep growing and we will strengthen the well-being of our territory.

Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker, and before I close, I would like to recognize some visitors. Today we have Lareina Twardochleb, the director of Victim Services. We have Michelle Rabineau, the supervisor at Victim Services, and Monique Benoit, a summer student with Victim Services, and, of course, Alex Hill with the Women's Directorate.

Applause

Mr. Cathers: I rise today on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition to pay tribute to national Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, which is taking place across Canada from May 28 to June 3 this year.

Throughout this week, attention is brought to the issues that victims face and gives us the opportunity to collaborate across the country, to share best practices, to thank service providers and to raise awareness of the importance of providing direct, meaningful support to survivors and victims of crime and their families.

This year's theme is "Empowering Resilience" and it speaks to the importance of moving beyond victimization and finding strength in positive adaptation. Resilience is borne from positivity, and when a community positively reinforces a person to be able to regain their sense of self, we see an increase in cognitive flexibility, positivity, optimism, resourcefulness and positive coping.

This week as well, with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls holding the first hearings here in the country, it is also a timely opportunity to honour those families for their determination to tell their stories, as painful as they are, and to seek justice and answers to what has occurred.

I would also like to acknowledge that Yukoners have in fact been leaders in pushing for the inquiry and in putting together the roundtable to make it happen. I would like to give credit to all of the people here in the territory who made that happen and have been part of developing an excellent model for helping families to share their stories and to seek justice.

The support systems that are in place for victims and survivors in the Yukon — including the Yukon government and First Nation governments, health care providers, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, volunteers, friends and families — can all help those who have been victimized to access and navigate the legal, justice and health systems.

I would encourage the public to drop by Well-Read Books this evening at 6:30 p.m. to attend a presentation by the RCMP about the rights and responsibilities of victims and how to report crimes. The event is hosted by the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre and the Department of Justice Canada. I would also like to thank all of those individuals who work to provide services and supports to

victims and survivors of crime — who respect them, who listen to them, who advise them, and who advocate for them.

I would all urge all Members of the Legislative Assembly and Yukoners to be supportive and helpful to victims and survivors when given the opportunity to do so. Be there for your loved ones and friends in times of difficulty and be respectful of their wishes in the time that it may take for them to heal from incidents that they have experienced.

Together we can support one another and together we can help to empower resiliency within our friends and neighbours.

Speaker: Are there any further tributes?
Introduction of visitors.
Are there any returns or documents for tabling?

TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I have for tabling *Yukon Police Council — 2015-16 Annual Report*, which is tabled pursuant to the terms of reference for the Yukon Police Council.

Hon. Mr. Silver: I have for tabling the terms of reference for the Yukon Financial Advisory Panel to Government of Yukon.

Hon. Mr. Pillai: I have for tabling a legislative return in response to a question from the Member of Whitehorse Centre regarding mine closure security.

Speaker: Are there any further returns or documents for tabling?
Are there any reports of committees?
Are there any petitions?
Are there any bills to be introduced?
Are there any notices of motions?

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Mr. Adel: I rise to give notice of the following motion:
THAT it is the opinion of this House that:
(1) before doing renovations, it's important to obtain proper estimates;
(2) obtaining estimates is no guarantee that the work will ever proceed;
(3) the \$36,000 actually spent by the new Liberal government is in fact less than the renovations carried out by the previous Yukon Party government, which cost \$52,000 and included the construction of a new media centre at a cost of \$24,500 in 2012; and
(4) the \$36,000 actually spent by the new Liberal government is in fact far less than the \$60,000 spent by the previous Yukon Party in 2007, which included \$2,694 spent on leather furniture, including couches and chairs, for the lobby area in the Premier's wing.

I also give notice of the following motion:
THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to increase the ceiling for the Yukon small-business investment

tax credit from \$1 million to \$5 million and increase the asset limit to allow larger companies to qualify.

Ms. McLeod: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Canada to reconsider its decision to not support the establishment of the Canadian Autism Partnership, which supports families and individuals with autism through improved treatment, diagnosis, detection and research.

Ms. Hanson: I rise to give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon to oppose the direct or indirect privatization of the Yukon Liquor Corporation by:

- (1) rejecting any privatization schemes as part of the promise for a Yukon *Liquor Act* review; and
- (2) ensuring current policies don't create loopholes that equate to an indirect privatization of the Yukon Liquor Corporation.

Speaker: Are there any further notices of motions?
Is there a statement by a minister?
This then brings us to Question Period.

QUESTION PERIOD

Question re: North American Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Hassard: On May 18, the Trump administration in Washington officially started the 90-day countdown to NAFTA renegotiations. This means that official renegotiations could begin as early as August 16 of this year. Considering that the Yukon has a very long border with the United States and a lot of our economy is closely tied to trade with the Americans, the renegotiation of NAFTA could have a major impact on Yukon.

Considering the North American Free Trade Agreement will soon be open for renegotiation, can the minister tell us what elements of the agreement Yukon is trying to protect?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As the member opposite knows, there will be COF — Council of the Federation — meetings happening next week in Washington. We will be talking about a whole bunch of issues related to the two countries, and I'm sure NAFTA conversations will be front and centre in those conversations. I will report back to the members opposite any of those conversations at that time.

Mr. Hassard: NAFTA is a major trade agreement that touches on a number of topics ranging from intellectual property to agriculture. As in any deal, both sides have to give and take to get an agreement. This means there may be sections of NAFTA that this government thinks should be renegotiated to benefit Yukon.

Can the minister tell us which elements, if any, of NAFTA he thinks should be renegotiated to benefit Yukon?

Hon. Mr. Silver: The conversations that will be coming forth next week will be fulsome and will cover everything from softwood lumber to NAFTA.

We hope to get a lot of time to speak about specific issues to the Yukon, which are ANWR and also Shakwak. Other than that, as far as the agenda, it's a moving target and to speak right now about the agenda items that are going ahead at that time is a little premature. We will have information to report when we get back, and at that time we will have more to say on the matter.

Mr. Hassard: It's a little bit concerning considering the Premier is going to be in Washington on Monday. I was hoping we would have had some idea of some Yukon-specific things that the Premier would be discussing.

Previously the government had committed to give the opposition parties a briefing on all topics related to NAFTA and the government's position on them. Considering that the Trump administration has begun the 90-day countdown for renegotiations, a briefing would be even more timely and helpful.

Can the minister let us know when the opposition parties will receive these briefings?

Hon. Mr. Silver: In my last response, I did mention a couple of items that will be on the agenda. As the members opposite know, the content of the agenda is a moving target at best. It all depends on the meetings that are set up, and that's how we're going to move forward. Based upon how the officials from America — whom we get to speak with — that will determine the conversations that we have.

If the member opposite would like to have a conversation with me before I head down to Washington to give me their concerns about the items that they want us to speak about, I will gladly have that meeting with the member opposite and we can discuss what the Yukon Party feels is an important conversation for Yukon to present when we meet with our national COF meeting folks and also the people in Washington.

Question re: Macaulay Lodge closure

Ms. McLeod: Yesterday during budget debate, the Minister of Health and Social Services indicated that the government is planning on closing Macaulay Lodge. However, any plan to close Macaulay would need to be carefully planned in close consultation with residents and families.

Can the minister tell us what consultations have taken place with residents on the plan to close Macaulay?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will maybe refer back to the comments yesterday. I have met with the residents of Macaulay Lodge. I had tea with them. I spoke to them. They are aware that Macaulay Lodge is at the end of its life. Once the Whistle Bend facility opens, Macaulay Lodge will shut down. The residents are fully aware of that. That has been done.

Ms. McLeod: Regarding the planned closure of Macaulay Lodge, I have some questions about timing and planning. I believe the minister said yesterday that there were

47 or 48 residents currently residing at Macaulay Lodge. Any plan to close the lodge would obviously have to account for all of those folks, their needs and where they may be moved to. Yesterday, the minister indicated that the residents may be accommodated in a variety of different places around the city.

Can the minister tell us what the current timeline for closure at Macaulay Lodge is, and can she tell us where the current residents will be moved to and how that decision will be made?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to refer back to April 2015. This very discussion happened with members of the Third Party, the NDP, with the then-Yukon Party government with respect to the closure of Macaulay Lodge. Very specific discussions were happening then with regard to wondering about the government's plan for the future care of these residents.

The very same questions that are being posed to me today were posed to the members of the opposition. The quote, specifically from a member of the NDP, Jan Stick, is: "Can this government confirm the closure of Macaulay Lodge and, if so, tell Yukoners where the current residents will be moved to?" That was a year ago, and today I can confirm that we have a very specific plan. We've met with the residents. Each member of Macaulay Lodge will be dealt with on an individual-needs basis. They will go into the facilities that they choose, that best align with their specific needs. In fact, we've already taken some steps to do just that in working with the families.

Thank you for the question.

Ms. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, as you know, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, we're all elected to represent our ridings and our constituents here in this house. That's why oftentimes, it's critical for government to engage with the local MLA on major government decisions that will affect people in their riding.

So regarding the closure of Macaulay Lodge, has the minister consulted with the two MLAs who represent Riverdale, and what was their input?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have consulted with my Cabinet colleagues. I have worked quite closely with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Continuing Care department. We have worked on, I guess, a case-need basis. A needs-assessment and business-planning process was taken into consideration so, most definitely, we have taken into consideration — going back again from 2015 when then-minister Doug Graham stated that the facility would require much renovation to be brought up to the current standard. We knew two years ago, when the plans went into effect, that Macaulay Lodge would be closed down and that the residents would be taken care of and transferred into proper accommodations. This government will never place any of its residents in jeopardy and we will always ensure that they have proper and appropriate accommodation that best aligns with their needs.

Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre segregation cell

Ms. Hanson: Howard Sapers is a former correctional investigator — essentially an ombudsman for federal offenders. Mr. Sapers spoke earlier this week at the Re-Visioning Justice conference in Whitehorse that the minister referenced in her tribute. Mr. Sapers is one of the many experts who have highlighted the devastating effect that segregation can have on inmates' physical and mental health. This, in turn, poses a threat to correctional officers' safety and to the public by making rehabilitation less likely.

While the previous government simply denied that this was a concern, we are hoping that this minister will take a more balanced approach to the issue. Does the Minister of Justice acknowledge that solitary confinement can have severe mental health impacts on inmates — impacts that are contrary to the goal of rehabilitation?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I thank the Leader of the Third Party for her question.

There is research with respect to separate confinement that, as the member opposite says, indicates the difficulties and ultimate harm that can be done with respect to overuse of separate confinement. The statistics on separate confinement in the Yukon are posted on the department website and updated annually.

In specific answer to her question, I think the research is clear that separate confinement should only be used in the rarest of cases and the opportunity for me to discuss this with Mr. Sapers occurred yesterday morning. In fact, I met with him personally. I spoke to him about his recent report from Ontario. I have not had an opportunity to read all of it, although he did give me a copy, and we spoke specifically about issues here in the Yukon and his advice and his expertise with respect to that.

There is lots of research on separate confinement and it should be used in only the rarest of cases.

Ms. Hanson: I thank the minister for that answer. It is encouraging because you know, Mr. Speaker, the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights has said that solitary confinement for longer than 15 days is a form of torture and should be banned. Yet in Yukon, one of the most well-known incidents of solitary confinement saw an inmate at Whitehorse Correctional Centre spend in excess of 81 without interruption in separate confinement. That was just recently. As federal correctional officer, Sapers called for an end to the long-term segregation of mentally ill, self-harming or suicidal inmates.

Has the minister directed that inmates suffering from mental illness or who are at risk of self-harm are no longer subject to solitary confinement at Whitehorse Correctional Centre?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: The Whitehorse Correctional Centre has a responsibility for keeping every inmate safe who is under its care and to ensure the safety and security of correctional officers and others who work there. On occasion, the only way to achieve those objectives is to separately confine some inmates, particularly if they are violent or a danger to themselves or to others. Inmates may be separately

confined in a segregation unit following disciplinary hearings held by independent adjudicators for administrative reasons, but these are very rare occasions.

I have not directed the department of Corrections with respect to the question that the member opposite asks, but I am certainly interested to speak to her more about her views on that.

Ms. Hanson: Indeed, I am as well. Once the minister has had a chance to read Mr. Saper's report, she will know where I'm coming from.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that without proper support and training, the staff at Whitehorse Correctional Centre has few options besides solitary confinement; yet we know in the long run the mental health impacts of segregation make rehabilitation less likely. This means that Whitehorse Correctional Centre staff and the public safety are also jeopardized. As Mr. Sapers pointed out in his presentation, across the country we have seen a decrease in crime and incarceration, while at the same time, rates of segregation have increased.

It doesn't have to be this way. In order to change the system, the government needs an independent assessment of the situation.

So Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Justice willing to invite the correctional investigator to conduct an independent audit of the use of segregation at WCC?

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I guess it might help in answering this question to provide some statistics with respect to the Yukon. These statistics are posted on the department's website, as I have said, and updated annually: 70 individuals were separately confined for 120 incidents during the 2016 calendar year by either correctional management or by independent hearing adjudicators; 80 percent of inmates were not separately confined for any reason during that year; and one inmate was separately confined for more than 15 days. This confinement, however, was on a voluntary basis. No other inmates were confined for more than 15 days, which is the standard maximum.

That said, nobody wants to use this sanction unless it is absolutely necessary for the safety or the health of an individual inmate or for perhaps correctional staff or other inmates, which is a key factor in these situations. Often there are situations where inmates are having violent incidents among themselves. There is gang activity and drug activity — those kinds of things that absolutely have to be addressed inside.

I have no concerns whatsoever. I have full confidence that the segregation unit cells are safe places and that they were used on a minimum basis. That is the direction that we want to have here; it is what the research says; it is what the Yukon needs to do.

My discussion with Mr. Sapers is also influenced, as I agree with the member opposite — correctional centres are not hospitals and they are not mental health units. We need to do better.

