

## **MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE**

### **EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM REVIEW**

**August 16, 2019**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Members of this House have likely encountered the issue of NWT Health Plan coverage under the specified disease conditions list under the Extended Health Benefits Program.

Recently I brought forward another instance of lack of care supports because a constituent has a condition that is not covered. Recently the NWT Autism Society released a thorough legal review of how autism is not covered under the list of specified disease conditions and how this may be viewed as discrimination. When I raised this review with the Minister of Health and Social Services, the response from the Minister shows that GNWT inherited a system from the federal government, including a list of specified conditions, that has changed little since 1988.

There have been two failed attempts at reviewing the Extended Health Benefits Program. More recent efforts were put on hold when Ottawa kicked off its Advisory Council on National Pharmacare; and, let's be clear, I support national pharmacare. Until decisions are made on a national pharmacare program the NWT Extended Health Program review and specified disease conditions list review seems to be on hold.

A review of extended health benefits is also tied to the bigger package of our overall Supplementary Health Benefits. While I don't expect that this work will be done in this Assembly, our citizens deserve to have their critical healthcare needs served, and we can and must do better. I will have questions for the Minister later today on how our government is going to deal with the assertions such as those of the NWT Autism Society, and when the specified disease conditions list and the Extended Benefits Program will be reviewed to ensure our citizens get the healthcare they need and deserve. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.