

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Paid Caregiver Leave Program
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 26, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Mr. Chair. It's been a long week; I'll try to get the gender right. I take it this is the part of the budget that the paid caregiver leave program falls under. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes, I think that's this part of the budget. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know that there is a pilot program in progress. Can we just get a bit of an update of where that program is at? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. The program exists in five different communities at this point. There is a limited intake of spots, but I think that most of them have been taken up and that there is evaluation planned for the next fiscal year in order to determine the future of the pilot program. That's a very high-level answer. The deputy minister would be able to offer quite a bit more. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Deputy Minister.

MR. COOPER: Thank you. Yes, indeed, we do have pilots ongoing in Behchoko, Yellowknife, Dettah, Ndilo, Tuktoyaktuk, and Hay River. We have individuals who have been accepted: five in Behchoko; eight in Yellowknife; two in Dettah and Ndilo; eight in Hay River; and there are some issues in Tuktoyaktuk. We've got a capacity for five; there is still some work ongoing to hire the caregiver there, but as of last week, they are in the process of hiring. As the Minister said, we are finalizing an RFP to hire a contractor this spring to undertake an evaluation framework and to conduct the evaluation of the program over this summer, and that will help inform our business planning for next year. Thank you very much.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I'm very supportive of the pilot program. I'd be happy to see it made permanent in some way. After the evaluation, is it the intention of the department to work this into the next budget cycle or look at a potential supplementary appropriation? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you. It's my understanding that the evaluation will point the way forward and this will be incorporated into the budget planning for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Thank you.

forward.