Question re: Medical travel

Ms. White: Medical travel, whether within Yukon or out of Yukon, is never without costs. For many, a trip out of Yukon for medical reasons is unexpected and can be very stressful. No one is prepared for this type of medical emergency or the stress that goes along with it.

It was surprising to read in the 2015 *Guide for the Travelling Yukon Patient* that a person who has been medevaced should be prepared to pay for their flight back and to apply to be reimbursed later. This might not be an issue for some but, for minimum-wage workers or other Yukoners living paycheque to paycheque, this is not an option.

How are people who have been medevaced outside of Yukon supposed to pay for a return flight if they do not have the means to do so?

Hon. Ms. Frost: That is a really great question. What we are looking at through Health and Social Services is the whole continuum of care process and program, and looking at ensuring that we don't marginalize folks when they are in an emergency situation. So most definitely taken under consideration are all of the current challenges and, if necessary, we will look and take the evidence-based decision and look at where we are and where we land with respect to transparency and equity for services and programs. Most definitely, I see that as a big issue and a big concern.

I just want to assure the member opposite that we are taking — and I will take that discussion up with the department further as we look at recoverables and how that process works to ensure that we don't ever marginalize or put undue stress and hardship on patients and clients who are already having a difficult time.

Ms. White: More and more often, we are seeing crowd-funding pages for families or individuals who are receiving medical treatment outside of Yukon. Medical escorts or a parent of children under 19 may be eligible for subsidized travel, if approved by the department.

Currently, the subsidy for travel outside of Yukon is \$75 a day to cover accommodation, food and ground transportation starting on the second day. Mr. Speaker, I think that the last time a hotel room in Vancouver went for \$75, people were on their way up for the gold rush. The fact is that Yukoners can't afford to pay these costs out of pocket.

Does this government believe that people should have to fundraise for their medical care, or is it time to review the medical travel policy and regulations?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can assure the member opposite that the medical travel budget, as I described yesterday with the questions that were posed to me — we spend in excess of \$12 million on medical travel inside and outside. We are really trying to determine where the expenses are being — whether we can look at alternatives in terms of the medical travel budget. It is adjusted at least annually when it's anticipated that there won't be an increased demand for medical travel.

Right now we are anticipating that we are going to make some significant changes. There may be some minor adjustments as we look at the analysis and look at what we

can do and how we can do better. I am always open to conversation. I'm always open to input on current discussions around medical travel or any sort of medical treatment that would advance our program areas for ensuring better services for all members of Yukon.

Ms. White: I would just point out that, within this Chamber, our travel per diem is far higher than \$75 a day, not to mention that our accommodation is always covered.

Often individuals travelling to Whitehorse or outside of Yukon on medical travel will receive a recommendation from their community nurse or family physician to have a medical escort, usually a family member, to accompany them. This person can assist the patient with travel, be present when the patient is discharged, and provide emotional support while in the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware of instances where patients were repeatedly denied medical escorts, despite their doctor recommending that they not travel alone. Why would individuals needing a medical escort on the recommendation of their doctor be repeatedly denied this support by the department?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would just reiterate that Yukon has already one of the most robust medical travel programs across the north. We currently do not cover costs for non-medical escorts in some circumstances, and in other circumstances, as described by the member opposite, the program that provides for medical travel will cover expenditures for escorts.

I can say that, as we are looking at this, each individual request that comes forward is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and that is done in collaboration with the medical professional who is responsible for the patient. We design the policies that govern us in terms of medical travel, but we also recognize that there's room for improvement and we're always open to that conversation and discussion with the member opposite. I am most definitely open to that.

Question re: US/Canada border issues

Ms. Van Bibber: Out of all the Canadian jurisdictions, Yukon has the third-longest border with the US. In 2013, it was estimated that Yukon had exported approximately \$77 million worth of goods to the United States. Clearly issues regarding Yukon's border with the United States has a great importance to all Yukoners.

In the Council of the Federation statement about the upcoming trip of premiers to Washington, one of the key issues listed to be discussed was border issues. Can the Premier provide more detail on exactly what border issue Yukon will be raising while in Washington? Are there currently issues that Yukon wants to see addressed?

Hon. Mr. Silver: We are meeting with our counterparts in Alaska. I believe that one of my first meetings will be with Senator Murkowski, and we will be speaking on a lot of different issues. The members will have to be patient. It's a conversation that is led by our Alaskan counterparts, and we will be talking about everything from trade, bilateral relations, energy — there's a whole raft of conversations we're going to have, based upon the environment and climate change. To say

specifically what we're going to talk about — that all depends on the agenda and the timelines we have.

As opposed to speculating what conversations we're going to draw into, I will make sure to report back to the members opposite after our meetings with our counterparts. But I do agree with the member opposite — there's lots to talk about, and I think we haven't done enough in previous years.

There is more that we can do with this amazing state right beside us, especially when you take a look at issues in Skagway, when it comes to power, and when you take a look at the Shakwak road and the amount of material that has to come up through Canada to go into the great State of Alaska. I am looking forward to my meetings with Representative Young and also Representative Murkowski.

Ms. Van Bibber: In a statement issued by the Council of the Federation yesterday, it goes on to state that the key purpose of this trip is to ensure security of the shared borders with the United States. Presumably having this listed as a key priority means that the Premier, as chair of the Council of the Federation, believes there are currently issues regarding border security. Can the Premier provide more detail on what he sees as issues threatening the security of the shared border with the United States? What does the government think should be done to address these issues?

Hon. Mr. Silver: With all due respect to the member opposite, it doesn't work that way. As the chair, I will turn that specific conversation over to another premier who will chair that particular conversation when it comes to border security. As we are hearing horrific stories of attempts to get across the border ending in death and other issues on the lower border situation, that is not a conversation that is going to be led by the Yukon, I am sorry to say.

When we take a look at the issues here in the north, I believe there are more important issues to talk about than our border security on the borders between Alaska and the Yukon — not to say that there aren't issues, but I think we have more important issues to talk about when it comes to our turn to lead conversations on Yukon issues. That part of the conversation will be led by another premier from one of the provinces. I will get that information for the member opposite as to who specifically is going to be the chair of that particular conversation.

That is how these conferences work. You will have a chair who will do their responsibilities in introducing the people for specific conversations. We will also have our opportunity to showcase our issues — our issue, particularly as far the Yukon is concerned, is not border security.

Ms. Van Bibber: Another major issue listed as a priority that the Premier will be raising in Washington is energy, as he mentioned. Given that a national topic of discussion is cross-border energy infrastructure, such as pipelines, and given the current political situation in British Columbia, has the Premier had any discussions with Alberta or the US regarding the Alberta government's proposal for a pipeline connecting to Alaska? Will this be a topic on the Washington trip?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I believe — and I might be corrected — that Premier McNeil is going to be the premier who will be chairing the conversation when it comes to energy. We will be taking a look at the conversation Canada-wide as far as energy is concerned. I have not had any specific conversations with Alberta government when it comes to pipelines.

I guess that is all I can do to answer that particular question, but again, when it comes down to the chair's responsibility, we will use that opportunity to showcase Yukon-specific concerns. On the energy file, we have lots of conversations to be had when it comes to if there is still a conversation for a national grid across Canada. Is that something that the other premiers are talking about — or the nation, for that matter? Also, how does that apply to conversations with Alaska? We all know that there are some situations in Alaska that we might be able to help out with when it comes to talking about energy.

If any of those conversations are going to be had at the Council of the Federation, I'll be sure to get back to the members opposite as to what we specifically talked about when it comes to Yukon's issues.

Question re: Liberal Party of Canada commitments

Mr. Kent: I have a few questions for the government with respect to promises made by the federal Liberals during the 2015 election campaign.

The first one is with respect to reopening the Canada Revenue Agency office here in Whitehorse. At the time, the federal Liberals stated in a press release — and I quote: The closure of the CRA office "... has hurt individuals, and in particular, small businesses". They went on to say in that same release: "Bringing back the CRA office means bringing back the government services that help individuals who need assistance and help businesses to thrive throughout Yukon".

As of today, the office remains closed here in Whitehorse and we have no indication of when the federal Liberals will honour this commitment to Yukoners. We know the Premier has travelled to Ottawa on four separate occasions and at least once has appeared by teleconference to advise on the budget.

At any of those times, has he asked the Prime Minister or our Member of Parliament or any of their federal colleagues when they intend to fulfill this commitment?

Hon. Mr. Silver: As this is a question for the federal government, I will direct the member opposite's concerns to our MP Larry Bagnell.

Mr. Kent: My first question was: Has the Premier asked the Prime Minister or our Member of Parliament when they intend to reopen the Canada Revenue Agency office here in Yukon? Perhaps it's not an important issue for the member opposite or his government.

Yukon's MP, the Liberal candidate, stated at the time in that same news release — and I quote: "I have brought these concerns to Justin Trudeau and have ensured we are able to return the necessary services to Yukon. That is why I am happy to announce today that the Yukon CRA office will be re-opened under a Liberal government".

Also, further in that news release — and I quote: “The closure of the office also disproportionately impacted seniors who would go there to file their taxes”.

Mr. Speaker, has Prime Minister Trudeau or Minister Morneau or any other federal minister given any indication to the Premier when this office will be reopened?

Hon. Mr. Silver: Again, as this question is a question to the federal government, it’s interesting that it’s coming up here in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. I will take these considerations and concerns, again, to our federal representative, MP Larry Bagnell.

Mr. Kent: It’s disappointing that the Premier won’t stand up for Yukoners on something that’s very important and has been identified as very important.

Another federal Liberal commitment was made in January 2016 when there was an announcement made that they would support the construction of a multi-use facility for cadets here in Whitehorse.

At the time, the MP said that it would much more convenient for them to have a year-round place to have weekly and monthly meetings. In 2016, and again earlier this year when I followed up with our Member of Parliament on this project, it was in the design phase then and it remained in the design phase earlier this year. Construction is slated to start on this \$4-million facility in the summer of 2017, which would be a great project for local contractors to bid on.

Will the Yukon Liberals follow through on the \$250,000 commitment made to this facility by the previous government and has the Premier or any of his colleagues spoken to the Minister of National Defence on when construction will begin?

Hon. Mr. Silver: I guess the members opposite might have run out of questions for this government. They’re now asking us questions for the federal government. They’re also asking us to stand behind commitments that the previous government — the Yukon Party — has committed to. I believe those were commitments that were in their platform, so I really don’t have anything to comment on what the Yukon Party did in their platform.

I also have no comments when it comes to questions that should be directed to the federal Minister of Finance. What I will do is I will reach out to the federal minister and ask him where he stands on the previous government’s commitments, now that there is a new Liberal government — I guess if that is what they’re looking for.

I could see how the members opposite do get confused. In the *Klondike Sun* this week, they were talking about the Premier’s carbon-pricing mechanism. So again, maybe they don’t know the difference between the federal government and the territorial government.

Speaker: The time for Question Period has now elapsed.

We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Ms. McPhee: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to

Speaker leaves the Chair

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair (Mr. Hutton): Order, please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Bill No. 201: *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18* — continued

Chair: The matter before the Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Department of Health and Social Services — continued

Hon. Ms. Frost: I’m pleased today to welcome back Brenda Lee Doyle, Acting Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, and Birgitte Hunter, the assistant deputy minister of Corporate Services for Health and Social Services.

Mr. Chair, yesterday, the member opposite asked me several questions that I was unable to answer at the time. I said I would provide some answers, so I would like to do that now and, for the record, provide some answers to the questions posed yesterday.

The honourable member asked the cost of the current contract for the deputy chief medical officer of health. The contract for the last fiscal year ending March 31 was for \$208,005. The actual expenses were \$128,409. For the coming year, the contract is set at a maximum of \$236,055.

The member opposite was also asking for the actual costs for medical travel in the territory and out of the territory. The actual cost for in-territory travel was \$2,120,083. Out-of-territory travel costs \$10,254,030.

The total expenses of home care for 2016-17 were \$6.3 million. Just over \$6 million had been originally

budgeted. The 2017-18 main estimates for home care are \$6.5 million.

I would like to also point out that home care staff in Watson Lake is comprised of a full-time registered nurse, an auxiliary on-call licensed practical nurse, and three part-time home support workers. In the past we have provided weekend services when there were specific needs or requests — for example, for palliative care.

Ms. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and welcome back to the officials for your assistance today.

Today I want to talk a little bit about drug and alcohol addictions. This is a serious concern for my community and indeed throughout the Yukon. The abuse of these substances results in family stress, family breakup, adult and child abuse, right up to death and the associated grief of families — serious indeed. My community has seen more than it can handle.

I would like to thank the Department of Health and Social Services for sending support staff to Watson Lake to help the people get through the rush of deaths during 2016. By all accounts, they helped. Since then, I have been seeking a more sustained level of assistance in order to avoid a recurrence of the incidents.

In January of this year, I sought out information regarding supports and services that were available to help people dealing with drug and alcohol addictions. I wasn't getting a lot of responses, so I sought out an appointment with the minister and, although it took some e-mails, I was granted a meeting at the end of March.

During this meeting, we discussed, among other things, homelessness in Watson Lake because residents see that as a problem. I asked the minister to go to Watson Lake to talk to the people and to those in the community who may be in a position to provide some supports. While I understand that the minister wouldn't be able to do this during the current Sitting of the Legislature, the minister did commit to sending officials to Watson Lake to convene discussions with the community around how to develop long-term plans for dealing with homelessness and addictions.

The minister said she would keep me advised. However, I have heard nothing further. My question is: Did the officials attend in Watson Lake and, if so, what were the results? If not, why not?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I also understand that the seriousness of alcohol and drug addiction is a serious concern across the Yukon. In our rural communities, it is most definitely something that we take into consideration.

In response to when I am going to Watson Lake, I have committed to going to Watson Lake when the Legislature concludes its session, and I will do that on June 16 with my staff.

