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Speaker: The Honourable George Qulaut, M.L.A.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Amittuq)

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(Gjoa Haven)
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(Arviat North-Whale Cove)
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(Hudson Bay)

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Pat Angnakak
(Iqaluit-Niaqunngu)

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(Aivilik)

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(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)
Minister of Community and Government Services

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(Iqaluit-Manirajak)
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Hon. Johnny Mike
(Pangnirtung)
Minister of Environment

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Joe Enook
(Tununiq)
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Simeon Mikkungwak
(Baker Lake)
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Isaac Shooyook
(Quttiktuq)

Hon. Paul Okalik
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)
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Hon. Peter Taptuna
(Kugluktuk)
Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs; Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council

George Hickes
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Hon. Keith Peterson
(Cambridge Bay)

Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial Management Board; Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk
(Netsilik)
Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible for Homelessness; Minister responsible for the Status of Women

David Joanasic
(South Baffin)

Pauloosie Keyootak
(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Paul Quassa
(Aggu)
Government House Leader; Minister of Education; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Members Present:

Mr. Tony Akoak, Ms. Pat Angnakak, Hon. Monica Ell, Mr. Joe Enook, Mr. George Hickes, Mr. David Joanasi, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. George Kuksuk, Mr. Steve Mapsalak, Hon. Johnny Mike, Hon. Paul Okalik, Hon. Keith Peterson, Hon. Paul Quassa, Hon. George Qulaut, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Hon. Tom Sammurtok, Mr. Isaac Shooyook, Hon. Peter Taptuna, Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk.

>>House commenced at 13:30

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. George Qulaut): I ask that Mr. Taptuna lead us in prayer.

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon. Welcome to the House, members, ministers, Premier Taptuna, and all Nunavummiut. Additionally, I want to inform the members here today that the arrival of two Members of the Legislative Assembly, Simeon Mikkungwak, Member for Baker Lake, and Joe Savikataaq, Member for Arviat, has been delayed due to inclement weather.

(interpretation ends) Item 2. Budget Address. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Item 2: Budget Address**Minister's Statement 092 – 4(2):
Budget Address**

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Nunavummiut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the government's budget for the fiscal year 2015-16. This is the seventh budget that I have presented in this legislature. I thank all members for your continued support. I look forward to working with you for real and visible progress in building the foundation for Nunavut's successful, prosperous future.

Fiscal and Economic Overview

This is the second budget to be guided by *Sivumut Abluqta*. It funds initiatives for each of the four priorities: a skilled workforce, strong communities, responsible development, and effective use of public resources. I will describe our investments in each priority, but first I will describe the government's overall approach to developing this budget.

In the current fiscal year ending next month, we expect a surplus of \$35.7 million. Next fiscal year, we expect revenues of \$1.72 billion, an increase of 5 percent from this year's main estimates. Our expenditures next year will rise more than 9 percent to \$1.67 billion. We plan to spend less than we bring in. The net position next year will be a surplus of \$22.8 million.

Looking at that expenditure of \$1.67 billion, members will know that our capital plan foresees about \$205 million of investments. That's about the same as last year. This money pays for projects that shape the future of Nunavut like schools, community centres, and other public buildings and facilities.

Let me focus briefly on the revenues generated by our government. In the

coming year, our own-source revenues will reach nearly \$187 million. That's nearly 11 percent of our total revenue. We're seeing good growth in corporate and payroll taxes and from personal income taxes, thanks mostly to growth in the mining industry. In fact, the mining industry, the Iqaluit airport project, and the Canadian High Arctic Research Station represent three significant growth drivers. They helped the Nunavut economy to grow 3.5 percent last year.

>> *Applause*

In short, there are reasons to be optimistic. At the same time, though, the current global collapse in oil prices may affect investment in energy sectors like petroleum. We saw how exploration retreated a few years ago when financial markets collapsed. Accordingly, we must balance our optimism with a good measure of caution.

***Sivumut Abluqta*: Four Priorities**

Having described our overall situation and our financial resources, let us turn to what we will accomplish through this budget.

When this government took office, we looked forward 20 years and described the Nunavut that we are all working together to build. We are driven by a vision.

We see a Nunavut whose people are happy and whose education, skills, and self-reliance give us an advantage in the global economy.

We see a successful blend of traditional culture with modern life, making us better off. And Nunavut will be less

troubled by addictions, suicides, and social assistance.

We see Nunavummiut prospering from our resources and our knowledge, and take pride that we have sustained our natural wealth to benefit future generations.

And we see our government working effectively and efficiently to deliver the services that our people need.

These are the four priorities of *Sivumut Abluqta*. When we published this mandate, we said we wanted to make real progress on these priorities during this Fourth Legislative Assembly. That goal drives the allocations made in this budget.

Education and Training

Looking forward, we see that our territory has an incredible potential for development. Through responsible resource development aligned with Inuit societal values, we can build a better future for us all. To meet this goal, we must help today's workers to improve their job prospects and help our children to prepare for their future careers.

Today almost one-third of Nunavummiut are below the age of 15. Now they are students, but tomorrow, they will enter the workforce as contributors to our shared future. Their success depends critically on their skills, knowledge, and ability to learn throughout their career.

Over the years, our public school system has made some important gains. In the first 14 years of Nunavut's existence, the number of high school graduates almost doubled. That is excellent progress...

>> *Applause*

...yet it is only the first step of many that we shall need to take together. That's why our government is providing the Department of Education with a significant 10 percent budget increase to nearly \$203 million. Also the budget for the Nunavut Arctic College rises 5 percent to \$48 million. Taken together, the two organizations represent an investment in our future worth a quarter-billion dollars.

>> *Applause*

We are increasing funding for instruction, regional school operations, and teacher professional development, an additional \$15 million into these three areas. We are also improving our focus on the subjects that our children learn and introducing new graduation requirements in English, math, and science. We will be working more closely to engage families to promote school attendance and student success.

Early childhood education is essential to our success. It gives children a head start in preparing for modern life. It gives parents opportunities to enter the workforce or take training. In this budget, our government is increasing support for early childhood education by 14 percent to \$7.4 million. The education department is also thoroughly reviewing all early childhood education programs and services to improve their results.

In making these investments, we also recognize our responsibility to ensure that Nunavut's child care centres and schools are safe and secure. As this House knows, the Auditor General

reported last year on a number of deficiencies. The Department of Education and the Department of Community and Government Services are working to ensure proper inspections and safe working practices. The Nunavut Teachers Association has joined us to implement proper methods for school safety and training for school staff. These safety improvements and these investments in better educational services will help young Nunavummiut to succeed in an increasingly challenging world.

What about adult Nunavummiut? How are we helping them to gain the job skills that bring better paycheques? Moving from our traditional economy into today's global business environment is difficult without proper education and training. Recognizing that long ago, the government placed a strong focus on helping adults to train for jobs in mining and construction. We succeeded, but now, we can see that we still have more to do. As our economy grows and diversifies, we will need not only specific skills but also the ability to learn throughout our careers.

Getting a job or running a business is difficult without a High School Diploma. Advancing into middle and senior management is difficult without college or university. Our ability to control our future depends on our ability to equip people with the skills they need. Today, one adult Inuk in 50 has a university degree. Two in five Inuit have a High School Diploma. If we are to take control of our future, these numbers will need to rise.

Not only that, but almost half of adult Inuit are not in the workforce. Their

participation would certainly benefit the territory. That's why the Department of Family Services is working to develop better information about Nunavut's labour market, where the jobs are today and where they could be in future. That knowledge should help Nunavummiut position themselves better for employment and take the training they may need. The department expects to begin publishing labour market information this summer.

Putting more adults on track to a High School Diploma is what the PASS program is all about. The Pathway to Adult Secondary School program is working well. Nunavut Arctic College reports an increased demand for its services right across the territory. Now some 74 students are taking courses online.

