

KEVIN O'REILLY - MLA FRAME LAKE
Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review
Department of Justice – March 2, 2020

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do have some questions on Integrated Case Management and Victim Services. There are increases in the budget, as the Minister mentioned in her opening statement, and I agree with that. I have heard about the value of these programs, but we need to see the evaluations. I know this is something the Minister keeps promising, but when are we finally going to see the evaluations of these two programs? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, Mr. Chair; I will get that right before the next two hours. Mr. Chair, the evaluation is now complete, and I can at least so far confirm for the Member that it is in my hands, and it's a question now of turning that around through the right processes so that it can be shared properly; I would think, I'm hesitant to say that it will be before the end of the current sitting of the Assembly, but that's at least my target date. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. I asked about two evaluations. Since one is ready, can you just identify which one it is and what the schedule is, then, for the other one? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Yes, I was entirely focused on the most recent evaluation that was done, of the Integrated Case Management; that's the social return on investment and that is the one that has not been shared. As I have said, my target date is to have it, while it's not quite a commitment, it's at least a target, to have it by the end of the current sitting of the Assembly. The older one, from roughly 2017, Mr. Chair, ought to have been previously shared, and if it wasn't a tabled document, then I will confirm and we can make sure that it is. I will look into whether there was any restriction on its being shared. Sometimes, Integrated Case Management evaluations do contain identifying information, and if that's the case, then we'll just have to ensure that that is taken out before it can be shared. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Now I've got the schedule for the Integrated Case Management evaluation. What about the evaluation of the Victim Services program? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're just confirming. My recollection is that I should have that back this month. Ah, April 2020. I was a little bit ambitious. By end of April 2020 we'll have that back. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. In the Minister's opening remarks, she indicated that there is an extra \$240,000 for Victim Services. Can the Minister tell us how that money is actually allocated or split out? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I do have a breakdown by community that we can provide to the Member. Money that flows through the Victim Services does go direct to the individual communities via community partners, whether it's community governments or organizations such as the Native Women's Association. Subject to what the Member might say, I would suggest a commitment to providing the allocation by community after, as part of our response, but I certainly can read the numbers out if that's preferred. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't need the Minister to read it out, but I want the information made public. If the Minister would like to table that as a return to oral question, that would be great. It sounds like the money is kind of being spread out amongst maybe around eight or 10 communities. Will there be consideration of additional increases to Victim Services once the department has had a chance to review the evaluation? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I certainly can table that as a response, in terms of the specific funding to communities. We will do that. There are currently eight communities that are receiving funding for in-person services. Other communities in their respective regions can access them by telephone. I can certainly commit to considering whether or not Victim Services can and should be expanded to other in-person services in other communities; what I can't do is commit to, in fact, having that happen. It would have to look at what the report says and conduct some degree of cost benefit analysis, or consider what other alternatives we can use to help support individuals in other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I'm sure the Minister can talk to her twin sister, the Minister of Finance, about the value of Victim services. Anyway, I've been asking about this, and the previous Minister did commit to do the work, so that's great. I'm really anxious to see the results of this and to make sure that we get the support needed, and that we complete this network across the NWT. You know, I made a Member's statement and asked questions about this already once in this sitting and raised it in the House a couple of times. I think that's all I've got on this section of the budget. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Nothing, thank you.