Ms. McLeod: Perhaps the minister could provide us with a few details around her visit on June 16 and whether or not she has meetings set up with the public, with various NGOs that are on the ground in Watson Lake and perhaps the mayor and council, chamber of commerce — any of those things. The First Nations — yes, their election will conclude

on June 5, and there should be a new chief and council in place, so I am hoping that there will be some meetings set up there.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I wanted to reaffirm that anything that I do as the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services will be inclusive of a collaborative discussion with all members of the community. I will ensure that we always keep a transparent and open process when we design and look at public engagement and consultation processes. Every community member should have a voice in terms of wellness in their communities.

Just as a follow-up to the earlier question around what the department is doing. I ran through a list yesterday for the member — and I also provided it in writing — of all of the services that are being provided to Watson Lake to address the current pressures in the community at this point. I think it is just touching in to see how effective those positions are and how effective the program delivery methods are. Alcohol and Drug Services is hosting an open house in Watson Lake — community addictions workers — on June 2. Hopefully that will garner some input and generate some discussion and public feedback.

Ms. McLeod: As I understand it, and from reading the advertisement on the June 2 open house, it is just that — an open house — to let folks go through the new renovated space. There was no mention of an opportunity for discussion, but perhaps we will see that happen.

I know that we have had a few discussions regarding addictions to drugs and alcohol. I am sure I was clear that this is a matter of some great importance. When I brought up the fact that the Health and Social Services website was not very helpful for a person seeking help with addictions, both at the meeting in March and in the House, there were some quick fixes made to the website, and I appreciate that. These quick fixes may help some persons; however, they are not likely to help people who are in crisis. I would like to see this help for citizens front and centre on the website. Perhaps it could get its own little square box on the front opening page because it is difficult to wade through that information and find what you need. But I don't think that information goes far enough, quite frankly.

The minister did provide a legislative return on May 18, which was to address my request for information on what services and supports were available to people in southeast Yukon. The information contained was really just an expanded explanation of which staff was located in Watson Lake and which staff travelled to the community. This does not adequately address the inquiry regarding services available.

I ask the minister — I have not in the past, but I do ask now — to prepare a householder type of booklet with detailed information about services and where to get them, along with contact persons and phone numbers, for every Yukon community and then send them out to all Yukon addresses. I think, in this way, the information will be readily available to every house and available to all household members for their reference.

During a crisis, it would be much more helpful to grab the booklet off the counter than to run and find your computer, pull up the website, search for the information you need and then make those phone calls. Most likely, a person in crisis seeking information is doing it at some off-hour in the middle of the night. Frankly, I would be very interested in helping the minister with this.

I just wonder if the minister has any thoughts on that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: No quick fixes — clearly, there is never a quick fix. I think we have seen some long-term systemic issues in all of our communities and we aim to address those concerns in a methodical, well-thought-out kind of way. We want to ensure that all of our programs are really well-aligned. As the member identified, I listed off a number of positions in Watson Lake and, most definitely, I think the feedback is essential and critical in terms of whether those positions are best aligned to meet the needs of the residents of that community. If they're not, then clearly it's an opportunity to have a good dialogue and a good discussion on realigning and perhaps retooling the program areas.

The listed positions — I can provide details on what those positions are obligated to do and the mandate, because these positions pre-existed my arrival here. They were positions that were identified from the previous government situated in the community, so perhaps the member is familiar with how that was set up with the hospital there. There are two doctors. They are medical doctors providing health care supports. We have registered nurses obviously providing medical care and we have the addictions counsellors through Many Rivers and, as well, we have some psychological supports that the community requested. So we have expanded and scaled up programs as they are deemed necessary or as the community has advised that they require.

The recommendations regarding a mail-out of a booklet and compiling noted resources in respective communities, perhaps that might be something we can consider in the future if that is a way that we can reach out further to the community — if it makes good sense. We have alternatives now — communicating via social media and other methods that our communities are more in tune with nowadays.

Just back to the open sessions and public engagement — the invitations will go out next week, so hopefully community members will be present and make their voices heard and provide some really good insights for us and some direction on what they see as needs in the community.

The initial plan for Alcohol and Drug Services in Watson Lake has gone forward. I know it has come up in the past, historically, and most definitely will still be there in terms of ensuring we provide necessary supports to the community of Watson Lake.

Ms. McLeod: There has been much discussion in the public and the health community, and within the Legislature, regarding the abuse of opioids. Recently, the government announced that a training session will be held to ensure that people were prepared to deal with this emerging crisis.

How many seats were provided at this training session? I'm told there were doctors who were turned away because

there was no room. How many of the attendees were directly involved with patient care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The advertisement went out quite broadly, and it was really intended to provide an academic or training opportunity for front-line workers, and the biggest venue we could find was the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre. We accommodated 150 people. That's significant participation and representation from all sectors — our medical, our care facilities, our First Nations and looking at specialized experts, or expert representation presenting at the conference, recognizing early on that we are in a crisis in the Yukon and we wanted to take a proactive approach and help to educate our staff, help to educate our communities and educate the front-line workers, and essentially create venues for broader learning to avoid further unnecessary loss of life.

We are working with many partners to raise awareness on the dangers of fentanyl and other opioids that can cause fatal overdoses through misuse, unintentionally in some cases. We have seen some circumstances where there are recreational users who have succumbed to an overdose because of fentanyl. Being proactive and educating the public about the dangers — high-profile awareness-raising, using whatever means necessary — and social media is a big component of that and now also print materials.

Ms. McLeod: I have asked the minister about whether she will return to the negotiating table to request additional funding to address the fentanyl crisis. As we know, other provinces have received specific funding to help with this growing problem. Is the minister seeking assistance from Ottawa by way of additional funding?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The federal government just now came out with documentation or a summary of analyses on fentanyl and the opioid crisis across the country, really setting a high profile.

They have made some major commitments around supporting the communities and supporting the provinces and territories. We are in current discussions with the federal government, recognizing that this is not unique to the Yukon, and we will most certainly engage and ensure that our voices are heard and that we access the necessary funding and programming — whatever the federal government makes available. I will ensure that I'm there, bringing our concerns forward.

Ms. McLeod: Is the minister working on ensuring that the toxicology for suspected fentanyl deaths is received in a much better time frame? We know there have been some delays — quite a lengthy time until this information is received — and obviously this is a great concern to families — if the minister could just comment on that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: There are some things we can control and some things we can't control. We are working with the communities and ensuring that they are responsive, and that's our commitment.

The coroner's report and the toxicology report take some time to compile. Those are things that really we don't have any control over in terms of expediting and defining what the individual — or how things evolve with respect to a death. I

wouldn't say it's irrelevant, but it's essential that we look at a proactive approach and get ahead of that — then prevent unfortunate situations like that from happening — really, just getting out ahead.

What I can say is that we've had five confirmed deaths in the Yukon, and that's significantly high. Using word of mouth, using consultation, using education and using whatever methods we possibly can to share the information on the overdose events and circumstances around that with potential users — making them aware — we are doing that. Again, something we don't have control over as a department is how quickly the coroner's report — and the post-medical process — works.

Ms. McLeod: Will the government commit to increasing funds to alcohol and drug addiction programs and services at the new Sarah Steele Building, the Jackson Lake healing centre as well as work with municipalities and First Nations to ensure that they are able to provide programs and services in rural Yukon communities to all Yukoners?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I do know that what historically has happened with the Sarah Steele or the Alcohol and Drug Services addictions program clearly was not sufficient. The new facility and expanded scope of care and modelling really have, I think, provided for a broader spectrum of care, in particular with drug addictions and drug treatment programming — not focused so much on alcohol components now.

We have in our budget \$150,000 to work with rural Yukon to come up with a strategy, with very specific discussions with the First Nations around the assumptions of responsibility on section 17.7 with negotiations and trying to look at efficiencies and the effectiveness of pre- and post-care programming, which we have not done a very good job of, I must say, up to this point.

We send our clients into the Sarah Steele facility, they come out at the end of the 30 days — or whatever amount of time they spend there — and we send them back to their respective communities without appropriate programming in place. We are really attempting to take a comprehensive review of integrated programming and management of that with consideration from our respective partners. I believe that the member will note that, in the budget — I believe it is in the Executive Council Office budget — there was funding made available to the tune of \$330,000 to continue with the operation of the Jackson Lake treatment program. It is in the Executive Council Office.

The question with respect to enhanced funding for the Sarah Steele Building, given the scope, size and complexity — with the department offering more programs, it therefore requires more staff. The larger size of the building also increases O&M expenditures tied to that. We are seeing an increase of \$3.1 million in operating costs for the expanded scope of care and the expanded care program in the Sarah Steele facility.

Ms. McLeod: I went online and I tried to find information on the statistics and perhaps an executive summary of the Jackson Lake healing centre as to how many

people were being assisted and helped, but I couldn't find it anywhere. I don't know if that information is online and perhaps, if it is, the minister can direct me to that. She may not have that information now and she can certainly get back to me with that at a future time.

We have heard many times over the years — and continue to do so — that the community nursing program is short of nurses. I am sure that many things have been tried to address this problem, so I ask the minister: What is she doing differently that will resolve the problem of nursing staff shortages? How many vacancies are there? Where are the identified shortfalls? What efforts are being made toward recruitment? How much is in this budget to ensure a favourable outcome for this shortage?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The question with regard to nursing shortages in Yukon is clearly not something new. Historically, what I understand to have happened was that the former government looked at a recruitment and retention strategy to ensure that vacancies in nursing care in the communities were stable in terms of ensuring that we had the primary health care providers in our communities for the longer term.

Job security was a component that was very important to look at, and that is no different today. We still have challenges with securing recruitment and retention. We have nurses who are coming to our communities on a casual basis to fill vacancies.

Working with the Yukon Employees' Union, we have looked at the question that was posed a few days ago on the Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek health centres. We are looking at increasing — ensuring that we have a health care provider in those communities and stabilizing in that regard. Despite the multiple challenges of hiring and positions, we are putting our best efforts forward to ensure we have secured primary health care providers in our communities.

Community Nursing — having said that, we have successfully hired and trained 13 nurses in the last year to fill a variety of positions supporting our communities, so best efforts are being put forward.

We have added one new position in Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek because that was identified as an area that was essential and much needed. The question is: How many nurses do we have on staff? We have 173 nurses; we have 79 permanent nurses, two term, one casual, and 90 who act on an auxiliary-on-call basis. As our permanent nurses take their vacations — some are on maternity leave — we transition the nurses in, so there is never a community without a primary care provider.

Ongoing health care and the services provided are of the utmost priority, and we don't want to reduce that in any way — keeping a close eye on the areas that we see under pressure and responding accordingly, like with the health centres in Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek.

Ms. McLeod: I appreciate the minister saying that communities are not left unattended. What I didn't hear in there was how many identified vacancies there are in the Yukon. I'm trying to get an understanding of how large the problem is and where the problem is.

Hon. Ms. Frost: As I have highlighted, we have a number of positions in our community and we are responding appropriately to look at where we have vacancies and where those vacancies are, and ensuring that we respond in a timely fashion. At the moment, all I can tell the member opposite is that we have a grand total of 173 employees — 79 are permanent. We have a number of auxiliaries. Vacancies — I'm not sure how many vacancies we have, but we ensure that every position is covered. I will, I guess, commit to bringing back to the member opposite what communities there are vacancies in and if there are vacancies, where those vacancies are situated.

Ms. McLeod: I thank the minister for that commitment.

So we know that the health centre in Destruction Bay is at the end of its life cycle. My questions are: What are the plans for its replacement? Will the government be replacing this building in Destruction Bay? Is there money in this budget to move forward? Will there be consultation with the communities of Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay before making a decision on where the new health centre is built?

Hon. Ms. Frost: At the moment, I can say that there is no money assigned in this budget to replace any of the health centres. What we are doing is we are looking at the critical needs in each one of our communities and ensuring that we provide supports, if necessary, to upgrade the facilities to keep them up to standard and up to code. There are some facilities that are more imminent in terms of replacement than others and we will determine that as we align our budgets and look to the future.

Ms. McLeod: I understand then from what the minister just said that there are no immediate plans to replace the health centre in Destruction Bay—in either of those two communities.

When does the minister believe that this information might be available?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I would not commit to a specific timeline. What I can commit to is that we are taking a comprehensive review and assessment of all of our health care centres and identifying where the most critical replacement needs are. We have some buildings that are in dire need of capital repair, some buildings that perhaps need to be replaced, and other health centres that are sitting on top of a contaminated waste site that we're actually delivering health services on and that is not acceptable.

So if we want to talk about which health centres require replacement more imminently than others, we will clearly look at all of the communities and budget accordingly. At this time, that is not something that I can commit to until we do that further analysis.

Ms. McLeod: I wrote to the minister some time ago regarding a program called SNAP that used to be in place to help children with a variety of special needs in some of our schools. I had asked the minister by way of e-mail a number of questions regarding the success of this program and whether or not an assessment of its effectiveness had been done. The minister has advised that this was a program funded

by the federal government and that funding has come to an end.

By all accounts, parents felt that this program was very beneficial in helping children adapt to the school system. My question remains, was the program deemed a success or not by this government? If so, is the territorial government willing to find a way to maintain the program?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Whether the program was a success — I can say that I will collaborate with my colleague, the Minister of Education, and look at the program. What the member noted was that SNAP is no longer operating as it was a federal copyright process doing programs to help high-risk youth.

We have other alternatives that we are looking at within Education and within Health and Social Services to provide whatever services we can in supporting our youth. This SNAP program, although the letter came specifically to me, was not a Health and Social Services program. It was run from the Department of Justice. Sorry — it was run out of our department, but it was funded from Justice, so therefore it would have been a collaborative approach between Justice, Education and Health and Social Services.

Ms. McLeod: I just have one final question and I'll turn it over to the Third Party — perhaps I'll get a crack at a few more at the end.

The Department of Health and Social Services provided funding in the amount of \$15,000 in the form of a contribution agreement to the Watson Lake Food Bank. This was in 2016. This was to relieve community pressures due to the economy and other social issues.