Looking forward, we need to help Nunavummiut succeed in college and university. The trades training centre in Rankin Inlet has made good progress in developing accredited apprenticeship programs. Now Nunavut Arctic College will set out a plan to become a university college. It aims to become a degree-granting institution within three years.

>>Applause

Strong and Resilient Communities

Let me turn now to the second of our *Sivumut Abluqta* priorities, to strengthen our communities. The main idea here is "resilience." The word describes how we bounce back and how we recover from difficulties. Resilience means that we help and support each other as friends, as neighbours, and as family. Our government is helping as well by

improving health care, taking action on violence and crime, and easing our housing shortage.

Improving health care is key to our future given the wide gap between health indicators in Nunavut and the rest of Canada. Our indicators fall significantly below the national average. We can raise these indicators by investing in both prevention and treatment. Investing in prevention will fight disease, save lives, and reduce future pressures on our health care system. Everyone can participate, especially through physical exercise and stopping smoking.

>>Applause

This budget improves support for health care more than 6 percent to \$317 million. It gives better support to hospitals, physicians, and community health care. It improves funding for mental health care and residential long-term care.

In the coming fiscal year, the government will introduce a new *Public Health Act*. The current law has not changed in nearly 60 years. It's out of date. New legislation would better protect patient rights and better support health promotion programs.

We also look forward to tabling the Mental Health and Addictions Framework this year. We want to improve frontline service delivery across the territory. We will also raise our support to mental health and addictions programming by 35 percent to \$20 million.

>> *Applause*

All communities will benefit from improved psychiatric nursing services, counselling, and programming.

We are also investing nearly \$4 million more in community health services and taking steps to define and provide residential care services to our seniors. In addition to these direct investments in better health care, our government is also promoting better health by helping Nunavummiut to enjoy active lifestyles.

This budget provides the Department of Community and Government Services with a 39 percent funding increase for sport and recreation administration. This investment will lead to better programs in sport, recreation, and physical activity. We are also providing these programs with \$4 million next year and we will review these grants to make service delivery more effective.

In building strong and resilient communities, we must also confront crime. For Nunavummiut, this is a serious issue. The territory's rate of violent crimes is about eight times higher than the Canadian average. The severity of crimes also far exceeds the Canadian average, but there is some good news in these numbers. Looking at data for 2013, the latest numbers available, we see that Nunavut's crime rate dropped 15 percent from the year before. Violent crime was down 11 percent. Property crime was down 20 percent. This trend is very encouraging.

Through continuing improvements to crime prevention services, we will help make our communities stronger and safer. For example, we see a way to keep

young Nunavummiut out of jail through the new Youth Intervention and Diversion program. It aims to screen out of the criminal justice system those youth who pose low or no risk. Even offenders who represent a higher risk will face a better future if we deal with them through community services rather than jail. These efforts will also help us to relieve pressures on the Baffin Correctional Centre.

Overcrowding remains a problem, but the new relief structure will open soon. This budget doubles funding for the new structure. Staff have been hired and are now training. They're preparing to take in prisoners in the next few months. Meanwhile, the justice department has hired architects to give us design options for the renovation of the correctional centre. Our priority is to create bed space so that we can separate maximum security prisoners from the rest of the BCC population. We also want to make room to bring home Nunavummiut serving time in other jurisdictions.

Strengthening our communities also means finding a way out of our persistent housing crisis. We are making progress, but we see clearly that we will need significantly more resources than we have now. In this year's budget, our support for housing rises 6 percent to nearly \$184 million. This includes an \$8 million rise in utility expenses.

It's encouraging to see that we are adding to the housing supply. The Sanikiluaq and Arviat public housing projects should be complete by December. The Nunavut Housing Corporation is on track to complete 258 public housing units on time and on budget. The government is also investing

\$20 million in housing for government staff. In the big picture, we will have added nearly 1,300 homes in the past decade.

>>Applause

This is thanks to three federal investments and our own contributions. We are going in the right direction.

Not only that, but rethinking our approach to housing design is also yielding benefits. Nunavut Housing Corporation's new five-plex design achieves savings and efficiencies worth \$700,000 per building. Improvements and efficiencies are encouraging, but they get us only partway to our goal of providing Nunavummiut with options for affordable and adequate housing.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation tells us that about one-third of existing homes are overcrowded and about one in four need major repairs. The demand for better housing and more housing remains strong. Meeting this demand would greatly improve our social and economic situation. Better housing leads to stable families, better health, better school performance, stronger communities, and a better workforce. In short, better housing would make our goals more achievable.

We have repeatedly made the case for federal investment in housing Nunavummiut and we will continue those efforts in the year ahead. At the same time, the housing corporation will complete its action plan to implement our long-term housing strategy.

Responsible Development

In strengthening our communities and educating and training Nunavummiut, we create favourable conditions for sustained economic development. Through economic growth, we will create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve the way we live.

There is strong demand for our vast wealth of natural resources. We will develop this wealth using a responsible approach that protects our environment, manages wildlife, and sustains our resources for future generations.

This budget provides the Department of Economic Development and Transportation with a 12 percent rise in funding. With a budget of \$68 million, the department will be well positioned to support projects essential to our growth.

We will also implement an updated NNI Policy to ensure that Nunavummiut can better compete for government business.

Our economic development policies provide support for mining and petroleum exploration and development. They also support diversified development by focusing on specific sectors.

In the coming year, we will double our investment in developing tourism and cultural industries across the territory.

>>Applause

We will also develop a new cultural industries strategy to replace the arts and crafts strategy, and launch a national marketing campaign for our unique arts and media sector.

We will continue to invest in transportation infrastructure to better connect Nunavummiut with each other and the world. The economic development and transportation department receives an additional \$1 million in this budget for community transportation projects. As well, we will complete the improvements to the Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay airports this year. We will also support fish harvesting by seeking further federal funds for small craft harbours.

Our overall fisheries strategy will be updated this coming year. The government will also update our harvester support programs to make them more effective. In addition, the environment department will complete wildlife management plans for Baffin Island caribou, polar bears, and grizzly bears.

This budget recognizes the importance of wildlife protection. It allocates about \$25 million to the environment department. Overall spending rises more than 7 percent, but funding for environmental protection rises by a substantial 43 percent.

We will invest in a new initiative to manage contaminated sites. Our initial investment of \$1 million next year will rise in later years to \$1.5 million annually.

Wise Use

In acting to support better education and training, stronger communities and responsible resource development, it is essential that we use our resources wisely. We must get the best value we can from public funds. That is why my

finance department is working closely with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to coordinate a review of government programs. We will engage an independent external reviewer in the coming year.

My department is also working with all departments and territorial corporations to improve budgeting and results management. We are putting in place a planning horizon of three years. That way, we can identify strategic opportunities and prepare for them more effectively than we are now.

At the same time, the government is implementing the Human Resources Strategy to recruit and develop our employees and improve client service. We are also gathering better data to support planning and decisions. In addition, the strategy guides our effort to hire more Inuit into the public service.

As of September 30 of last year, the government's 10 departments had 3,980 employees. Of these, 50 percent were Inuit. We continue to see strong Inuit representation in our administrative support functions, but we need to see more Inuit in senior and middle management positions and in the professional and paraprofessional categories.

We continue to place a priority on Inuit in our recruiting, in line with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. We project that Inuit participation will rise to 51 percent by the end of the next fiscal year.

>>Applause

Our government is also working to improve the integrity of our public service through the appointment of an ethics officer. We look forward to announcing this appointment very shortly and to having this person take office April 1.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, there you have it. I have given you a plan that aligns the government's financial and human resources with the vision that this Assembly set out in *Sivumut Abluqta*. In our vision, Nunavummiut enjoy a positive outlook on life within a strong, prosperous Nunavut. Our vision compels us to invest in our communities and our people to develop our economy responsibly while using our resources wisely.

