

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

MIDWIFERY SERVICES IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

October 20, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Midwifery: where to begin? We go back to the last Assembly in 2012, when public advocacy prompted the government to commission a Midwifery Review and Expansion Analysis Report. That report recommended options for expansion of midwifery service, including creating a territorial model based out of Yellowknife in 2015-2016, so that the full rollout could be done in 2016-2017. Mr. Speaker, that was last year.

The Minister stated in July 2015 that he was still committed to introducing midwifery services, but then there was no money; so a further study and further public consultation was commissioned by the department, staffed by two term consultants. In explaining the intended outcomes of this study, the Minister said on June 1, 2016, "We have those consultants in place. They're working on evaluation frameworks, not to reinvestigate it, but to help us develop a territorial model."

The report that was recently released is sorely lacking. Basically, this is because none of the three stated purposes of the study was to recommend a preferred plan for establishing midwifery services. The study only looked at:

- perceived gaps in service;
- potential enhancements for an integrated midwifery program; and
- potential support for community health nurses.

It is not surprising the report only recommended further study, examining the feasibility of midwifery expansion to Hay River as a regional program and the reinstatement of the Yellowknife position with travel resources to enable travel to other communities, and yet more study, examining the feasibility of an integrated Beaufort Delta service establishment and proposals for service to Behchoko.

It is not clear what the next steps may be.

I cannot describe my disappointment in reading that, when it comes to establishing actual positions in communities, we are still stuck in the "feasibility" stage. How many more studies will this take? The Minister promised that we would get a proposal for a territorial midwifery program, not a proposal for more studies. I will have questions during the upcoming business plans on what is being done right now and when we are going to see a territorial midwifery program with services available in Yellowknife. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.