When I asked the department whether or not this funding would be continued, the minister certainly said no. I'm wondering what evidence the minister used when making this decision. Given that the economic outlook has not changed, and that the community remains under crisis, and the fact that according to the budget documents the money was 100-percent recoverable from Canada, why and how did the minister come to this decision?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Absolutely correct — the program is no longer being funded. It was one-time support funding made available to help the community in a crisis.

In terms of what we use the Health and Social Services' budget for, providing one-time funding to give support in a crisis situation — we're not generally in the business of funding food banks. We are there to try to help families and help communities. When we are in Watson Lake, we will speak to the community and hopefully get some good feedback. The funding that we've provided them, as the member opposite may know, came from Canada as a one-time funding envelope that helped in that crisis.

Ms. White: I thank the Member for Watson Lake for her thorough questions. It has been eye-opening to know that we share so many concerns. I had no idea, because it certainly didn't feel that way when they were on the other side of the Chamber. I thank the officials for being here, and of course the minister.

I'm going to follow up on one thing really quickly before I move on. The Watson Lake community addiction services has just set up a new facility. The Member for Watson Lake brought it forward, but I'm going to maybe bring it forward in a bit more gritty way, because I'm going to read someone's Facebook post about it. I'm going to edit, though, because some of the language would not be acceptable here.

It just says, okay, I seriously hate to rag on this, because yes, it's a step in the right direction, but the fact is that it's next to the courthouse, run daytime during weekday hours. Just goes to show that people implementing this program are far removed from what the actual issues are in Watson Lake. It asks, is the government just looking for a pat on the back? Like, "Yes, we've invested in addictions services in Watson Lake; see, it's not our fault."

The concern she is raising is valid, because it is right next to the post office. The drop-in hours are between 1:00 and 3:00 on June 2. If the community gives the feedback that says it's in the wrong spot — so above the post office, next to the courthouse, pretty much on the main drag — is the department willing to move this office? Would they be willing to find a place that community members would be more comfortable attending?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite for the great question. Most definitely I'm hearing the same questions, same complaints and same concerns being raised by community members about the location. In fact, I would like to have that open discussion with members of the community when I'm in Watson Lake. What we have to do is ensure that we have a safe and appropriate place where citizens of that community can come and feel safe to reveal more and seek the supports they require. It most definitely is high on our priority list.

However, due to dedicated space available in Watson Lake, we have had some restrictions. Essentially, what was done in the past is the facility was housed as was described, in a place that was not conducive to proper client care. That was done in the past. As we move forward in this new government, in our new mandate and my new mandate, I really want to look at finding a premium location that provides for better and safer program efficiencies. This is most definitely on the priority list and we are also speaking with Yukon Housing Corporation to look at some alternatives. We will raise that with the community on June 16.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. What I heard was that there is a willingness to take a look and consult with the community, so I'm hopeful. I'm sure that between the Member for Watson Lake and I, we'll make sure that meeting is well-attended and people let the minister know how they feel about it.

Yesterday during the budget debate, there were some really interesting things said. I'm going to start with that, before I go into my original notes. This is a quote directly from the minister, and I have taken this out of yesterday's Blues. This is to quote the minister. It says: "Another way we will meet the needs of the people at all stages of their lives is by working with Yukoners to create solutions to promote

aging in place and a full spectrum of care, both privately and publicly. We have reached an agreement with the federal government for an additional \$6.2 million for enhanced home care services for the next 10 years."

The focus I am looking at here is "both privately and publicly." I am curious: Is the minister thinking about privately funded care? Is that what she meant when she said yesterday "both privately and publicly" — so is this government right now considering privately funded care facilities in Yukon?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for the question. I would say that with regard to the comments that I made with respect to private and public care, I think we have to keep our sights focused on whatever options and whatever possibilities there are in rural Yukon. We recognize that in rural Yukon, oftentimes, when we look at an aging-in-place model, it may very well mean that we work with the First Nation communities and the First Nation governments to ensure that we provide the best possible venue or facility for an aging-in-place model. We don't have any at this point, other than making some statements and having a clear mandate from the Premier to proceed with an aging-in-place model. We are looking at collaborating and consulting with the communities on what those models will look like.

It is not really specific to facilities like McDonald Lodge or Macaulay Lodge or the Whistle Bend facility. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking more about a seniors supportive housing-type concept that will venture into ensuring that community members stay in their own communities and in their own comfort zones. Whatever we can do to ensure that happens, we will do that on a basis that meets the needs of the respective community. Every community, as I understand and am fully aware having worked in most of the communities, have unique circumstances. Some are *Indian Act* First Nations, some are settled First Nations and some cohabitate with municipalities, so clearly we want to look at the best model available to those communities.

I look forward to deliberations and discussions with the member opposite, and I am sure that she has a lot of good ideas and good thoughts on how these models can work in the communities. I am most definitely open to having that dialogue as we move forward in implementing a longer term plan for an options consideration.

Ms. White: I am just really going to hone in looking for clarity on this answer because there is public health care or there is private health care. Private health care is fee-for-service and that is not what we do in the Yukon at this point. We have a public health care system that is accessible to all people. Private health care is about fee-for-service and whether you have the money to pay for it. When the statement was made yesterday, it was in relation to care facilities. Obviously the concern I have right now is that we have the biggest care facility opening in the Yukon sometime next year.

One of the questions we raised in the previous Assembly was that it needed to remain a public health care. It could not

be run by an Outside company as a P3 — public/private partnership — and that health care needed to remain a public asset.

Can the minister please clarify her statements between the terms “private” and “public” when she is referring to health care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Just to clarify, I may have misstated yesterday, there are no private health care initiatives or processes that I’m pursuing as a minister. All I’m trying to do is look at opportunities to ensure that our members — older adults — age well in their communities, because for me, I think really it’s what facilities can we provide in our communities right now. I have a small community. Old Crow is 250 people. We have five members of our community in a lodge in Whitehorse. Do they want to be here? No, they don’t. They want to be in the community, but we don’t have any opportunities or any facilities in our community. That’s one example. Ross River is the same thing. In fact, as the Member for Klwane raised, there are challenges at the care facility in Haines Junction.

Really, back to feedback and consultation, we’ll have broader discussions on what that might look like in our communities and looking at the facilities that Health and Social Services funds really is not the model that will fit in the communities. Clearly we’re not going to be able to finance or support that. We have just seen in our budget a \$140-million facility going up in Whistle Bend and, added on top of that, \$68 million in O&M expenses. That makes it very, very challenging for this government to look at alternative options.

I know, having worked as a negotiator for the First Nations, they want to enter into partnerships to better align services and needs in their communities, so whatever options we can look at, we want to ensure Continuing Care looks at various complex needs in our communities, but we’re certainly not going to privatize in any way. We will look at open discussions and open dialogue.

I said “\$68 million” and I take that back. It was actually \$36 million, just for clarification in the record.

Ms. White: I’m just going to put it on the record one more time that the NDP fundamentally believes in public health care — that we are looking across the country and we look at examples of institutions that are being run by private organizations. We just firmly stand by our thought that this is not where we should go in Yukon.

The minister touched on some of the stuff she did yesterday and again — I’m quoting from the Blues and seeking clarity. This is what the minister said yesterday: “With regard to a broader collaborative care and an aging-in-place model, I think we really need to look at having a community conversation — a conversation around why is it that this government has only provided services to Yukoners who are non-indigenous? We really have to alleviate that barrier that’s there for us and push it back out further and look at what we can do to ensure that all Yukoners have access to equitable, fair and transparent services and programs.

“Once we start looking at this being a 100-percent Government of Yukon responsibility — I believe that society,

individuals, other organizations and other governments have a responsibility as well to come as partners to the table in designing a comprehensive model — a model that will apply to long-term care in rural Yukon: “... we’ll be working with the federal government through a bilateral agreement in home care — is, again, the basis for the discussion and that will then address the needs.”

“Perhaps it hasn’t been sufficient enough, but we do aim to work with our partners and really look at a one-government approach to addressing all of the questions around home care, aging in place, and ensuring we have collaborative care models. How will that happen? It will be done with consultation and engagement.”

The concern I have around this is: Is the Government of Yukon in talks with the federal government in taking over some of the responsibilities, in particular around home care, and are there other program areas that Yukon government wants to take over?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Great question. The question around non-insured health benefit programs — the federal government has an obligation to provide some health care-type programs to all status Indians who are registered under the *Indian Act*. What we really, I think, need to do is provide supports to those First Nations who are prepared and ready to have that dialogue with the federal government. So when I speak broadly and frankly about looking beyond, I’m really going to my own experiences in terms of trying to look at potential opportunities for supporting — perhaps — the aspirations of the communities in rural Yukon.

I guess when we look at NIHB, it’s really the federal government’s responsibility in some comprehensive kind of way for its clientele. We have a responsibility as well. The Member for Watson Lake talked about a tier system in the Yukon. Perhaps that’s what she was referring to. I’m not sure, but in some circumstances we have health that is provided by the Government of Yukon and then we have a federal government obligation as well. Oftentimes that’s inconsistent. We want to ensure that we provide the best service possible to all our members of Yukon in a home care context, in an aging-in-place context.

Ms. White: Just a cautionary lesson for us all — which is that anything that we say does get recorded and is reflected honestly by the Hansard staff — and we thank them for that — but it just means that at times it’s something to come back to. Although the minister is speaking broadly and frankly, I would like to remind her that she is the Minister of Health and Social Services for all of Yukon. The statements yesterday just gave me pause — that’s all.

One of the statements yesterday that was also made — and this is again a quote. This is when we were talking about childcare and the cost and, in this case, the salaries. This is a quote from the minister yesterday: “... and the salary for a level 3, highly qualified individual in the communities is \$40 an hour. In my estimation that seems to be a pretty fair and equitable wage. Level 1 is \$31 an hour. The salary range is based on competencies and based on skillsets.”

Mr. Chair, my question is: Where in the territory are childcare workers making this money? Because I looked around and I talked to some people yesterday, and that is far, far out of the ballpark of anyone I know — of anyone, of any facility I talked to. If the minister can tell me where in the Yukon childcare workers are earning this money, there might be the new gold rush toward that community.

Hon. Ms. Frost: For the record, the note that I made yesterday with respect to the high end versus the low end — that's what this government provides by way of a direct operating grant to the facility for supports. What they do with it is really, I think, up to the childcare centre. That's what we provide. That's the high end, and that's what I was referring to yesterday.

The scale from one to three, based on competencies and based on the grant formula — that's what is provided to the daycare centres. How they manage that — there are some things we don't control, but we do provide them through a direct operating grant.

That number was very precise what you read back to me.

Ms. White: Precise is exactly what you can get when you look into the Blues.

My concern, then, with the minister's response to this is, having had a recent meeting with both a daycare owner and a daycare manager — we had a really broad conversation about the direct operating grant, from the application to the filing to the fact that there is no appeal system. When the minister just says that the government transfers the money based on that skillset and says that she is not responsible for how that's distributed — I'm also going to highlight here that, at this point in time, this one daycare operator has tried to contact the minister a half-dozen times about meeting, and that hasn't happened yet, but I'm hopeful.

The point is that the direct operating grant — the money that was set out — was set in 2008. Everybody in this Chamber can attest that, since 2008, inflation has changed. Rent for facilities has changed, the cost of healthy food has changed, the cost of power has changed, the cost of heat has changed — all those things have changed.

What hasn't changed is the amount of the direct operating grant. I asked in Question Period — whether it was last week or the week before, because they all kind of run in together — if the department was considering doing a review of the direct operating grant for childcare facilities. It's important, Mr. Chair, that I mention that it's for licensed childcare facilities, because only ones that are licensed that meet the requirements of the department are able to apply for this money.

Is there an interest or a willingness within the department to review the direct operating grant, which has not changed since 2008?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The direct operating grant and childcare subsidies that the member opposite has referred to — over the last two fiscal years, the Department of Health and Social Services provided \$8,735,011 in direct operating grants and \$3,297,149 in childcare subsidies to childcare centres and day homes.

I'll refer to the number — we had 1,439 licensed spaces in the Yukon, and the department has made some adjustments. It made three significant improvements to the childcare subsidy program in 2015, with an increase in the threshold of five percent, to make more families eligible for subsidy funding, thereby making childcare more accessible with the enhancements.

We also increased the maximum amount that a family can receive by 10 percent. Finally, the parent contribution, which is the amount of the family income considered when calculating the subsidy, was reduced from 25 percent to 22 percent.

Ms. White: The one problem that I have with that answer is that what the minister was just talking about was the childcare subsidy. She also used — and I totally appreciate that, in two years, \$8.7 million sounds like a lot, and so does \$3.5 million. It's important to know that the childcare subsidy helps families afford childcare. It does not actually help the facilities operate.

When we were being given the numbers and told the \$40 an hour for the level 3 — I'm just going to ask for a breakdown. From the department's own website, the direct operating grant — and this is what it says: "The grant provides funding to child care programs to help ongoing operating and maintenance costs and to help reduce the pressure on programmes having to raise parent fees." That's the definition of what the direct operating grant is.

Within that \$40 an hour — keeping in mind, of course, that people have to do 20 to 40 hours of education yearly or every two years. In the meeting that I had with the daycare operator, there were a lot of notes and it was pretty overwhelming, and I'm going to go back. But what part of that \$40 does the department acknowledge is for wages and what is for the cost? When I was looking at the paperwork that we were shown, they were not getting \$40 directly toward the wages. That was to run the facility. That was for the maintenance costs; that was for the program. How does that break down — the direct operating grant toward salary and toward the actual running and maintenance of the facility?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to the recommendation of the review, I noted yesterday in my presentation that we are in current discussions with the federal government on early learning and childcare. That will provide more opportunities to review the existing programs. Most definitely, as we advance at this point, we don't have the capacity or the resources to advance on this particular budget, but as new resources and new initiatives come forward, we will most definitely consider our options.