In closing, let me make two final points. The first is to recognize the work of our civil service. We count on them to deliver results for all Nunavummiut. The second is to say that my cabinet colleagues and I look forward to working with all Members of this House in taking these next steps together, moving forward to our goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Item 3. (interpretation) Ministers' Statements. I don't have any names on my list. Item 4. Members' Statements. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Item 4: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 202 – 4(2): Tribute to Louis Kamookak

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) To the residents of Gjoa Haven, (interpretation ends) good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my constituent, Louie Kamookak.

Mr. Speaker, as members will recall, Mr. Kamookak worked closely with our territorial and the federal government in the search for the lost Franklin Expedition ships. His research on Inuit oral history played a key role in the historic discovery of one of the two lost ships. It was a great moment for Nunavut and for Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the 50th anniversary of the National Flag of Canada was marked earlier this month. The Prime Minister of Canada presented 50 Peace Tower flags to recognize 50 Canadians and their great contributions to our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I congratulate Mr. Kamookak for having been presented with a Peace Tower flag for his great contribution to the 2014 discovery of one of the Franklin Expedition ships.

I would note another prominent northerner, Nellie Cournoyea, was also presented with a flag for her work in support of Inuit and I congratulate her as well.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mr. Kamookak and all Peace Tower flag recipients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Tununig, Mr. Enook.

**Member's Statement 203 – 4(2):
Tribute to Pond Inlet Residents**

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the residents of Pond Inlet and Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the many constituents in Pond Inlet who have been working tremendously hard in recent weeks to overcome the state of emergency in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I will begin by acknowledging a number of individuals who work at the municipality. In recent weeks, they have been stretched to the limit in keeping our trucks on the road and providing essential services to the community. They are:

Sandy Kaunak
Isa Koonark
Willy Enoogoo
Simeonie Enook
Jasipa Singoorie
Emily Onalik
Abraham Kunnuk
Douglas Enooagak
William Onalik
Manasie Akpaleepik
Sandy Angnetsiak
Steven Enooagak
Steven Kilukishak
Lanny Arnakallak
George Kippomee
Tommy Aglak
Andrew Tagak
Brandon Killiktee
Louis Erkloo

Nathan Tigullaraq

Mr. Speaker, my apologies if I have omitted anyone.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my Member's Statement yesterday, the crisis in Pond Inlet has resulted in extensive flooding of homes.

I wish to pay tribute to the efforts of the following employees of Pond Inlet's local housing association who have been making every effort to deal with this situation. They are:

David Pitseolak
Harvey Nutarak
Nathan Ootoova
Floyd Milton
Leo Mucktar
Ivan Sangoya
Brian Simonee
Daniel Quassa
Ronnie Qiyuapik
Imo Killiktee
Simeonie Inootik
Samson Akpaleepik

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): The Member for Tununig is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? I don't hear any nays. Mr. Enook, please proceed.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals I named, along with other workers, provided essential services to our community and they went above and beyond the call of

duty, enduring long and stressful hours during our local crises.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in paying tribute to the many residents of Pond Inlet who have been serving their community with distinction during this difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

**Member's Statement 204 – 4(2):
Kimmirut Radio Returns in Time
for Christmas**

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to warmly welcome the return of Kimmirut's local radio station broadcasts.

Mr. Speaker, Kimmirut's local radio station was unable to air any broadcasts for the majority of the 2014 calendar year due to a combination of technical and logistical challenges. The community radio outage for Kimmirut was a cause for deep concern for residents.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members would agree that community radio is a vital communication link for residents. Nunavummiut use the airwaves to share information from within and from outside of their communities.

As well, the longstanding tradition of community radio allows for dialogue through call-in shows where, on occasion, members participate by

sharing information and answering constituents' questions.

Mr. Speaker, a benefit of great importance regarding community radio is the role it plays in promoting and preserving the Inuktitut language.

Mr. Speaker, during the holiday season, community radio plays a particularly significant role in providing news of events, broadcasting holiday greetings, and playing radio games.

Leading up to the Christmas holidays, Kimmirut were eagerly anticipating the return of the radio station.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in my appreciation for the individuals who assisted with the repair of the radio station. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. I apologize for overlooking you. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Shooyook.

**Member's Statement 205 – 4(2):
Baffin Island Caribou
Management**

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to wish my fellow residents of Nunavut and Arctic Bay a good afternoon. Welcome to the people of Nunavut as well as my colleagues in this House.

I rise today to speak to an issue that arose during our fall session. We were informed by the Minister of

Environment about the developments in the management of our caribou. Mr. Speaker, currently, on Baffin Island, we have heard that the caribou population has crashed and that this raises deep concerns on the caribou population on our island and that is what we heard.

We seemed to hear two different management options, one where caribou have a quota and a limited harvest or that the communities would be allocated a certain number of caribou to harvest, for example, a certain number of caribou per person. When we were informed of this development, we weren't provided with future plans or a timeframe for when this proposed moratorium would commence. Alternatively, the other option was to curtail all harvests of caribou.

As it developed, it turned out that this information was sent out during December where a teleconference ensued with five communities, or was that four? We then were served with information at the beginning of January that a moratorium would be placed on caribou harvesting in the interim.

Now, with this moratorium in effect today, we also heard on the radio passionate commentaries from various community members who hadn't been apprised of this development and that this caught them off guard. I made the assumption at that time that local community representatives who partook in these meetings must have not passed on this information, as their local people weren't informed about this issue. We heard many Inuit berate this development since they weren't aware that a moratorium was even part of the considerations.

Part of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* speaks to never fighting over or complaining about any species since it can have detrimental effects. I personally am not too concerned about this moratorium because we will have future opportunities at some point. That is why I am not too concerned about this matter, but I wanted to speak to this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Item 5. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. (interpretation) Member for Netsilik, Ms. Ugyuk.

Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to my relatives and the people of Kugaaruk. I would like to recognize James Eetoolook, Vice-president of NTI. He is in the gallery and I would like to welcome him. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Thank you. For all those who are at the Assembly, I welcome you. (interpretation ends) Item 7. (interpretation) Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Item 7: Oral Questions

Question 332 – 4(2): Food Insecurity in the North

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, food insecurity is an ongoing issue for people across Canada's North and has been raised in this House on a number of occasions.

As the minister will be aware, Canada's Public Policy Forum will be holding meetings in Yellowknife and Iqaluit next month to hold a dialogue on the issue of food insecurity in northern Canada. Information provided by the forum indicates that these meetings will be held in partnership with a number of organizations, including the Nunavut Food Security Coalition.

Can the minister indicate what actions will be taken to ensure that the proceedings and outcomes of these meetings will be made publicly available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Ugyuk

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for asking the question. The (interpretation ends) Nunavut food coalition (interpretation) is operated by the Department of Health up to this point, although our department sits in on these poverty reduction meetings. I will provide the member with the information about the proposed plans once they are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the answer. On February 10, 2015, the issue of food security in Canada's North was also raised in the House of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. For your information, in their question period, they also mentioned the community of Gjoa Haven. At that time, the Premier of NWT indicated that his government has been working with the Yukon and Nunavut governments on the issue of food insecurity.

Can the minister indicate what specific meetings she has had in the past year with the Yukon and NWT governments concerning food security and what were the outcomes of those meetings? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for the question. The (interpretation ends) Nunavut Food Security Coalition (interpretation) sent a letter to the (interpretation ends) Nutrition North (interpretation) board to enact changes to the system, with the support of the Department of Family Services. I wanted to provide that information, as the (interpretation ends) Nutrition North (interpretation) program is managed by the federal government.

