

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

**QUESTION 51-18(2): CARE AIDES AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL
February 22, 2016**

MR. O'REILLY: I have a number of Yellowknifers who have contacted me regarding termination of care aides working at Stanton Hospital effective March 31. Can the Minister tell us how so many care aides are currently working at Stanton, when this service started, and what sort of duties they perform? Sorry, that question would be to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Currently there's 16 nursing or, rather, care aides within Stanton Territorial Hospital, and at this point in time we're not planning on eliminating any of those positions, with the exception of two. And we're not actually eliminating those positions: Two nursing care aide positions were actually created through unfunded dollars as a pilot study, and the purpose of the pilot was to evaluate whether the level of trained staff could be used in patient watches instead of using security protocol or personnel. That pilot has come to an end and as a result, those positions will cease to exist. Those unfunded positions will cease to exist on March 31, 2016. But the remaining 14 nursing care positions continue to exist.

MR. O'REILLY: It's my understanding that care aides at Stanton have bolstered the healthcare teams to ensure patients are clean, fed, cared for and free of bed sores while lowering the pressure and stress on nurses. They do things like patient laundry, shaves and baths are given, patients are escorted for tests or taken to another floor for showers and so on. I'm just wondering with these two positions that are apparently unfunded, who will perform the services that they perform now after March 31?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, the purpose of the pilot was to evaluate whether nursing care aides, this level of trained staff, can be used for patient watches. Patient watches are used after patients who pose a risk to themselves or others and require more frequent observation—for example, individuals who might be suicidal, confused patients who are unable to comply with treatment, patients who are at risk of actually leaving the facility, and other patients who may have some behavioural issues. The decision was made not to renew these two contracts for these two unfunded positions and rather put an end to the pilot, because the objectives of the original pilot were not achieved and security personnel continued to be used in that area to provide patient watches.

MR. O'REILLY: I apologize, I didn't give the Minister much advance notice of this. This seems to be a quickly evolving situation. I'm just wondering if the Minister can tell us then how these two pilot positions were actually evaluated, and would he be prepared to share that with at least this MLA?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Originally the pilot was only intended to last one year, with the intent, as I said, to see whether or not this level of position could do the patient watches. There was some turnover in the department as a result, or rather in the Authority as a result. The pilot was extended so that they could review to see if it was actually providing or meeting the intent. At the end of the day, security was still required in those units to provide those patient watches, and since then, we have actually enhanced the security levels within Stanton so that these

positions are actually no longer required. The pilot proved ineffective and we still needed security staff. As a result, these two unfunded positions will cease to exist on March 31, 2016.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the answer from the Minister. One part of the previous question that he didn't answer was whether he might be prepared to share the results of this evaluation with at least this Member and perhaps other on this side of the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll go through the department and get a bit of a summary of the pilot intent and what actually the results were and share that with the Members, but at the end of the day, we ended up having to put more security in that building to provide patient watches as well as other security. Those two positions were unfunded. The remaining 14 nursing care aides continue to exist, providing the exact services that the Member is reference, important services within our healthcare facility. These two positions were created for the sole purpose of doing an assessment. The assessment didn't prove out, as a result those two positions ceased to exist.