Now, the direct operating grant formula for childcare centres is based on enrolment, building expenses, a hot meals program to provide nutritional meals, and staff training levels. The enrolment component provides monthly payments of \$180 per infant, \$135 per toddler, \$100 per preschool, \$80 per kindergarten child, and \$85 per school-aged child enrolled in the childcare program.

Additional funding is provided for children with special needs. The building expenses component provides 32 cents

for every one dollar the childcare centre spends monthly on improved building expenses. The hot meal component provides for \$14 per child. The staff training component provides an hourly supplement based on the childcare worker's designation level — level 1A, and it goes up to level 3 — so the contribution component for level 3 is a contribution, I believe, of an hourly supplement for staff training of \$9 to a maximum of \$40.

The formula that I read yesterday was that, although the staff training component contributes to early childhood educator wages, these wages are determined by each childcare program. So the 2016-17 wage for early childcare educators throughout Yukon — and I highlighted what was available to us by the assessments that were done — and the \$48 that I highlighted was the salary for a director, the level 3 high end was \$40 and the low end was \$22. The contribution through this direct operating grant helps to subsidize that as well.

In 2008, the wage portion of the direct operating grant was increased between 29 percent and 30 percent. As I indicated, the wage is really controlled by the childcare program operators. It is not something that we control. Health and Social Services is really preparing a pilot — a rural childcare model — in Dawson City, Ross River and Watson Lake. We are looking at stabilizing childcare in these communities that are seeing a higher demand. In the summer and the early fall, we will have more resources made available to us and most definitely we will look at the childcare models and early child learning and childcare for the Yukon — perhaps an enhanced scope.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the government may be talks with the federal government about funding for early childhood education or programs specifically targeted at children and youth, but it is important to know — and you know, for a government that talks about how they are going to make decisions based on evidence, all that money invested into children early pays off in spades later on. In our opinion, and at one point it was the opinion of the Premier because we also sat on the same side and this conversation, which was that every child has the right to early childhood education. These aren't daycare facilities in the way that we talk about them. They are actually early childhood education facilities where they are being taught a spectrum of things.

I am going to flag that I hope that when the minister is approached by people within the early childhood education field, she is receptive to meeting with them because the reality is that grant hasn't changed since 2008. The costs of operating the facilities — the cost of operating to keep them going — has changed and, therefore, they are stretching the money in ways that are quite remarkable.

I'm just going to follow up on one thing that was said today in regard to Macaulay Lodge. It wasn't me; it was the previous Member for Riverdale South who had questions about the Thomson Centre. There have been discussions in the last couple of years with the previous government about the closure of the Thomson Centre once the Whistle Bend facility opened. I think it's important that the first thing we talk about is that the Thomson Centre was purpose-built to be a

continuing care facility. It was never designed to be offices. Probably the most expensive offices in the entire territory are in the Thomson Centre because that's not what it was designed for.

Is it still the plan of the department to close the Thomson Centre? Or will this very purpose-built facility expand back to its original size with its original purpose and remain as part of the continuing care for Yukoners? It has been raised numerous times by palliative care experts in the territory that palliative care needs to be closer to the main hospital. Although the Whistle Bend facility will probably be very nice when it opens, for palliative care purposes, they need to be closer to the pharmacy and they need to be closer to the hospital.

Is there a plan by this government to shut down the Thomson Centre? Our hope is that they will consider keeping it open for what it was purposely built for.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for the question. We have no plans to close the Thomson Centre. In fact, we've opened up 10 additional beds at the Thomson Centre to alleviate some of the pressure that is being felt in our community. Certainly we will take the member opposite's views into consideration. We now have expanded care at the Thomson Centre to 39 beds from, I guess, the historical average, although we are looking at that. We respect the member's opinion and views as well on potential feedback. It's really great and I'm open to that.

Ms. White: I'm just going to point out that I appreciate that, when push came to shove, the previous government did actually open up beds in there, and that's great, but it's still not at its full capacity. It is not being fully utilized for the facility it was. Maybe that is something we can look at.

I have had a kind of christening by fire as far as the health file goes, because I'm following behind someone who was really, really good at it. There are interesting things between this year's budget and last year's budget. One of the things, right off the top, is that there is a lot less information being provided in this budget. There is less statistical information and it's important to note that this information allows you to make comparisons between previous years. It shows you trends and it can explain increases or decreases in funding. What was in last year's — the 2016-17 budget — does not exist in this one. Also missing is information on individual program areas. Especially obvious is any information or statistics on social assistance.

I appreciate that we're now looking outward and trying to project further, but we are missing important information in Health and Social Services that used to live within the budget book and doesn't anymore.

I'm going to save my questions for those areas where that information and statistics are missing, but I'll be asking them when we get there. This is all part of the importance of being able to understand what is going on in our territory with our citizens. One of the things that is so intimidating about this budget is that this department is the biggest. It affects every single person in the territory from birth to death. It is quite a bit more intense than my previous critic areas because of that importance. It is puzzling to know that some of that

information that helped us go through programming and successes isn't there anymore.

The easiest way for me to do this is I'm going to start at the beginning of the budget and work my way through. First question is: What is the number of auxiliary-on-call FTEs throughout the Health and Social Services department?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm going to apologize. I didn't get that last question, but I'm going to respond to the first point that was made with regard to statistics and data that is not relevant or that's not evident in this budget. We have clearly taken a different approach to program design and delivery, really looking at performance measures reflecting some of the successes and perhaps some of the failures historically, and what can we do to improve and provide enhancements.

The measures will be defined in our business models and our performance reports going forward. We will ensure the performance measures, as they become available, are well-noted on our websites and in the reports that are tabled in the Legislature. I will be happy to have a further conversation with the member opposite to provide whatever detail she requires. Most certainly, I will not object to that. I'm open to providing and helping to better educate and provide more input.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. I think there is an importance, though, with continuity. To say that all the information that we used to collect and include — we're not going to anymore — because although the minister is new and so is the government, the department has been around for a couple of days. It's to be able to look back to see where we are and where we want to go. It's just about that continuity.

If the programs get dropped or the collection of information has changed — the Premier also knows that, in 2011, the budgeting process changed and we were looking at two different sets of information between 2011 and 2010. That's okay. It is just to make sure that we can still figure out where we are in that process.

The question that I did ask was: What was the number of auxiliary-on-call FTEs throughout the Department of Health and Social Services?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have that number. We have 85.25 auxiliaries currently on staff.

Ms. White: Under Family and Children's Services in the capital costs line, we see cash for treatment home and receiving home replacements. Where are these projects, and do we know the projected costs of them?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The funds are under the Family and Children's Services component. The funds for planning construction — the \$660,000. We have funds requested for planning costs for the replacement of 502 Hoge Street and 502 Lowe Street, which are residential group homes. The funds of \$500,000 are also requested for planning and replacement of a new female receiving home on Fifth Avenue.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. I appreciate the clarity, so thank you for that.

Just while we're talking about the replacement of buildings, the old St. Elias group home just off of Wood Street served as an emergency shelter this winter, and it was well

attended as everyone knows. I'm happy to see that the blue construction fence has gone up around it. There was an original conversation and hopes that it would be taken down this summer and available for something else.

Can the minister tell us what the expected timeline is for that deconstruction of the old St. Elias group home? What can we expect to be built on that site?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I have old memories of the St. Elias Residence. I spent my youth in that facility — some good memories and some not-so-good memories. I plan to be there when it comes down — when it is deemed not to be safe, given the state that it is in.

With regard to when it is coming down, that has gone over to Highways and Public Works and the tendering is being issued now, so I really don't know specifically when, but I do know that it's imminent. We are looking for options and are exploring our options for what should go on that site in the future. There are many good recommendations coming to us and we will consider all the options.

Ms. White: Has the minister been approached by her department for a Housing First facility? I know that the minister has mentioned multiple times in my questions about housing and the need for housing. The term "Housing First" has been used, for which I am eternally grateful, because I talked about Housing First until I was blue in the face for probably the first three years of being elected. It's nice to know that Housing First is now actually a concept that I can use here and it's understood. That is fantastic, but when the minister has talked about Housing First and the importance of it, is this a potential site for a Housing First facility?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I wouldn't say that it's not, but I wouldn't commit either. We are looking at options, and most definitely Housing First is a priority. As we well know, we have a bit of a crisis on our hands with accommodating and providing services and supports. One of the key messages that I have heard continuously is that it is inappropriate for us to house mothers and children in hotel rooms because we have nowhere else to put them. Key priorities like that will drive what we do in the future with new builds.

Ms. White: My concern with that last statement is that we're talking about multiple continuums of housing. I understand that the minister is both responsible for Health and Social Services and for Yukon Housing Corporation. I would suggest that families would possibly be better suited to go into the Yukon Housing spectrum as opposed to the Health and Social Services spectrum, which I would suggest is where the Housing First would lie. It is not just housing; it's housing with supports.

When the minister talks about the critical importance and the emergency need for Housing First, but then says that no commitments have been made, when can we expect government to make a decision about a Housing First model? Not, of course, looking at the Centre of Hope and the Salvation Army, because that is private and that is not what I'm asking about. I'm asking about government responsibility with Housing First.

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to my role as the minister responsible for housing, I have instructed the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services to work with the president of the Yukon Housing Corporation to look at all options regarding the implementation of the housing action plan, the Housing First model. Adopting a Housing First strategy for vulnerable populations, such as those affected by poverty, addictions and mental challenges, is most definitely a priority, but we have multiple priorities and multiple pressures and we are really trying to take a one-government approach and to maximize the opportunities that are presented to us. Recommending that we do have a supply, or a shortage of supply, of safe and adequate houses across the housing continuum — we can't really rely on Yukon Housing to provide that because they do have a bit of over-capacity as well in providing housing options — trying to base it on Housing First approaches.

Clearly we have to look at the whole aspect of supplying safe and adequate housing for all of the housing continuum requirements. Key components are ensuring that we have safe houses — adequate houses — and that we provide, first and foremost, for those vulnerable populations and try to transition them to a safer environment. Some of these facilities or some of these units have requirements — stipulations. With Yukon Housing, for example, there is an application process, and the application process will determine how and when you get into these facilities. That sometimes is not the best model either, so we are looking at all of the models to ensure that we provide the best services in a timely fashion. We don't necessarily want to put any of our residents at risk when implementing the housing action plan. Some really good recommendations came out of the housing action plan, so now it's a matter of putting some implementation elements to that action plan.

We took that first approach most recently in March by hosting a community-based forum discussing the housing action plan and looking at identifying priorities for the coming year.

Ms. White: I really did have organized notes, and I did plan on following them, but I am totally going with my train of thought right now.

When we talk about Housing First, the Premier is going to know about this document because it was brought forward in 2011 by a subgroup of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. It was the northern housing trust — it's something very similar to that — and it was a Housing First model. It tied in all sorts of different community providers and addressed it. At that point in time, the then-Yukon Party government had no interest in meeting with them. It is important to note that safely housing people is a cost-saving on the health care system and on the justice system. We are talking about two different kinds of housing. I can't wait until we get to talk about Yukon Housing Corporation, but right now I am firmly in the camp of Housing First in Health and Social Services.

When the minister just talked about housing vulnerable populations, one of the issues that I took incredible issue with over the last number of years, was that Health and Social Services pays upward of a half-million dollars every winter to

hotels where people have no protection because they are not there for six months plus a day; where they don't have adequate cooking facilities for the most part; where they are not treated with the same rules that you would in private market rentals; and where evictions happen. I know in one case — very much so — that one hotel room had three evictions in one calendar month where they kept the deposit from all three social assistance clients. That one room in that one month earned an awful lot of money because there was no housing security there. That was an issue, and I am sure that department heads are well aware of it because I spoke about it a lot. When the minister talked the other day, she mentioned that she was not happy with that and that in the last number of years — I think the number that was used was close to \$7 million, because more than \$500,000 each winter goes toward these hotels.

A Housing First facility would answer a lot of those issues because it is about housing stability. It's about safety; it's about security; it's about dignity, and then it is about addressing those needs and moving forward to other things. It's not to say that everyone in a Housing First model is going to get a job and they are going to contribute to society in that way, but everybody in the territory deserves housing because it is a fundamental human right. I look forward to the time when I am not going to ask what cost was paid last year for long-stay hotels, but I feel like this is an opportunity. How much did the Department of Health and Social Services pay for housing accommodations in hotels in the 2016-17 winter?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Well, I would have to say that I most certainly take issue that as well. I think one of the first things I did when I was assigned this responsibility, which I take very seriously, was ensuring that I read all of the documentation. I thank the member opposite for providing me with some historical information as well as some reports. That really helps to refine my perspectives and perhaps enlighten my understanding a little more. My issue as well is quick assessment. This is not 100-percent accurate, but my general assessment coming in was: What are we paying for hotel rooms and accommodations? Exactly that point: How can you provide safe, healthy and sustainable environments for families and multiple members of families staying in hotel rooms when you can't cook, can't provide safe facilities and the children are expected to go to school and be functional? It's absolutely not something that we should be doing at all.

My assessment was that I believe there was something like \$675,000 spent on an annual basis, or \$60,000-some a month. That may change and fluctuate in the summer, but for the most part, that was my assessment. I most definitely did a quick calculation, looking at the Housing First model. One would play with some numbers and you can quickly calculate — if you compound that over a course of a short number of years, you can have a Housing First model and you can have secured accommodation to provide for these residents.

Clearly I am looking at wanting to change this and ensure that we have permanent residency established for all these clients in the best way possible, looking at our partners and looking at strategies. We know the federal government is

coming out with some national initiatives — poverty reduction strategies, national housing strategies. There are new initiatives coming down from the federal government to Yukon Housing Corporation. We want to take a very proactive approach, perhaps unlike historic practices. We want to take a more proactive approach and try to eliminate some of the barriers and work across departments and ensure we collaborate on good models and implement a Housing First action plan. So I thank the member opposite for the great question and I absolutely agree.