The Nunavut Food Security Coalition is administered by the Department of Health. We receive updates on their activities on this issue. The proposed

changes were recommended after discussions with the Auditor General. That is one avenue of assistance we have provided to that group. That is all the information I can provide at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your final supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the minister's department is involved in a number of initiatives to address food insecurity, including the Nunavut Food Price Survey and the Nunavut Food Security Coalition.

On October 27, 2014, I asked the minister what her department was doing to align the current Income Assistance Program to the cost of living in Nunavut. In her response, the minister stated that due to a number of "interagency meetings, we haven't reached the point where we have finalized our plans and action items in a written format," and that an upcoming meeting in Iqaluit would "further our guidance on what needs to be undertaken."

Can the minister indicate what work has been done to align the current Income Assistance Program to the cost of living in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Ugyuk.

Hon. Jeannie Ugyuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague from Gjoa Haven for that question. The Department of Family Services has immediately made slight changes to the proposed budget for the upcoming new budget year. We expect these changes, but with respect to the

larger changes proposed, we will require further research prior to implementing them and to conduct a thorough review. That is our current plan of action on this issue related to poverty reduction and this would require a large allocation of funds to undertake. We have to be very careful to manage this issue. That is what I can respond with at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet South, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 333 – 4(2): Boarding for Medical Clients in Rankin Inlet

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, medical clients often travel through the community of Rankin Inlet to receive medical care. Can the minister clearly describe what accommodation arrangements are currently in place for medical clients and their escorts who are travelling to Rankin Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I know, some of them stay in hotels and some are billeted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, there is no designated boarding home for medical clients in Rankin Inlet as there are here in Iqaluit. Having a designated boarding home would provide many benefits for medical clients, such as transportation to and from the airport or to their medical appointments, meals, and a comfortable and secure environment. MLAs in the past have also addressed the need for a Rankin Inlet medical boarding home. Can the minister explain why his department has not given this initiative further consideration to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for that good question. The Department of Health is currently starting to have discussions with the federal government, as they provide funding for boarding homes, for example, in Iqaluit, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Yellowknife. The money is provided by the federal government and only after those discussions take place can we further consider the possibilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, a local contractor has put forward a proposal to open a medical boarding home in Rankin Inlet. The minister has responded that his officials will be working with Health

Canada on developing a business case related to this initiative. Can the minister give an approximate timeline for that business case to be developed and submitted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not an easy process and we would have to get staff, provide housing, and so on. We are just in the initial stages of having those discussions, so I can't respond to him at this time, but we are in the planning stages and we are beginning our talks with the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, Ms. Angnakak.

Question 334 – 4(2): Services for Nunavummiut

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

The budget speaks of various programs and services that the Government of Nunavut delivers. Can the minister explain in detail what measures are in place that indicate that Nunavummiut are getting the services that they need and that they are delivered in an accountable and transparent way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would probably need three

weeks. That's what this whole process is for, to explain the processes in place. Through contribution agreements, the departments monitor the money they deliver and give to third parties. Through the standing committee process and the Committee of the Whole process, MLAs get a chance to question the ministers during Committee of the Whole on previous year's appropriated funds and what the funds will be used for in the future year. There are a number of processes.

As the Department of Finance, we work with all the departments and public agencies to ensure that departments work within their appropriations and, if there's a need and they can justify it, then we will go to the Financial Management Board for a decision. Each department has corporate services officials who work with their frontline staff and managers to ensure that the monies that are appropriated by the department are used for the purposes intended.

Again, that's a thumbnail sketch. I probably need a lot more time to get into real detail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I raise that because coming as a regular MLA, we have asked questions in the House, we have asked questions at standing committee, we have asked questions in Committee of the Whole, and a lot of times, we don't get the answers that we're looking for. Usually the answer is because they're under review or it's confidential, yet we are

asked to sign off on budgets. That's why I asked the question.

If everything is under review currently, how do you know that the money is being spent wisely? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Ms. Angnakak for the question. Of course, all the public monies are the taxpayers' monies; it's not ministers' monies or MLAs' monies; it's monies that taxpayers give to us. Certainly, within a standing committee setting or in-camera, for example, last month, I could see no reason why you wouldn't be provided the information that you asked for.

Of course, I don't know the details about some of the levels of questioning, but a minister or the officials should be able to provide the answers to your questions. When you're in Committee of the Whole, they should be able to as well. Let's say, for example, if someone got funding for a business plan, you wouldn't want to provide detailed information that a competitor would like to have.

Again, through the grants and contributions program, there are funding agreements that every department and deputy head are responsible for, but the officials should monitor them through your questions in the House. We do have our annual business plans looking forward three years. You can look at the business plan.

You can ask the ministers exactly what kind of detailed results... . They always have their officials with them as witnesses. If the ministers don't have the information, because we're not responsible for the day-to-day operations of a department, our officials certainly would have that information. If they don't have it at their fingertips, then they should be able to get it to you.

As an MLA, you have a lot of power to compel the government to provide information subject to confidentiality issues. I can't imagine what other reasons why ministers would say that's confidential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, as regular MLAs, we have been frustrated to some extent over this and we have all been pushing a comprehensive review of programs and services to take place. I understand that there was an RFP recently issued. Can the minister tell us when he expects this review to be completed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Laughter*

You're planting a seed in my brain there about the... .

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am working with the Premier's department, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, and our officials are. There was an RFP that went out. I'm not sure of the closing date, but we're hoping that there will be a number of good proposals that will be reviewed.

The general plan is to review in two phases. There will be a phase this year and we hope we will get some results back by this fall in time to incorporate some changes into the 2016-17 business plans. There will be a second phase that would take place after this fall that would go forward another year with more detail. It is a very comprehensive review plan and I think the Premier will probably be able to speak to it in more detail at a future date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Shooyook.

Question 335 – 4(2): Baffin Island Caribou Management

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Environment.

With respect to the moratorium on caribou hunter being enacted, especially for the seven communities in the Baffin region, based on the population dwindling and the estimates numbered, it has caused a lot of concern as to how the process will be laid out with respect to this plan.

What have you prepared and what timeframe do you have for the caribou

management plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the member has raised that question regarding the management plan for Baffin Island caribou and the process. I am pleased that a Baffin MLA has finally provided that question ever since the issue was brought up into question and that it came from our esteemed elder here in this Legislative Assembly. I am grateful he raised that question.

With regard to the caribou management plan for the Baffin region, it has been a long process and we involved the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board. It was brought up as a concern by that organization and I wanted to lay some background in order to speak to that issue. It was brought up as a concern primarily by the hunters and it moved up from that level.

To date, in the Baffin region in particular, starting from 2013 to 2014, caribou discussions were quite hectic and there were population estimates, research, and a lot of meetings regarding the caribou management amongst the HTOs, the wildlife boards, NTI, and other Inuit organizations that worked towards developing a plan.

At this current time, the moratorium is now in place and again, it was given to me to make a decision on. I was pleased to deal with that particular management decision submitted by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, which was

supported by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

Currently, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board has proposed a public hearing for the Baffin region regarding caribou management. Prior to the goal being established, they wanted a moratorium on caribou hunting. This was supported by many of the HTO representatives, especially on the basis of the caribou becoming a concern.

After the public hearing process has played out, I will be provided with a list of recommendations from various wildlife organizations and at that time, we will be deliberating on these issues. That's all I can say at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for clarifying and for providing this information. Thank you.

I would like to raise this other question. I know it's a cumbersome process; it's quite complicated. With respect to the caribou hunting moratorium, what timeframe will it extend to? Will it extend to the spring? Will it extend to a couple of years? What timeframe are we looking at? Have you made any decision as to what kind of timeframe you will be enacting that moratorium? Will you speak to that after the management process has been played out? Do you have any information on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated previously, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board has to have a public hearing on this issue. After this process has played out, we will have a better idea. This process will take a couple of months.

