

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Metis Health Benefits Review
Committee of the Whole—2022-2023 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—March 9, 2022

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for that. The Minister mention that Metis health benefits had been reviewed around the eligibility. Can she just give me a bit of a refresher around how those benefits were changed? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the sticking point with the Metis is that they had to apply for NIHB benefits and to be told that they are not Indians, which you can imagine didn't go over very well with the Metis. So the way in which the Metis health benefits have been changed is that the Metis associations determine their memberships and thus that's how we determine who gets Metis health benefits.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Okay, yeah, thanks, and I think that's consistent with UNDRIP and reconciliation, all of those things. That's good.

I'd understood too that there was some discussion at FPT table around the federal government starting to provide some financial assistance with Metis benefits because of previous court cases. Has there been any further discussion of that? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. JULIE GREEN: I'm not aware of that discussion. I'll just ask the deputy minister if he is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy minister Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is something that we had raised pre-COVID with the federal government. It's been a position of the GNWT for some time that there should be a reflecting on the Daniels decision, that there should be some recognition of this and providing funding for our Metis health benefits program. So it's -- I think the last time that we would have done any lobbying at the officials' level was certainly before COVID in 2020.