Ms. White: That is fantastic news. I can assure the minister that the cost that goes toward hotels in the summertime comes down because, every spring, the clients are evicted because they become tourism accommodation. That is the fundamental basis of my problem — it's not secure housing. It's great that it's over the cold months, but it's not great for every other reason, including the fact that there is actually no recourse. You can't go to the Minister of Community Services' department to look for help. You can't go anywhere for help because they don't fall under anywhere except for the hotel guidelines and that actually doesn't help.

One of the issues I have always had about long-stay hotels is that, although the Department of Health and Social Services pays for those rents, there are no inspections done. There is no security to be sure the buildings we are paying for are adequate. Without names, I think everyone will understand that nine rooms were closed in a hotel last year because they did not meet minimum health and safety standards, although they had been paid for by Health and Social Services for a great number of years prior to that.

How does the department guarantee that if we're paying for accommodation, the accommodation is safe and that it meets the same requirements that a private market rental would have to meet?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I guess that is a bit of a question that I find challenging as well.

The rule, in terms of inspecting facilities like hotel rooms before we put clients in these rooms, is not something that Health and Social Services is responsible for, but it's clearly something that we want to ensure by way of case management — that as the clients move into these facilities, they are as much as possible short-stays and are there to provide and ensure that imminent needs are addressed, and emergency shelter is provided but on a temporary basis.

By the same token, you want to ensure that they are provided some long-term permanent residency, and what that looks like is really by working with the individual and helping them to seek a permanent residence. I don't know that we have an obligation — perhaps there are rules in terms of how hotels govern and manage themselves.

Unless we get a very specific complaint — I understand that historically there were some concerns about one specific hotel with regulations around safety and accessing some rooms, and there was an inspection done on that facility. Unless there is a direct complaint back to the department, then the health inspector — or perhaps the fire inspector or the building inspector — will then trigger a response and go into

the facility and address that. But under the *Landlord and Tenant Act*, that is not something that we're obligated to or can do, but we will most certainly ensure that the clients are, as much as we can under the laws of application — protect the individuals.

In the future, perhaps we won't have to worry about that if we address the Housing First model and we start looking at alternatives. For me, I guess, I would have to say it's not the ideal but it's what is available, and it's unfortunate. I do know that the *Landlord and Tenant Act* really doesn't reflect on the hotels and how the hotels accommodate, but we can work with the hotels when there is a complaint that is brought forward by the client to hopefully eliminate some of the concerns raised.

Ms. White: This is not the proper department but I will flag it right now — there is an incredible imbalance between the *Landlord and Tenant Act*. There is also an incredible imbalance between someone who is staying at a hotel for a long period of time and doesn't fall under that legislation — and to be able to make those complaints. Although I appreciate that it would be complaint driven, the power imbalance exists and it is hard to address. I would just put that out there and I will have a conversation with a different minister at another point about that.

In the last number of years, I have been really fortunate — and this is not for feedback about the organization. But the Yukon Association for Community Living and the work that they do is very important. The work that they do and the lessons that I've learned through them is equally important for me because it gives me a better understanding of how people with disabilities are able to function in our communities whether they stay in the territory or whether they go out in some cases.

Under Family and Children Services, we see that the department is spending over \$1.5 million for Outside placements in a variety of programs.

My question is: For how many individuals are these long-term placements? Is there any plan to return these individuals to the Yukon? Then, more importantly, when someone is out of territory, how do we make sure that they are able to maintain contact with their families?

There are some pretty big questions there, but it is also about the ability to have a conversation about it, so I don't expect all the answers first off.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have a direct response at the moment. It is a bit of a complex challenge to get my fingertips on that right now. What I can say is that it is very similar to perhaps the line of responses that I have been providing. To have Health and Social Services — it's really about the complexity of the client needs and where and what types of services are provided and where and when they can come back to the territory. Whether we can provide that service here is perhaps another whole conversation, but we'll certainly provide that information.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer.

In the last number of years — I always say that people don't come to the NDP office because things are going really

well. I mean, once we know people and things are going really well, then we'll know, but typically when people come to visit us the first time, it's not because things are going really well.

One of the things that has been brought forward for us with families with either children with disabilities or adult children with disabilities is that there is an inequity within the system. The Yukon government is willing to pay an awful lot of money to put someone into an institution Outside of the territory, but it is not willing to spend even remotely that same kind of money to help the family. By that, I mean it's not about respite care, but it's making sure that, if there is a family member who needs to stay home full-time, it is a paid position. If the government is willing to pay for that outside of the territory to the tune of hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars a day, I find it hard to believe that we're not willing to pay the family member who has to become the full-time caregiver.

Does the minister have any thoughts on that?

Hon. Ms. Frost: With regard to paying family members, I don't think that is something we would entertain, but we are looking and we will look at the complexities of each case, or each client, and at that point work with the families to better manage their requirements or the services that they require. We do, as best we can, provide services and, if it's not sufficient, then most definitely we look forward to speaking with the families to ensure that they get the services and the support they need, but paying families to take care — I don't think that it is in the budget, nor is it something we would consider.

Ms. White: The reason I bring this up is that we talk about the importance of keeping families together. We do. We talk about how incredibly important it is, and an adult child with disabilities is just as valuable as an adult child without disabilities. The concern we have is that we're seeing families who are being forced to institutionalize their children because government doesn't view the care that they give them as a service for government, and government would rather pay an institution to do that care and separate the family. I point out right now that we do not have the care facilities required, although there are definitely some people at the Copper Ridge facility.

Again, my question is: Why don't we consider the work that families do to care for children with disabilities, or adult children with disabilities, as a service to government? Why don't we value that and the family members who have to do that work?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I definitely understand and appreciate that there are perhaps some considerations around families with members with disabilities, and that the care providers in the communities or in the city are sometimes insufficient, given the complexities of the care required for those who are disabled. However, just as a note, Copper Ridge does provide some units that are available to ensure that children are kept in the Yukon and that they have the proper supports there.

My understanding also is that in 2016, there was a group home — the St. Elias group home — with six apartments

assigned specifically for disabled clients. I'm just going to refer for a moment to find if that was for adults or children.

Some Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Hon. Ms. Frost: Okay, so that was for adults. We also have — as I indicated earlier — really tried to work with the families to provide individual respite care when needed. We have a number of other facilities available, if necessary, to provide the supports required by the families for some respite care, if needed.

Ms. White: The reason I was able to shout out that the St. Elias group home is for adults is because I have a friend who is there. I'll just take this opportunity to thank the staff there. It is a phenomenal and beautiful new facility. The really important part for me is that, at one point in time, it wasn't looking like it was going to be a facility that would allow people with mobility issues to be there. My friend was going to have to move. I appreciate that everything was put in place, because it is his family. These facilities very much become families. It's great. It's good. It's a fantastic place. If everything could be like that, then I wouldn't have to be here asking questions that didn't have answers.

Just to get back to Family and Children's Services, we are seeing an increase in the number of families receiving family services and increases in the number of families with identified protection concerns. Is there any speculation as to why there are these increases? What is being done to address that growing number?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Family services have gone up significantly, especially in rural communities. The services have gone up, and because of that we have had to increase our staff numbers and provide staff in all of our communities. I think that looking at starting an engagement process, and looking at providing essential services and referral services in our communities — families with identified protection concerns are somewhat up in Whitehorse. The numbers fluctuate from time to time, and we are trying to be responsive at any particular time.

Ms. White: I can appreciate that. There has been quite a drop in the number of adoption placements. Does the department have any speculation as to why that is?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Adoption services approved and waiting for child placement — is up significantly. We have and continue to have very few adoption files with children waiting for a placement, so such small variations in number can reflect disproportionately on program statistics.

Ms. White: Moving on to Child Placement Services: How many extended family care arrangements are there now?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will have to provide the member opposite with a response to that answer. I will do that at a later date.

Chair: Would members like to take a brief recess?

All Hon. Members: Agreed.

Chair: Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

Recess

Chair: Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

Committee is continuing general debate on Vote 15, Department of Health and Social Services, in Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*.

Ms. White: Moving into Child Placement Services, I had just asked the number of extended family care arrangements now. The number is more to just get an idea.

There has been a big push by the department to get more foster families. For a long time, I think foster families didn't get the credit or recognition that they deserve for the work that gets done. I think a lot of times, if you could talk to families who have historically done it and don't do it anymore, some of it would be because it's not cost-effective or that their situation changed — all these things. I do appreciate that there has been a big push toward that.

One of my concerns is that I actually called the phone number in the newspaper for the foster care families at one point in time, because it is actually something that I've entertained at times, although right now my life is so crazy I would not pass the intake program because I would not be as steady as would be required for that.

I was super surprised when I called that number that it didn't say that I had reached the foster care line or that I had reached the department responsible for that. It actually says, "You have reached Health and Social Services; leave a message. It didn't actually give me any indication of where I had called. It didn't say: "We'll call you back." It didn't say any of that.

My concern is that if I were on the edge and I wasn't me, I was someone who had maybe a bit more stable of a life and I was ready to do this — if I had called that number and that was the response that I got, I would be concerned because you would expect a bit more, especially with the drive for foster families that has been going on. I'm just going to put that out and it's just a concern. It's a concern that I'm sure can be addressed. I just want to put it out there.

I have a couple of friends who have actually recently gone through the training, which is really exciting. I'm very proud of them that they made the decision that they're ready to do this. It's a huge undertaking. The training is involved and you go through a background check, as you should, because you are dealing with vulnerable children. That's all really important.

I just wanted to know how many full-time or FTEs are within the foster care unit — so people who are doing the training, doing the placements and doing that organization. How many people work within that very specific branch of that department, the name of which I probably have wrong? I am aiming specifically for the foster care unit.

Hon. Ms. Frost: My understanding is that we have five FTEs in the foster care program. I thank the member opposite for the great feedback on the call centre and most certainly we will have a look at that and ensure that we have addressed some of the concerns around that.

Now the question around how many children we have in extended family care agreements — we have 48 currently, clearly pushing really, really hard to reduce that down as much as we can. I met with the grandparents' association — really great folks. Obviously they have some really great concerns as well around extended family care options and looking at what other alternatives there are in keeping children at home with families in the event that they can't stay with their parents.

The continuation of implementing the foster care action plan is working with the caregivers. I did attend the Christmas luncheon thing as well and met with all the foster parents and the children. I have personal experience as well in having fostered myself. I know how important it is to work with families and children and then to remove them from their community and try to keep that intact as much as we can.

Some recent coverage I think really highlights that there is a challenge, when are working really hard to eliminate and ensure that we have proper environments established to keep our children in their communities and in an extended-family type model.

Ms. White: I appreciate that the minister just mentioned kindred care because the grandparents' association is also an organization that we spent quite a bit of time talking with and it's just recognizing the value and the importance of that, so I appreciate that was just mentioned.

Knowing that there has been a push for new foster families, how many have been recruited in the last drive? How many have quit in, let's say, the last calendar year?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I just wanted to make a note of a correction. I said, "We have five full-time FTEs." It is in fact seven, just for the record.

I'm not able to give you those specific numbers on what we have had historically to what we have now, but I do know that we are and we will continue to work with foster families, and look at really trying to promote awareness and do as much training as we can to expand our pool of foster parents and foster caregivers. I gave you some numbers earlier about the challenges in rural Yukon. We are trying as best we can to work with our partners there. We have entered into some bilateral discussions with some of the First Nation communities on child welfare issues, trying to establish beyond that best practice so that we can work with the partners as well. Thank you for the question.

Ms. White: I guess something that I would see as being incredibly valuable is exit interviews. So if a family has been enrolled in the foster care program before to be a foster family and then they make the decision to opt out for many different reasons, is there an exit interview process to understand if there were specific challenges that could be addressed by the department?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I thank the member opposite for the excellent question. Really, I think feedback is essential and important always in program management and in ensuring that we adapt the program to best align with needs. Most definitely the department attempts to look at providing exit interviews where necessary and where the foster parent is willing and

able to do that. From July 16 to March 17, the foster care program received 28 inquiries from prospective foster caregivers and approved five new foster homes. So that is just referring back to the earlier question — I said I would get back to you.

We continue obviously, by way of advertisements and media, to try to promote more awareness and engagement to increase that number. As of March, there were 57 active foster care homes in the Yukon — 41 in Whitehorse and 16 in rural Yukon.

Ms. White: For the 16 in rural Yukon, if there isn't a full-time social worker, what kind of supports do they get?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I just wanted to note that we do now have full-time social workers in every community, so that social worker will work very closely in collaboration with the respective First Nation that is there, recognizing that they are there to provide a broad spectrum of care for all of society.

I am not in any way attempting by way of my responses to discriminate or marginalize or target just the First Nations, but we have an obligation to work with those communities as well, given that they have taken some assumptions of responsibilities and we want to just ensure that, as a government, we're not eliminating or removing that from our discussions.

All of the regional offices and the social workers offices are fully staffed. I am happy to say that this is the first time that we have had this for many years. We hope and we aim to keep that effective and active and that the new positions that we are creating will only help to augment and support services in our communities.

Ms. White: Congratulations to the department for that incredible feat. It has been a long time that I know that effort has been there.

One of the concerns that I have about the foster program is whether or not the financial supports are there for foster families. Is government planning on undertaking a review of the financial supports for foster families?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am just going to refer to the funding model for foster care as it currently stands. The model we have is as follows: \$1,072.91 per month per child in Whitehorse; \$1,148.24 per month per child in communities; and in Old Crow, given that the cost of living is a lot different, it is \$1,947.73 per month per child. The monthly basis is there to provide for the children's needs, including food, shelter, clothing and personal incidentals.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for those numbers. Like I said, I was just wondering if it's adequate. If a review has been done and a discussion has been had with families, does it meet the requirements? Are those children able to participate in activities? How does all that work out? I will just leave that there.

When the minister said that there were social workers in every community, is that every community? We can go from Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Destruction Bay and Haines Junction if I follow the highway. Can I get a list of the communities where the social workers are located please?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that right in front of me, but I will certainly get that to you in a few minutes once we pull the information out.