While we are deliberating on this management issue related to this hunting moratorium, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board hasn't identified the actual month when they will be holding the public hearing. I had expected some time in the spring when they would identify a date. I imagine it could be early spring or the spring. Those are my expectations. I believe there will be a public hearing on caribou next month. After that public hearing process is completed, they will be submitting recommendations for my decision.

I also wanted to speak to this issue to clarify it. There was a Baffin caribou management working group and they identified a lot of issues, particularly related to Baffin hunters, through various avenues and modes of meetings. With respect to the caribou population research study that was reviewed by the representative, they identified that the research study of caribou was managed properly and that it was exactly how it was reported.

With respect to further decisions regarding caribou, there have been some decisions concurred to by the communities with respect to caribou management. There were some decisions on how to deal with these particular

issues. Due to these many factors, it resulted in a hunting moratorium on caribou, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for his response. How would this moratorium on hunting caribou... ? I have continued to raise that question. We are not allowed to hunt caribou at this time in the Baffin region. We have no idea as to what timeframe that moratorium will extend to.

If you understand that that particular mainland has a lot of caribou, some of our caribou have probably migrated to that area as well. Those of us who are residents in Arctic Bay are actually closer to the mainland. Has the department discussed this issue with the other regions as to whether residents of Baffin Island can go caribou hunting in their region if they wish to or will this result in other management difficulties? What ideas or issues have you discussed in trying to allow Inuit from this region to be able to hunt caribou? I wonder whether or not we will have the opportunity to go to other regions to hunt or if we have that freedom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Only the Baffin region has that moratorium in place. There is no other discussion item about other caribou in other regions. It's just speaking about the Baffin region. It

doesn't stop any Inuk from going to the Kivalliq region or near Repulse Bay. They have that freedom to go hunting caribou in those regions. I know for a fact that people from Igloolik and Hall Beach have quite a few frostbites on their cheeks, probably because they have gone long distances to go caribou hunting.

I wanted to raise this issue that the Government of Nunavut has a position on caribou with respect to Baffin Island. They were provided a list of recommendations by the HTOs. The issue of having the HTOs manage caribou harvesting was deliberated and discussed during this meeting. There was never any movement to the HTOs managing their local hunters. It raised a lot of local concerns and this was brought up.

Instead of making any decision on these issues, we ended up enacting the hunting moratorium. Although that may be the case, there has been that option to allow the communities to conduct the management of their local hunters, but as of today, we have yet to receive any kind of proposal.

I have also heard on the local radio that the government just wants to control everything. That wasn't our position, but that end decision was not made lightly, along with the wildlife management boards. It continues to be a community decision. At this time, I have yet to hear of any HTO grabbing that mandate to handle their local hunters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Rumbolt.

Question 336 – 4(2): Dust Control in Nunavut Communities

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, during yesterday's proceedings, my colleagues asked the minister of number of questions concerning dust control in the communities. In his response, the minister stated that his department was looking at the possibility of using another chemical that, and I quote, "when you mix it with the sand, it can be used also for paving." Can the minister provide us with more details on this new dust suppressant product? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thought I had dusted it all off yesterday.

>>*Laughter*

Thank you for the question. I used that as an example yesterday to indicate that as a department, we are looking at other options. That may be one of the viable options that we end up working with. However, as I indicated yesterday, we are exploring other options other than what is currently being used now, which is calcium chloride. We are exploring ways to see whether these other options are even viable in the cold weather that we have here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Your first supplementary, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Dusting in communities is not easily
dusted off.

Can the minister indicate what research
his department has completed to date to
determine the effectiveness of this new
substance in northern climates? Thank
you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Minister of Community and Government
Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation
ends) As I indicated, this is one option
that we are exploring. However, we
haven't actually done anything to test it
in this cold weather. Eventually, as I
mentioned yesterday and now, as an
option, this is one of the things that we
are exploring and we hope to eventually
get the results at some point.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Your final supplementary, Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I wonder if the minister can indicate
when or if his department has any plans
in the near future to test any new
substances in Nunavut for dust control.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of
Community and Government Services,
Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated

yesterday, (interpretation ends) we have
provided USB flash to all the
municipalities, which gives you different
options on what different chemicals that
a community may want to use. Our
intention is that this coming summer, we
will be going into communities that
request training on the application of
dust control chemicals and provide
training to the municipalities so that
proper application of these chemicals,
whether it be calcium chloride or maybe
another chemical, can be done.

I know that in a lot of communities,
calcium chloride is applied. However,
when it's not applied properly, it only
lasts maybe two or three days. However,
I understand that with proper
application, it can last for up to about
two weeks at least. (interpretation)
Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Oral Questions. Member for South
Baffin, Mr. Joanasié.

Question 337 – 4(2): Medical Boarding Home Contracts

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to the
visitors in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my
questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, the services at medical
boarding homes in various city centres,
such as Iqaluit, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and
Yellowknife, are delivered under
contracts with the Department of Health.

Nunavummiut, especially elderly people
or those with physical disabilities, who
travel for medical reasons require special

and appropriate care during their commute and while staying at these facilities which are designated for health care clients and their escorts.

I want to ask the minister if he can describe what measures his department has put in place to ensure that the contractors who operate medical boarding homes are providing a level of service that meets quality assurance standards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there is one boarding home I have been able to tour and that's the one in Ottawa. Staff has researched whether or not people with disabilities can be accommodated and whether they can access their rooms. I know that these services are available based on the information I have been provided. I haven't been able to tour any other boarding homes, so I can't really speak to those facilities.

As far as I know, inspections are required and it has been done here in Iqaluit at this boarding home. Just recently, the fire marshal conducted an inspection of the facility in September and his report highlighted specific areas requiring repairs. Apparently, there were 26 code deficiencies identified, which were dealt with. As far as I know, those are the types of inspections required of these facilities to see whether they are up to code and in compliance with legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister just stated that the Office of the Fire Marshal has to conduct inspections. I want to ask the minister if he can clarify whether the medical boarding home contracts permit officials from the minister's department, such as (interpretation ends) environmental health officers, (interpretation) I am not sure of the exact title in Inuktitut, or officials from other government departments to perform spot checks or inspections of boarding home facility operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, they are subject to the contract obligations as well as the legislation that governs the facilities, and they check to see if the contractors are in compliance with the requirements. I also stated earlier that inspections are conducted on these facilities, especially compliance with the legal requirements, and improvements are sometimes required. That is how it is managed currently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Joanasié.

Mr. Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lastly, I want to ask the minister if he can identify whether contractors who operate medical boarding homes are required, under their contracts, to provide their frontline workers with the appropriate training in hospitality or customer service practices prior to working at these facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Finance... (interpretation) I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) ...Health, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A change of title was unexpected. Darn! I almost had the portfolio handed to me.

>>*Laughter*

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are quite a few contractors and they have different types of employees. Some have in-house nurses while some have in-house interpreters. There is a whole variety of positions and it is obvious that they follow their requirements for each position, but the question didn't identify an actual position. If the member can provide more detail in the future, I can look into the matter and provide further information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Enook.

Question 338 – 4(2): Status of Standing Offer Agreement for Government of Nunavut Medical and Duty Travel

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

In 2011, the government issued a request for proposals, No. 2011-22, for a standing offer agreement for medical travel and duty travel on scheduled airlines. The RFP indicated that the term of the agreement would be "for a period

of three years with the possibility of three one-year extensions."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he can update the House today on the status of the government's standing offer agreement for medical travel and duty travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the question raised by the member, at this time, I will have to research the issue and provide more information later on. Perhaps at this time, with respect to the member's question, I don't have it here, so I will take it as notice. That is unfortunate. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Did you have a supplementary? I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) The minister has taken the question as notice. I will proceed to the next... (interpretation) Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Question 339 – 4(2): Baffin Island Caribou Management

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would first like to ask a question to the Minister of Environment.

