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Nursing Services
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MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I noticed on page 190 that the actual (nursing overtime) expenditures here are lower on the previous year. I'm just wondering, this is probably the section where overtime for nursing at Stanton would be part of this budget. Is that correct? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Overtime for front-line nurses would be in here, yes. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for confirming that. What are we doing about overtime? Because that continues to be a problem in terms of burnout of our nursing staff and additional costs and so on. What is the department doing to try to deal with that situation? Thank, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has certainly been making the authority aware of the fiscal challenges that we're having and the demands that the authority is putting on us financially. Right now, we know that we're running about a \$60 million deficit. We know that's going to increase. One of the major, well, I wouldn't call it the major driver, but certainly one of the drivers is overtime. The territorial authorities, CEO, board chair, board, and senior management have had a number of discussions about what they need to do to help control these costs. To make sure that they, frankly, control these costs, they need to understand these costs. They're trying to do an analysis on where they're bleeding on the overtime so they can make some informed decisions. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that. Yes, I recognize this is not something that perhaps the department itself can control, other than perhaps in sending some service standards and making sure that the health authorities have the resources that are needed to carry that out.

The Minister said that there is some study or something being done. Is that by the department or by the Stanton? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the cost drivers are occurring in the authority, but the department is working with them to identify those cost drivers and trying to put some scope on the things that are driving costs to help us better understand the deficit so that we can efficiencies and make improvements to get

maximum bang for our dollar. It's kind of a cooperation. It's working together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that from the Minister. Is there a specific study being done on overtime relating to nursing, or is this just kind of broader effort to look at efficiencies as part of transformation? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The second one the Member described. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: A broader effort, okay. Is there anything specific, though, that the department is looking at doing to address overtime in nursing? Are we looking at setting service standards? What is it that the department is doing to try to address this problem? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The setting of service standards is part of the work that the department is doing with the authority, given that we've moved to a single authority. This is real opportunity for us to set those standards. That's part of the important work we're doing to try to help us control costs.

Stanton is continuing to do some work around scheduling and trying to improve their scheduling so that they're minimizing double shifts, triple shifts, those types of things, and hoping to control some of their costs that way, as well. There are all sorts of things happening. One of the big ones is, obviously, standards. The other one is individual regional operations, looking at how they're scheduling, in particular, Stanton.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't want to seek another commitment on the Minister on this, but I just want to give him a heads up that this is something I am going to ask again in the business planning for next year, so I am hoping that we've moved beyond just talking about some of this stuff and that the Minister can discuss it in a little bit more detail about what we're actually doing to address this issue, but I will leave it at that for now. Thanks, Mr. Chair.