Ms. White: Even if it doesn't happen to be every single community, it's better than it was, so I will also still offer the congratulations.

For the breakdown — and I don't need to know communities because I don't want anyone to be singled out, but what are the numbers of First Nation children and non-First Nation children in the care of foster families?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am not able to provide that specific data at the moment, but I can certainly provide the member opposite with the information.

Ms. White: I definitely don't need it here on the floor. It's just more for trying to understand the numbers between this year and last year and the year before — and next year. It's just that information.

On Child and Adolescent Therapeutic Services — or CATS, because that is way less of a mouthful, so I am just going to refer to it as CATS — there used to be information available in the budget.

There used to be a table, which doesn't exist in this budget anymore. Why is that information no longer in the budget book?

Hon. Ms. Frost: It's a bit of an education, as my colleague said yesterday. You're getting all of this information and it's like talking words in your head to try to decipher and relate back to the budget. So it's not in the budget. It's not specifically identified here. My understanding is that it fluctuates based on numbers and, really, it's about the outcomes. What are we doing with the assessment centre and the services provided out of that centre? It does fluctuate and we don't have it in here, but I would certainly be willing to sit down with you and go through in more detail to provide you some more information.

Going back to your earlier question that you had with respect to where the social workers are situated, we have one in Old Crow, one in Dawson City, one in Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Ross River, Watson Lake, Carcross, Whitehorse, Teslin and Haines Junction, and the Haines Junction office provides services up to Beaver Creek and to Destruction Bay — Beaver Creek being, I guess, White River.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. That is substantially better coverage than we have had previously, so congratulations to the department on that.

The reason I was asking about CATS is that, when you used to be able to look at it within the budget book for service providers and all the rest of it, which is why it was important — and I do appreciate that we can have a conversation and that I can get the numbers. Currently, what is the number of adults and children being served by this program? I realize it's ongoing — but right now, how many are within this program? I guess I can tack on: Is this program available in the communities?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The program is actually for children. They do travel to rural Yukon and we provide services broader than Whitehorse — just in response to the question.

Ms. White: I was under the impression that it also serviced the families or the parents of those children. Does it also service adults and children?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for the question. More education on my part as well — the centre provides support to the children and, when a child comes forward or the centre provides support to the child, it clearly involves the whole spectrum of care and involves family members. That's when you have the adults involved in child support, particularly when we have therapeutic-type services that the child requires and that are far beyond — I guess it sometimes gets very complex when you deal with violence or physical or sexual abuse. The child may need an adult present to support them, so programs offered at the centre are counselling and play therapy, family therapy, and consultation and training.

Services are offered in the communities as well to provide treatment for groups, based on age and the type of abuse and experiences. Counselling and supports are also provided, not just to the mom and dad, but also, if necessary, to the siblings. It really associates with each individual requirement centred around the care of the child and the child's needs.

Ms. White: Just the acknowledgement of the superhuman work that happens within that department — the work that the department and those people do can't be measured. I hope they take care of themselves, that they have lots of good self-care programs and that they are well, because the work they do is really important.

I have mentioned differences. The differences between last year's budget and this year's budget — the minister did mention the number of licensed daycares and positions and day homes, but that used to be in the document.

It's not in the document now. I don't need those numbers again, because they were mentioned yesterday, but the one question I have is: Why does the minister think that approximately only one-third of families receive subsidies? Out of the number of children in the territory based on the numbers that we had, why is it only one-third? Is it because they don't qualify for financial reasons? Is it because the application process is too onerous? To be perfectly honest, there are quite a few hoops for the process, so I'm just wondering if the department is taking a look at why so few children are actually covered by that program.

Hon. Ms. Frost: My understanding is that there is a threshold, so it's really geared to low-income families and low-income clients. That's where the number comes from.

Ms. White: This is one where I would say that, if we had more in-depth statistics in Yukon, we could actually figure out if all the kids who would qualify under this program, based on their parents' income, were being covered. Without that statistical information, it's hard to know if every child is having access to early childhood education or not. I will leave that there.

We already talked about the direct operating grant and my belief that it should be reviewed, so I'm going to move on to youth justice.

Again, there are no statistics provided like there were in the past. What are the numbers of young offenders from the

past year in Whitehorse and regions? What are the numbers of young offenders in the Young Offenders Facility currently, and what is the average length of stay?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't know that. I can provide that direct information — just given the rules around privacy and privacy rules around individuals, in that realm anyhow.

Ms. White: I would just like to point out that it was in last year's budget. Those numbers do exist and they have existed in the past in print that you could find. I don't need them here — that is fine — but you could look at them before.

In what communities is the healthy families program now being provided?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I can't provide you the exact numbers right now, but I do know that we have the program in Watson Lake, in Dawson City and, I do believe, in Ross River. I'm not 100-percent certain of that but I will most certainly provide you with that information.

Ms. White: That's great. If there is an interest within communities and there is a group that is able to deliver the program, then maybe we can look at expanding it because it's great. I just put that pitch in there.

I'm veering off my notes. I was going through the budget in order, but I'm just going to go down my train of thought for a second.

I have different friends who work within youth support programs. They work for NGOs, they work for government, and they do different work. A youth worker is a super-specialized person, because whether they come from a background with training or whether they come from the ability to actually connect and to make those relationships and develop those relationships, it is incredibly valuable work. I thank everyone who works within the field of youth outreach.

One of the things that has been brought to my attention — I do really appreciate the Department of Health and Social Services responded to the call for a youth shelter. I really appreciate it because I'm sure that officials will remember that it was not the most pleasant of conversations that I had many years ago — including being told that if children didn't attend and if youth didn't attend, then it was over. I appreciate the department looked that way.

It's unfortunate to say that it is a success because it's successful — because of the number of youth who attend. I appreciate the work that Skookum Jim's does and I appreciate the work that is being done there. The concern that I have is that the facility is for children between 17 and 23 — so youth between 17 and 23. What we're starting to see with some youth outreach workers is that we have youth under 17 who are requiring emergency shelter. I can't imagine the stress of being approached by someone who is 13 or 14 years old who has nowhere to go, knowing that the only place that theoretically is open for that emergency purpose is only qualified from 17 to 23.

Has the department looked into options for youth under the age of 17 for emergency shelter purposes?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thank you for the question. Certainly the conversation will happen with the Skookum Jim shelter. I agree about the great work done by members in the past to

expand shelter care for children, but we will have that dialogue with the shelter to talk about potential options.

On an interim basis, what we have done is to create some alternatives to ensure that we provide a venue for children who need some immediate care — and opening up the space downtown. That came also from feedback from members of our community on the supported youth program. It's a place to go. It's a safe place to hang out on a Friday night. It is being well-used. So that is one avenue — most certainly — but we will commit to having more dialogue with the Skookum Jim model in the friendship centre.

Ms. White: I just really want to put out that it is not a criticism of what is being run there, because it is important that those ages were set for between 17 and 23. That is a vulnerable spot for a 12-year-old to go. I'm not saying that they need to do everything for everyone unless, of course, we look at a separate something next door or something like that. So it's not a criticism of what they're doing because what they're doing is incredibly valuable.

I appreciate the drop-ins. Splintered Craft is fantastic. The Boys and Girls Club is fantastic. Angel's Nest — or Youth of Today Society — I don't think it's called Angel's Nest anymore. All these organizations work with different spectrums of youth. That is what we have discovered. Heart of Riverdale — they all have different collections of youth going those places. The night-time hangouts on Fridays and over the weekend — those are really important, but my concern becomes when it's an overnight requirement.

I just want to flag that there needs to be an emergency shelter for people who are under 17. I don't know what the answer is, but I'm sure that, within the youth community, the answer can be figured out. I just want the commitment that, once there is a solution, we make sure that all those care providers and those service providers know what the options are.

I can't image what the stress is for someone who is trying to deal with emergency shelter for a 12-year-old. They can't just walk away, but they also can't take them home. This is just make sure that when we find that solution, that information is shared with all of the youth outreach workers.

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for those comments. One of the things I wanted to assure the member of is that through the ISYY program — actually it is just down here on Second Avenue — there is a social worker there. We have support staff there to help our youth. Oftentimes we are being made aware through that centre of some current, imminent needs that we may not be aware of other than the child showing up at the centre. I think that really highlights for us that there is a dire need for that, and it is clearly something that we have to look at. The staff helps to navigate the services that the child needs and tries to work through Health and Social Services and Family and Children's Services to ensure that all of the children who come through there are provided the services that they require.

I have gone over there numerous times, and the staff is doing a really exceptional job in reaching out to the youth. I understand that it's a really great facility and well-used. There

is a 24-hour support line that operates seven days a week that the housing navigator, the child, the families and agencies can reach out to if there is a crisis. Most certainly, we would attempt to intervene where necessary.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that. I don't doubt that the work being done by the department with the new office on Second Avenue is great. It is just to understand that sometimes when the relationships have been built up with other service providers, that might not be the first point of contact and just making sure that everybody is on the same page and that there is support there because I can only imagine how hard that situation is to deal with.

Yesterday during the debate, the minister referenced more than one time about enhanced home care. I wanted to know exactly what enhanced home care means. I would like to know the hours that home care is available. We will start with the City of Whitehorse before we go to the communities. What are the hours that it is available? I know that, prior to the election, it had moved to seven days a week. I am just confirming that it is still available seven days a week, 365 days a year. I would like to know the hours that it is available.

Hon. Ms. Frost: The enhanced home care really depends on the level of care required. Enhanced care in some circumstances is required more for palliative care-type patients. It is available 24/7 whenever the need is there or there or there is a requirement.

In some communities, it is more prevalent, I guess, in terms of priority needs and high-level needs than in Whitehorse because we have access to the medical facilities and access to emergency measures, whereas in some of the communities that's not available. We try to look at home care and home care needs within the communities based on level of requirement and level of need.

As I indicated, some receive intensive care and hours really depend on that care and how much families are contributing and how much other care providers are providing. It really depends on circumstances. Nothing is set in stone with respect to hours, other than individual requirements.

Ms. White: I'll just talk about my own personal experiences. I have a seniors complex in my riding with 48 units. One of the challenges was that home care was only available between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. That was for standard things, so that meant — as the Member for Watson Lake said — you couldn't get help with your after-dinner medication or things later in the day.

My question is: In the City of Whitehorse, what are the hours that home care is available? Not for a palliative care patient who is at home dying with their family, but for an average home care user, what are the hours of service that are offered?

Hon. Ms. Frost: As I indicated earlier, the care is provided based on the needs of the individual. The office hours are generally from morning to afternoon, so generally 9:00 to 5:00, but there is on-call support when required and on weekends, so flexible hours and adjusted accordingly. Most definitely I think all of us have been touched in some way by

home care supports, myself included, having used that in Whitehorse and in my own home community. It's a really great program and very responsive in time and very compassionate, in terms of care that's provided by all of the professionals.

Sorry, I said until 5:00 p.m., but it's actually until 9:00 p.m., so the services end at 9:00 p.m. and it's available on weekends as well.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that answer. From my perspective, if we're talking about aging in place, to have 24-hour care available in homes would make a huge difference. I have had the beautiful opportunity of being there for the end of life for numerous friends I made at 600 College Drive. In some cases, had home care been able to be there for longer, maybe there wouldn't have been deaths in hospitals, but that is also — there's no sense in trying to figure that out.

I also just really want to thank — I have also had the great opportunity of meeting and spending quite a bit of time with home care nurses based on the work they do. They are unbelievable. I have had picnics in hospitals and I have had visits in homes, and we have had tea and I have had great conversations with people who are really responsive, especially the social worker within the home care program.

It has been phenomenal from my perspective, but I would just like to see it bigger. I appreciate that it's seven days a week, because at one point in time it was Monday through Friday.

I agree with the Member for Watson Lake, I've heard things and it's funny that the criticism is about the cleaning, where I'm like, well, that's probably the last thing on the line, but that is one thing that gets mentioned. I always think baths are important and so is shopping and meal preparation, but it's always the cleaning that they tell me about.

So maybe at one point in time within that department, we can have different levels of staff so we could have people who are maybe cooks by trade and do light cleaning and then the nursing staff can do the nursing jobs and maybe we have people who are great supports who can take people shopping. Maybe that is how to expand the program. I'll just leave that out there. I am grateful for the work that they do. I look forward to a time where it's 24 hours a day.

We have talked before about Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay and we talked about that there was one nurse. There was a letter signed by the nurses association that there would be the commitment that a second nurse would be hired for May. When I asked that question last week, I don't think at that point the positions had been filled and there was mention earlier today, but I wasn't really focused. Have the two positions been filled for Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Thanks for the previous comments. I will certainly take that under advisement. As we look at an aging-in-place model, we have an aging population and certainly want to ensure that palliative care models are adaptive to the pressures and responsive as well.

The department has been actively recruiting for the two pilot projects or the pilot project that we spoke to around Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay — wanting to see two

nurses in those communities. In the interim, while recruitment actively continues, when extra staff are available, they are scheduled to these communities. Right now, we are in the process of providing the necessary support, ensuring that we don't have any vacancies there.

As I indicated, we are working with negotiating a pilot project with the Yukon Employees' Union to ensure that we provide the essential and additional nurse service and support in Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek. Multiple attempts to hire these positions have been very challenging. As we know, recruitment and retention in some of these communities is a challenge. We can create the positions, we can create the resources and put best efforts forward and that's kind of where we are.

We're looking at working through ensuring that we have supports when needed and working through the Haines Junction centre — is my understanding. In our health centres, there have not been incidents where — in the past year anyway — we have not had coverage. We certainly want to ensure that Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek are adequately covered and provided the support they need on a more permanent basis. Clearly that's a priority.

Ms. White: I appreciate about the coverage and the importance of having coverage in the communities. My concern still exists that we have nurses working alone.