Part of this question was already raised, but I wish to ask another question related to caribou management and harvesting. Confusion has reigned as people have different opinions, particularly amongst my constituents and communities. I

would like to first ask this question, Mr. Speaker: has the caribou moratorium already taken effect? The public has two viewpoints that they feel is valid. I would like to ask the minister if the caribou harvest moratorium is, indeed, in place.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for raising that question. Yes, the moratorium was announced as being effective January 1. The harvest was closed on that date, so the caribou harvest moratorium is in effect at this time. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize as my voice is quite hoarse and ragged.

Mr. Speaker, has the department provided a written announcement to all communities of this moratorium? Of particular significance is the fact that our community doesn't have a wildlife officer presently and with no written confirmation and only radio announcements, some hunters don't believe that a moratorium is in effect, quite a number of them anyways. Without a public announcement stating the length of the moratorium, people don't believe it.

Although I have spoken with the local HTO about this issue, they informed me that they hadn't received any correspondence announcing the caribou moratorium and outlining the boundaries

of the moratorium area. The HTO stated that they have yet to receive written correspondence.

I wonder why the Minister of Environment didn't confirm that notice was provided to every community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to this concern expressed and shared by the hunters and trappers organizations about caribou in this region and after several meetings with Qikiqtaaluk organizations on the decline in our caribou population, they arrived at three options to review. The options were to enact a moratorium or to have a limitation on the number of caribou per community or to allow the hunters to hunt in other areas. These were the options discussed by the organizations. When the options were brought up, it was through these meetings with the last meeting occurring this fall.

With this now in effect, I held a teleconference with the MLAs and at that time, there was no MLA representing the Uqqummiut Riding during the Christmas season. I believe the Member for Tununiq was also fielding calls voicing the concerns of Uqqummiut, as he agreed to do that prior to the by-election. That is how we handled that issue. The HTOs were also consulted prior to the moratorium taking effect and this included QWB representatives who were involved in this process and we informed them of this development.

With respect to correspondence not reaching his community or if one was sent, it is something I will have to look into, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this day and age, as we all know, nowadays, any news announced won't be believed unless written correspondence or statement is included. The only way any level of government will acknowledge the average person is when they submit a written application. Government doesn't put any stock in any oral traditional unless a written component is included.

Today, Inuit are becoming more and more dependent on the written format, particularly the younger generations who grew up solely in a written environment. If there is nothing written publicly about a government position, they don't accept that anymore and refuse to comply without written limits.

Since no public correspondence was sent to our community announcing the caribou harvest moratorium, many residents refused to believe this development and that no moratorium was in effect since the hunters hadn't seen any public announcements announcing the moratorium.

With that being the case, my constituents want written confirmation of any limitation, especially a moratorium on harvesting laid out in writing, outlining the rules Inuit have to follow. I was asked to voice this matter by many Inuit and I hope that the minister, if faced

with another moratorium on another species, will provide written announcements that our hunters can read. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Mike.

Hon. Johnny Mike (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will take the member's comments into consideration.

As I stated earlier, prior to the moratorium on caribou harvest, I informed the members via telephone conversations using a map with boundaries attached and it included the various recommendations submitted by the hunters and trappers organizations when QWB held a teleconference on this issue, with involvement from NTI and NWMB to review this decision. This decision wasn't arrived at posthaste, as every organization has written information outlining these options.

With respect to an actual public announcement about this moratorium, I will have to look into it, as per my earlier statement. However, with respect to the maps and an options paper, this information was provided to all of the organizations, where the boundary of the moratorium would lie for Baffin Island caribou, and the correspondence providing that information was available to them.

Now, the Member for Uqqummiut will note that I will look into his question about a letter or public announcement and whether it was released. I will be able to provide further information once I have it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Mapsalak.

Question 340 – 4(2): Local Volunteer Firefighters

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, most communities have volunteer firefighters, who are unpaid volunteers doing their civic duty, and they deal with emergency situations and stressful work environments.

Mr. Speaker, I would like information from the minister as to which division manages these local fire departments. Is it the hamlet or is it under the government? Which department is responsible for the fire departments in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The volunteer firefighters serve due to their public sense of civic duty. However, the fire halls and firefighting equipment is managed under the hamlet administrations. Our department provides the funding for the hamlets to be able to provide a firefighting service locally and we provide operational funding for them. However, the actual management of the departments lies with the local hamlets. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, based on my understanding or how I think I understood it, the volunteer firefighting equipment is managed by the hamlet through contribution agreements. They receive this funding from the government for this service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The communities or the hamlets have to request further assistance, whether it is conducting training or not, as training is offered every year for our firefighters in the communities. The government provides the trainers and training modules, as they offer various course annually, and that is how we provide assistance to them. We also work with the (interpretation ends) Municipal Training Organization, (interpretation) as they are able to visit communities to train the local firefighters throughout Nunavut. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason why I raised this question was due to the comments I heard from the firefighters who requested assistance in their community. They wanted to change from a volunteer firefighter brigade to a

paid firefighting force that would provide this essential service. Due to their concerns, I have raised this issue with the minister to see if they can receive assistance from the government to change their status, as this is an essential service.

Firefighters are faced with a challenging and difficult job in providing services to their communities. Have the firefighter groups received information about the different types of assistance offered by the government or would that go through their local hamlet? I wonder if firefighters are provided information on the different types of assistance from government specifically towards firefighting groups in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Sammurtok.

Hon. Tom Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I stated earlier that we can provide assistance to the local firefighting groups, either through training or by offering courses the local group wants, and occasionally there are different types of courses developed. If they want that training, then we can assist them with that training in the new courses.

Furthermore, the groups are provided with the information as part of their training exercises. They receive the information about how this government can assist their group and the different funds applicable towards firefighting. The trainers generally provide that information as part of the training. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Enook.

Question 341 – 4(2): Compliance with Duty Travel Directive

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance's Financial Administration Manual includes a directive on duty travel, which is Directive 820-1. This directive provides that "Air travel must be at the lowest practical fare." That's what it states.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he can clarify how the Department of Finance monitors and enforces compliance on the part of GN departments and Crown agencies with the provisions of the government's directive on duty travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Mr. Enook for the question. I think it actually says, "the lowest economical airfare." This question came up a few years ago.

There is a contract we have with both airlines. I don't have all the details. It's a fairly comprehensive contract. Our department, within the last month, I know for sure because I had a quick briefing on it, has asked all the departments to provide information on the travel that their employees are using on both airlines. I just don't have the

information in front of me, but we are well aware of it.

I suggested to our Deputy Minister of Finance, and I know this would be very onerous on the departments, that we could request the information and break it down by employee and which airline they're flying on, but right now, we are just asking, by airline, how much the different departments are using on each airline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister indicate if all government departments and Crown agencies are currently in compliance with the government's directive on duty travel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Mr. Enook for the question. I can't state here definitively if they are all in compliance, but public agencies and departments are aware of the contract of duty travel. I believe they have all received information on the codes they use when they are booking travel, so they are aware of that information. It's not a secret; they're aware of that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Ms. Angnakak.

Question 342 – 4(2): Wellness Courts and Rehabilitation of Offenders

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just raked in there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, wellness courts in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories use holistic approaches to rehabilitate offenders that suffer from mental health, addictions, and cognitive impairments.

On October 30, 2014, the minister stated that his department was looking at ways on how we can have that wellness court in Nunavut.

Can the minister provide an update on the specific actions that his department is taking to explore the possibility of implementing a wellness court in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Justice, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, my staff are reviewing the options on how we can develop more initiatives in this area and we continue to make progress in conducting this review today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing more on what's going with the wellness court.

