

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Midwifery Services**  
**Committee of the Whole—2017-2018 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 14, 2017**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. When I tried to raise this earlier, in the Main Estimates, I was told to come back here. I want to ask the Minister and his staff about midwifery services. I think the last time I asked about this he said that they had hired some consultants. I am not sure exactly what they were doing, but can the Minister give us an update of where we are with the territorial midwifery service and particularly with regard to service here, in Yellowknife? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the positions have been filled, the ones within the department that are doing the consultation and analysis. We have had a discussion paper put together with different options for a territorial program. That public consultation is going to be starting right away. I think we have got one date confirmed, and we are about to go out and announce some of the other dates, both in Yellowknife and in communities that would be receiving benefit from a territorial program. We have started receiving some input from all of the stakeholders, like physicians and others, so we are going to get all that information on proposed models and figure out where to go from there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, that is great to see that we are finally going to go out. Does he have a timeline, though, for this work? Like, this has been dragging on for years, so is there a timeline for these consultations? When there is going to be a report that is going to be a report that comes out of the consultation, and then probably you have to develop an action plan, then it has to go to FMB for funding, like, this is just going to go on forever. Does the Minister actually have any particular timelines? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will certainly be sending a letter to the Members once the last date of the last consultation is booked and confirmed. The consultations, we are expecting, will be completed by the 14<sup>th</sup> of March. We expect that we will be able to have some sort of analysis of what we heard and some direction on where we need to go early in the next fiscal year. I can also get the deputy to go into some specific detail on steps and actions being taken moving forward. If we can go to the deputy, that would be great.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. So we, as the Member noted, had committed to doing consultation by the end of the fiscal year. We are planning to hold focus groups in I believe it is eight communities. The delay we have had has been

simply working community governments to nail down appropriate dates because this is a busy time of year and there is a lot going on in communities.

We will advertise through community radio, through radio, through newspapers, through social media, and we will be sending notices to MLAs. In each of those communities, we will hold as many focus groups as there is public demand for, so no one will be turned away who is interested in participating. There will also be an online survey.

As the Minister noted, our timeline is tight because we want this wrapped up by mid-March so that we can have a report very early in the new fiscal year out of that on a design of a territorial midwifery program. Then we will look at our ability to implement that within existing resources or go forward to the business planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that detail from the deputy minister. I think I heard her say that the department is prepared to look within, internally, for the money to actually implement the program. Is another option to actually bring forward a supplementary appropriation? Is that something the Minister is considering? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't believe we will be ready for a supplementary appropriation during the next fiscal year. Once we get a model approved, then we have to do the design, do the implementation, job description writing, that will help us quantify what the costs will be so that we can come forward, identify what can be covered with existing funds, what we may need additional funds, so that we can have an informed discussion during business planning, looking at all of our services from a holistic point of view. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Sorry. Thanks, Mr. Chair. So it sounds like the earliest there's actually going to be any funding made available is 2018-19, is that what I'm hearing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** That would allow us the time we need to do proper implementation, design, and move forward with potential rollout, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, it's good to get this out now. I think there's going to be a number of unhappy people but, look, I do appreciate that this is moving along even if it's at a snail's pace, but good that it's still moving. I don't think this is going to keep some folks very happy, but I appreciate the responses from the Minister and his deputy minister. Thank you. That's all I've got for now.