

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Metis Health Benefits
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—March 1, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Can someone tell me how many Metis are actually eligible for the Metis Health Benefits in the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. When that question was asked about two minutes ago, it was 1,500, so I am going to say it's still 1,500.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is great to hear. Has the federal government paid any other jurisdictions with regard to Metis Health Benefits? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: No, I do not believe they have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Is there any indication whatsoever that the federal government is actually going to contribute towards this, and has it been raised, for example, at FPT tables? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is no indication that the federal government is ready to pay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Madam Chair, that was one of my questions. I guess I snuck a couple in. Has this issue been raised at federal-provincial-territorial tables with the federal government? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. Not in my time as health Minister. The FPT tables are predominantly preoccupied with the pandemic. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I am just trying to figure out: how do we get any traction on this issue? I think as my colleague from Yellowknife North said, it's \$2.8 million this year, which might help those people who actually do not get any benefits whatsoever. I don't know. Have we tried writing to the federal Minister? Is there any talk of a reference to the federal courts? I think there is a questions act or something where

you can actually refer a matter for a ruling of the court in terms of jurisdictional matters and so on. Any sort of thoughts about what kind of strategy we can use to get the attention of the federal government on this? Look, I recognize we are in a pandemic, but clearly, this has been going on now for a number of years. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Yes. Thank you. I am not aware of anything going on with respect to that. Deputy Minister?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Deputy Minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you. We, as a department, have certainly raised this issue with Indigenous services, but this is a matter of government-to-government relations and something that we also will be working with our partners in EIA on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I might have to ask the EIA Minister about it at some point, but that is all I've got. Thanks, Madam Chair.