Mr. Speaker, addressing mental health, addictions, and cognitive impairments through a wellness court in Nunavut may require the department to provide specific training for court staff, caseworkers, and to collaborate with mental health professionals in the territory.

Can the minister indicate to what extent his department is working with the Department of Health, being the same hat, as it moves forward to introduce a wellness court in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two departments are now working closely together to see how to develop a wellness court and we are looking at ways as to how we can provide more services to those in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your final supplementary, Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During yesterday's proceedings, the minister's response to a written question concerning correctional facilities and rehabilitation plans was tabled in the House. This response indicates that the department's correctional division "currently does not have the capacity to evaluate" the rate at which offenders reoffend.

Can the minister indicate what specific actions are being taken to improve the

department's reporting capacity and ensure that it has the ability to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of its rehabilitation programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this is something we are dealing with. However, we haven't had the chance to catch up with the volume of services for current inmates. Now we have started to catch up with the volume with the opening of the Makigiarvik facility, particularly the cases that need to be dealt with immediately. Once this workload has settled down, we will be able to start facing these other challenges and we expect to do that in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The time for question period has expired. (interpretation ends) Item 8. Written Questions. Item 9. Returns to Written Questions. Item 10. Replies to Opening Address. Item 11. Replies to Budget Address. Item 12. Petitions. Item 13. Responses to Petitions. Item 14. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 15. Tabling of Documents. Mr. Akoak.

Item 15: Tabling of Documents

**Tabled Document 094 – 4(2):
Resolutions Passed at the 2014
Annual General Meeting of the
Kitikmeot Inuit Association**

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table today a number of resolutions that were passed at the 2014 Annual General Meeting of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association. Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending this important meeting and I encourage all members to review these items with care. Mr. Speaker, I will be asking some questions about these resolutions to the appropriate ministers during our winter sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. I also have one.

**Tabled Document 095 – 4(2): 2015-
2018 Business Plan of the Office of
the Legislative Assembly**

I wish to table the 2015-18 Business Plan of the Office of the Legislative Assembly. (interpretation) Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Item 16. Notices of Motions. Item 17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

**Item 17: Notices of Motions for First
Reading of Bills**

**Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations &
Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 –
Notice**

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 27, 2015, that Bill 16,

Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Item 18. Motions. Item 19. First Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Item 19: First Reading of Bills

Hon. Keith Peterson: Mr. Speaker, I request the consent of this Assembly to waive the two-day notice requirement to allow for the first reading of Bill 16, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The minister is requesting to waive the two-day waiting period to allow the first reading of Bill 16. Do members agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker: There is an agreement. Minister of Finance, please proceed.

**Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations &
Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 –
First Reading**

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 16, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. All those in favour.

(interpretation) Thank you.
(interpretation ends) Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 20. Second Reading of Bills. Hon. Minister of Finance, Mr. Peterson.

Item 20: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 – Second Reading

Hon. Keith Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 16, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of Nunavut to make operations and maintenance expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 16 is referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Item 21. [Consideration in] Committee of the Whole on Bills and Other Matters. Bill 16 with Mr. Enook in the Chair.

Before we proceed to the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:23 and Committee resumed at 15:46*

Item 21: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Enook)(interpretation): Good afternoon, my colleagues. Good afternoon to the people of Nunavut who are listening to the radio broadcast and watching the televised proceedings. Welcome to your Committee of the Whole.

I would now like to call the meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following item to deal with: Bill 16. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, we wish to commence with the review of the O&M Appropriation Act, 2015-16, starting with the Department of Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Rumbolt. Are we in agreement that we first deal with the 2015-16 main estimates of the Department of Health?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 16 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2015-2016 – Health – Consideration in Committee

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister Okalik, (interpretation) welcome. Before we get into the opening comments, do you have any witnesses that you would like to bring to the table? Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, please.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
Does the committee agree to bring in
Minister Okalik's officials?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the
officials in.

Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Minister
Okalik, for the record, please introduce
your witnesses. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me this
afternoon to my right is my Deputy
Minister, Colleen Stockley, and to my
left is Assistant Deputy Minister
Rosemary Keenainak. Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you,
Minister Okalik. Welcome, Ms.
Keenainak and Ms. Stockley. If you
have any opening comments,
(interpretation ends) Hon. Minister,
(interpretation) you may now proceed.
Mr. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
afternoon to my colleagues. Prior to
commencing my opening comments, let
me start with acknowledging my
predecessor, Minister Ell, for her work
on this file, as she did the preparations
for this submission and I am just starting
to implement some of these plans. They
were quite timely as well, as she did the
preparations within the fiscal year. I
want to first express my thanks to
Minister Ell, who was my predecessor in

the Department of Health, prior to
commencing my opening comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased
to present the Department of Health's
main estimates for fiscal year 2015-16.
I'll be here today with my officials.

For the 2015-16 year, the Department of
Health requests a budget of \$317.4
million. This represents an increase of
\$18.5 million, or 6.2 percent, from last
year. This will include 100 new
positions.

In *Sivumut Abluqta*, we committed to
healthy communities... . What is
happening, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman: My apologies, Mr. Minister.
(interpretation) Maybe we can reset and
have you start over with your opening
comments. Again I apologize for that.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Prior to my
opening comment, first of all, I want to
express my gratitude to the previous
Minister of Health, Minister Ell. She
undertook all of the preparations for this
appropriation and this will be quite
beneficial to Nunavummiut.

As well, my officials are present with me
and I thank them for their preparations
for the main estimates for the
Department of Health for fiscal year
2015-16.

For the 2015-16 year, the Department of
Health requests a budget of \$317.4
million. This represents an increase of
\$18.5 million, or 6.2 percent, from last
year. This will include 100 new
positions.

In *Sivumut Abluqta*, we committed to healthy communities and good governance, and the request before you today will allow the department to work towards specific actions of our mandate, including addressing mental illness and addictions, ensuring clinical expertise and facilities are available to Nunavummiut, and delivering our services in an effective and efficient manner.

The Department of Health sought immediate action in mental health and as a result, new services are currently being delivered. Of today's request, \$2,825,000 will be used to make the positions permanent for 22 staff of the mental health transition home in Cambridge Bay, a wellness worker in Iqaluit, and psychiatric nurses in Qikiqtarjuaq, Kimmirut, Iqaluit, and Grise Fiord/Resolute Bay.

We will continue to rely heavily on southern mental health facilities. For the past three years, approved budgets have only met half the need. An additional \$2.3 million will bring that budget to a more realistic level and allow the department to hire a coordinator so that we can bring patients home when they are ready. The first step in progress is understanding the current situation. I will be the first to tell you that today's request in mental health is just the beginning.

Speaking now of ensuring clinical expertise and facilities are available to Nunavummiut, there are a number of new initiatives at Health which will improve diagnoses, access to continuous care, and bring care closer to home. Last year, the department pilot-tested the use of a nurse practitioner in Pond Inlet, as

these professionals offer an advanced scope of practice, such as prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic and lab tests.

Using a phased-in approach for \$1.1 million, nurse practitioners will be placed in non-hospital communities, specifically Cape Dorset, Clyde River, Igloolik, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, and Gjoa Haven.

Thirty of our elders are waiting for long-term residential care. Many of those in care are located far from their home communities or in southern institutions. We request \$2 million to repurpose eight unused acute care beds in the Kitikmeot Regional Health Centre and recruit 18 staff to provide care and support for elders and other adults who are chronically ill, disabled, or frail.

Tuberculosis continues to infect Nunavummiut, with dire consequences to individual and community health. In order to get ahead of the disease, the department requests \$1.5 million to introduce an awareness campaign; hire an educator to visit communities; hire indeterminate nurses in Clyde River, Pangnirtung, Qikiqtarjuaq, and Pond Inlet; hire a term nurse in Pond Inlet to address the several new active cases; hire a term, mobile nurse in the Kivalliq; hire a laboratory technician and supplies to expand the use of the GeneXpert test; and hire a term epidemiology program officer to track diagnoses.