One nurse in Beaver Creek works six months at a time and another nurse works the other six months at a time. Right now, because we were talking about that if there was the availability, there would be coverage. That letter of understanding was that there would be a second position for May in both Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay, so even if those positions haven't been filled, are there currently two nurses in Destruction Bay and two nurses in Beaver Creek?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Earlier the question was asked: How many nurses do we have on staff? I believe I said 173, and we have a number of auxiliaries. Given the pressure of permanent recruitment in those communities, we are temporarily — on an interim basis — ensuring that we have the support that's required to ensure that we don't have a nurse in the community for six months without a break. That's the discussion that's happening with the Yukon Employee's Union in negotiating a pilot project for an additional nurse in those two communities.

The attempt to successfully hire for these pilot projects has been a bit challenging so, in the interim, the assessment of staffing needs is based on pressure and needs in the communities. The extra staff I identified in the budget in the numbers earlier is available and is scheduled to these communities. We will continue to do that throughout the summer months. I think that's the comment that was provided earlier.

Ms. White: I'm just going to come back to this issue again, because one of the concerns about a nurse working on their own in a community is safety. There has been some kind of crazy stuff that has happened with nurses working on their own. It's a matter of safety.

Having worked in camp — I worked in mining camps, and the longest shift I did in a row was 38 days or something, and it was awful. It was really, really, truly awful and I don't think anyone should have to work 38 days in a row, especially in that kind of high-stress situation. The nurses in these two communities are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If we have auxiliary nurses and they're available, let's send them out. That would be great — 12-hour coverage for each, and then it wouldn't be the same thing.

One of the things we talked about with home care in the communities — my question is: In Beaver Creek and Destruction Bay, are those same two nurses having to do the home care work? Are they both available at the clinic, available 24 hours a day and doing home care?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'm just referring back to earlier comments. On an interim basis, during the active recruitment process, we are ensuring there are extra staff available in the communities and are scheduled in the communities to alleviate some of the pressures there.

Ms. White: Again, I will flag my concerns about those two nurses working on their own.

I am going to move on to social assistance. Previously in the budget, there were statistics that were available and it was broken out. These are the questions that I could have answered on my own previously, but now I can't so I'm going to ask for them.

How many files are there for social assistance, both in Whitehorse and the regions?

I'll just ask one question at a time because it will be easier.

How many files are there for social assistance — Whitehorse and regionally?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The Government of Yukon caseload — in 2016-17, our caseload was 879, and in 2015-16 — sorry, let me just go back to 2015-16. There were 819 and that increased to 876 in 2016-17.

Ms. White: Out of that number, how many were in Whitehorse and how many were out of Whitehorse?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I don't have that number in front of me, but I will provide that response.

Ms. White: I appreciate that. To make it easier, in case the officials don't have that number right on hand, I will just ask for what I'm looking for and I will look for a head nod, and if we can't get that right now, I will look forward to that response.

I'm going to look for how many individuals are on social assistance. How many are families? How many seniors? How many children are falling within the social assistance rates? How many adults are there with disabilities? How many receive the Yukon supplementary allowance? When will it be going up, or when will it be indexed? Is that information that I can get today?

I have just gotten the shake from the official's head, so I will look forward to that response and I will let the minister answer.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'll just maybe give some caseload demographics, which will respond to some of the questions.

The caseload — 62 percent are men, and 38 percent are women. The demographic shows that for over-65 people, we have two percent; ages 15 to 19 is two percent — so a very low younger age group; ages 60 to 64 is 13 percent; ages 40 to 49 is 17 percent; ages 20 to 29 is 19 percent; ages 30 to 39 is 20 percent; and ages 50 to 59 is 27 percent.

The specifics in terms of the request that the member opposite is asking for, I'm not able to provide that, but I can say that the increase from last year is seven percent.

Ms. White: I thank the minister for that and I do look forward to those numbers from the department. I don't need them right here. I used to be able to find them.

Today in Question Period, I had questions about medical travel. One of the reasons why I'm bringing up medical travel is that sometimes it seems arbitrary.

I have this handy dandy thing that talks about medical travel. I am not sure if the minister has had a chance to read it or if my colleagues have had a chance to read it, but I have mixed feelings about it. The *Guide for the Travelling Yukon Patient* has different — I am sure it is helpful at times. But when the minister said today that the decision is done in collaboration with the medical professional, I do question that.

I have an example right now where the minister will be getting a letter from me soon, where it was a senior travelling with a critically ill spouse. The recommendation came from multiple doctors that she go along to be the advocate. When that travel claim was put in, it was denied. When it was appealed, it was denied a second time.

When the minister said in Question Period this afternoon that it was done in collaboration with the medical profession, how does the department make that decision? If a doctor said that you need a medical escort, and then when the claim is put into the department it is denied and appealed and denied again, how is that working in collaboration with the medical profession?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I am not privy to individual situations and cannot comment on individual situations, but I will keep this at a high level. We do speak to our medical processes and medical treatment expenses as they occur — or travel expenses — which are defined by way of the *Travel for Medical Treatment Act* and regulations, which are set out by rules. It is administered by the department, and adjustments or changes to that are reflected under the legislative programs — for the services covered when there is medical evidence that supports that, and that is what I was referring to when I stated earlier that we would work in collaboration with the medical practitioner or the physician. With regard to individual cases, I am not comfortable responding to that.

Ms. White: The minister would have to be a mind reader, because I haven't actually written the letter yet. I wasn't actually asking about a specific case, but we hear the stories all the time where someone has gotten the go-ahead to go as medical escort, or someone has been told that they need a medical escort. The person goes, comes back and puts in the travel claim, and it is denied. Then they get another letter from the doctor that says that these are all the reasons why they had

to go as the escort and they make the application again — they appeal the original denial — and they are denied again.

My colleague from Whitehorse Centre and I were having a conversation earlier. She was sent for an appointment to see a specialist, and when she put in the application to go, it was denied. It was someone within the department who was denying the recommendation of a doctor.

I just find it challenging to try to understand how this happens. If we say that we are going to trust doctors, the doctors make the recommendation and then it gets denied in the department — I can go as far as saying that sometimes I don't understand why different medication doesn't get covered. We send someone out to see a specialist — the top of their field. They come back with a specific prescription for a specific drug for a specific reason, and then they get denied within the department and they get told that they should take the generic version. Although the specialist that we paid a lot of money for them to see, who is an expert in their field, has prescribed a very specific drug, the department then makes what feels like an arbitrary decision and denies that.

What we're seeing from our perspective are denials that are not based on collaboratively working with the medical profession. Would the minister like to respond to that? I can keep going.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I understand your frustration and certainly there is a lot that can be done with some of the management measures that are taken, but we also need to follow the procedures that are set before us. The medical assessment process, in terms of when a client is supported — there is a contract position in the department that does the medical assessments and looks and works with the client's physician. The medical doctor on site or on contract does the individual assessments.

With regard to the last comment on drugs and drug treatment or drug coverage, all drugs are insured under health and are approved based on an approved formula, so again, set standards are in place. Some things are difficult to change and some things are easy to change, but a lot of times it's on individual case management measures and priority needs. I think we have criteria that have been set for a specific reason.

Ms. White: Just for clarification — that person within the department — do they have a medical background?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Yes, a trained physician.

Ms. White: Great. I just wanted to make sure I understood that clearly.

Pharmaceutical costs in the territory, at one point in time, were the highest costs in Canada. Is that still the case? Do we still pay more for drugs than any other jurisdiction in Canada?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Clearly this is not a unique challenge to the Yukon. It's a broader challenge across the north, and so the dispensing fees are based on our location. The dispensing costs are really, I think, a challenge and so we're looking at that from a pan-northern perspective and working with our colleagues from the other jurisdictions.

Ms. White: Just to confirm that we're working with other provinces and territories to address those concerns? There was acknowledgement from the other side.

Has the government ever considered dealing directly with the pharmaceutical companies to get a better deal? There are definitely drugs — we know that we have high diabetes numbers, for example, in the territory, so has there ever been a thought of dealing directly with the pharmaceutical companies so that we would get the best deal and, I guess, we would eliminate the middle man there?

Hon. Ms. Frost: Responding to the question about the drug costs across the country and looking at a pan-northern approach or pan-northern costs related to other jurisdictions, work is being done to review consistent and collaborative cost factors and dispensing fees. That is being done and the assessments are being done on a continual basis with other jurisdictions — so yes to your question.

Ms. White: Great. I look forward to the time when we are not the jurisdiction that pays the highest drug costs in Canada.

To quickly step back to medical travel, when people are travelling by vehicle to Whitehorse from the community, are they paid the same mileage as a government worker who can claim for work travel?

Hon. Ms. Frost: The response is no.

Ms. White: I'm going to flag that as a concern for the obvious reason. We are making someone drive in from a community for a medical appointment. They either drive themselves or are being driven in by someone, either in their own vehicle or someone else's vehicle, and we're not covering the adequate cost of that. I'm going to just put that out there as maybe that could be part of the tiered system — government employee, private citizen. It's a concern; I'm just going to leave it there.

When the minister was talking earlier and mentioned a two-tiered system, and then said the Member for Watson Lake was talking about a two-tiered system, I actually have a positive that I think we can do. There really is a two-tiered system in Yukon, and it's those individuals who are covered by non-insured health benefits when they travel outside of the Yukon compared to Yukon citizens accessing Yukon health.

I'm going to use the example of a good friend of mine who has had some pretty huge health challenges in her recent life. When she travels Outside, she gets her plane tickets, she gets taxi vouchers, she gets her hotel covered and she gets meal vouchers. So when she goes Outside for appointments, where she has been a lot lately, she doesn't have the regular worries that, say, any of us in here would have, because it's not just a \$75-a-day that she can claim on the second day. She is able to get off the airplane; she's able to get to her hotel; she knows that she's going to be able to eat; it's going to be covered; she's not going to have to cover it with her credit card; she's not going to have to make applications for money and funding to come back — it's all covered.

I would say that it would be fantastic if Yukon health looked toward what happens with non-insured health benefits, when those individuals travel Outside. More than that, they are supported when they leave. There is not that insecurity of how they're going to do it when they're there, how are they

going to cover the cost. I'm going to put that out that I think that could be a way to get rid of the two tiers.

Mr. Chair, I'll sit down because it looks like the minister has a response to that.

Hon. Ms. Frost: I beg to differ. I don't believe the indigenous community and indigenous recipients of the NIHB program get better services than the average Yukoner. There are many times when that doesn't happen. The program offers Monday to Friday.

If you happen to be discharged from a hospital while in Vancouver and you come out of a community like Ross River or Old Crow and you're situated in a city, you have no supports. That's problematic, so who steps in? Then the community or the family — sort of the First Nation steps in.

We oftentimes have families who are released from health centres. I am recalling now that a recent study was conducted by the federal government on the NIHB program because of its inefficiencies of timely responsive services and inappropriate services to its citizens. I think definitely that we need to look at a collaborative model that ensures transparency and equity across the table and across the floor for everyone.

Every citizen of Yukon needs to be provided not only medical care travel, but care in general. The laws of application, as defined in the self-government agreement, says very specifically and clearly that every citizen in the Yukon needs to be provided with fair, transparent services. Clearly there are some inequities and we need to ensure that, wherever we can, we look at and assess the data — analyze the data — and retool and revisit our legislative models to ensure that we don't run into the discrepancies and run into discrimination one way or another. It's really about balance.

Ms. White: I would suggest that anyone being discharged, if the office is open Monday through Friday, feels the same thing that any other Yukoner who has to make their way home feels and I don't think that's right. That was my point. I'm just going to leave that there.

It's interesting because we had an example last year where one of our senior friends from Keno was medevaced into Whitehorse. He was medevaced into Whitehorse in the winter months and he was actually released and he had absolutely nowhere to go. He was medevaced into Whitehorse and English is probably his fourth language or something. He is a very interesting guy, who you probably know, Mr. Chair. The problem was that there was no release plan, so that's an example of the Hospital Corporation — there was no plan. Luckily he found us and he made his way to the office and we helped him get his way home, but that is problematic. I will leave medical travel behind in an effort to keep going.

The pioneer utility grant — you used to find statistics in the budget — you don't anymore. How many people received the pioneer utility grant and is that number going up or down?

Hon. Ms. Frost: It has gone down.

Ms. White: How many people qualified last time? I'm not sure if it comes out this spring. How many people most recently received the pioneer utility grant?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I'll get back to the member opposite with the numbers.

Ms. White: Absolutely, and I thank the minister for that.

I'm going to go back to my notes now. So family supports for children with disabilities — when was this moved out of Family and Children's Services? When did that happen and why did that happen?

Hon. Ms. Frost: That took effect last spring and my understanding is that the vision behind the integration of those two programs was to look at the full spectrum, and to not deal with children and adults but to try to provide a continuum of care.

Ms. White: That is a decision I understand. That makes a lot of sense, because then it also doesn't just stop when you reach adulthood.

How many adults with disabilities are currently receiving support services, whether they are residential supports and day programs, and how many under each of those titles?

Hon. Ms. Frost: I will again have to get back to the member opposite with that information.

Mr. Chair, at this point, seeing the time, I would like to move that you report progress.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. Frost that the Chair report progress.

Motion agreed to

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Chair: It has been moved by Ms. McPhee that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

Motion agreed to

Speaker resumes the Chair

Speaker: I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

Chair's report

Mr. Hutton: Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 201, entitled *First Appropriation Act, 2017-18*, and directed me to report progress.

Speaker: You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Speaker: I declare the report carried.

Hon. Ms. McPhee: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Speaker: It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. on Monday.

The House adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

The following sessional paper was tabled June 1, 2017:

34-2-18

Yukon Police Council Annual Report April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016 (McPhee)

The following legislative return was tabled June 1, 2017:

34-2-20

Response to oral question from Ms. Hanson re: Mine Closure Security (Pillai)

The following document was filed June 1, 2017:

34-2-9

Terms of Reference for Yukon Financial Advisory Panel to Government of Yukon, June 1, 2017 (Silver)