Early diagnoses of conditions like tuberculosis, diabetes, sexually transmitted infections, and cancer greatly improve the chances of a positive outcome through early treatment. The Qikiqtani General Hospital Laboratory

provides service for the hospital, Baffin, and most of the Kivalliq communities. The department requests \$634,000 for four new laboratory technologists and two laboratory assistants to handle increased volumes and support new and enhanced technologies.

Another tool in the diagnoses of conditions is the CT scanner with which patients have had access to better care closer to home. In the past, more than 460 patients were sent south. This year, the department expects to complete 1,300 scans, which are available to physicians as early as the same day. With this success comes the need for a scheduler, two assistants, and a clerk interpreter for a cost of \$372,000.

To adequately staff 11 positions in health records and clinics, the department requests \$850,000. The use of these services for Iqaluit and the Qikiqtani region has grown over the years and with the move to electronic records and reduced wait times, more staff are required to deal with the growing demand.

I turn now to good governance. The largest request today, \$5,560,000, is for 24/7 staffing. Our facilities are open as needed, all day, every day, yet our budget is based on most facilities being open on a 7.5-hour work day. Year after year, the department has relied on agency, casual, and overtime to address callouts, sickness, statutory holidays, professional development leave, and vacancies. It is time we build the cost of 24/7 staffing into our budget and reduce our reliance on supplementary appropriations for normal work.

In many of our communities, the frontline staff, our clerk interpreters, have been dedicated in their service to our communities without the benefit of a permanent job. The department has used casuals, overtime, and pulled senior employees from their regular duties to offer health care in our official languages. Today, I ask that you approve \$1.6 million to make 16 clerk interpreter positions indeterminate in Clyde River, Kimmirut, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Qikiqtarjuaq, Arviat, Chesterfield Inlet, Repulse Bay, Sanikiluaq, Whale Cove, Gjoa Haven, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, Taloyoak, and two in Baker Lake.

In times of disaster, the Department of Health must be able to respond. To develop disaster plans and procedures, the department requests \$245 million...\$245,000. Sorry I almost increased it thousand-fold.

>> *Laughter*

I wasn't trying to increase it. It is for the hiring of a senior health emergency planner and program budget.

Finally, the department would like to better coordinate its workplace health and safety programs, as health care professionals have one of the highest rates of injury. We spend too much to recruit nurses to lose them because of unsafe working conditions. The department seeks \$140,000 to create a territorial infection control practitioner who will be responsible for developing standards and procedures to provide a safe level of care for health care workers and patients when dealing with infectious disease issues. This role will liaise with a newly created occupational health and safety nurse position to

ensure that health care providers are working in the safest environment possible by fulfilling Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission orders, preventing injury and providing training.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening comments. I know that, obviously, there will be many questions from my colleagues. Thank you. Have a good afternoon.

Chairman: *Qujannamiik*, Hon. Minister. (interpretation) Also, you already know that there will be some questions coming up. Thank you. Moving on, does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness have any opening comments? Mr. Joanasie.

Mr. Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness have reviewed the 2015-16 main estimates and business plan of the Department of Health.

The standing committee notes that the 2015-16 operations and maintenance budget for the Department of Health is over \$317 million, which, at 21 percent, is the largest share of the government's total operations and maintenance budget for 2015-16.

While the proposed 2015-16 budget for the Department of Health represents an increase of approximately \$18.5 million from 2014-15, members are aware that costs for health care service delivery will likely continue to exceed approved allocations as supplementary appropriations for additional funding for the department are brought forward consistently from year to year.

The standing committee recognizes that the department is making significant investments in key areas, such as mental health, additional staffing, and adjustments to the way health care services are to be delivered at the community and regional health centres.

The Standing Committee on Social Wellness has continually encouraged the department to focus on the recruitment, training, and retention of health workers at both the community level and in the regional health centres. While members acknowledge the department's efforts to address key service needs with the addition of 100 new person years for positions in mental health, nurse practitioners, full-time clerk interpreters, laboratory workers, administrative coordinators, planners, and others, the concern remains that the department has consistently been unable to fill all of its allocated positions to date.

With the department's new CT scanner being used on an increasing basis at the Qikiqtani General Hospital, members look forward to reviewing reports demonstrating the system's effectiveness in improving the level of diagnostic service closer to home and reducing medical travel costs.

Members fully support the department's proposed initiatives to ensure improved quality of care at all community health centres. Concerns have been raised about staff availability after regular working hours for emergencies and other urgent needs. The proposed 24/7 staffing approach at the community level will not only reduce costs related to callouts and overtime as well as minimizing the personal cost of work-related illness and

burnout, but will also bring some relief to the minds of community residents.

Members applaud the department's efforts to strengthen infection control policies at health care service locations. Members note further that public health concerns frequently arise with respect to infectious or communicable diseases in our communities. Outbreaks of any nature put heavy demands on our resources and personnel as well as on individuals and families. The standing committee fully supports the department in its efforts to address these issues in a timely manner while ensuring ongoing public communication and awareness.

Mr. Chairman, health-related work at the community level extends beyond the community health centres with the contributions that can be made by Health Committees of Council. Members note that some health committees are more effective than others, although funding allocations remain equal and unchanged across all communities. The standing committee encourages the minister in his efforts to provide more support to Health Committees of Council which have struggled to become effective and to consider increases in funding support for those health committees which undertake many important initiatives to promote the health and well-being of their communities.

Mr. Chairman, Nunavut faces unique challenges in delivering health services across the territory. In recent years, the federal government has recognized the financial impacts related to delivering specific health programs and has provided additional funding through such programs as the Territorial Health Investment Fund. The standing

committee encourages the minister to work with his territorial counterparts to continue to lobby the federal government for increased funding to address all aspects of health care and medical service needs across the northern territories.

The committee further encourages the minister to work with his federal counterparts to seek support for increases to funding allocations under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, especially for costs relating to travel, food, and accommodation for medical clients who are required to travel away from home to receive medical treatment and care.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee fully supports the department's initiatives in the areas of long-term care and support for elders and individuals with chronic illnesses. Members have noted that initiatives are underway in the Kitikmeot region to provide additional long-term residential care. Members are pleased that this will enable those requiring it to receive the necessary care within Nunavut and strongly urge the department to consider similar opportunities in the Kivalliq region as well.

Committee members look forward to receiving information on the revised benefits that will be provided under the recently reviewed Extended Health Benefits Program and encourage departmental officials to ensure that clients who may be entitled to benefits under this program are informed and aware.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of food security is an ongoing and public concern across

Nunavut. During the minister's appearance before the committee to discuss his department's draft budget for 2015-16, members were given to understand that the Department of Family Services had been designated to take the lead on the government's Food Security Action Plan. However, this was not confirmed during the appearance of the Minister of Family Services before the committee.

The standing committee encourages the minister to work closely with his cabinet counterparts to ensure that this critical initiative does not falter through a lack of coordination and leadership at the ministerial level.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I anticipate that individual members will also have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Joanasie. (interpretation ends) Well read. (interpretation) We will now proceed and, as we move along, are there any general comments from the regular members?

If there are none, as we move to the Committee of the Whole, and since we haven't held one for several months, I wish to remind members, including our newest member, who will hear these rules for the first time that we follow in the Committee of the Whole, let me remind you of the following: according to Rule 77(1), every member has 10 minutes to speak, and according to Rule 77(2), subject to the discretion of the Chair, a member may speak more than once to a matter under discussion but not

until every member wishing to speak has spoken.

Due to these rules, which we will try to follow and I will try to have them followed, as we proceed with this review, I wish to remind members that prior to moving on to the page-by-page review, we have two additional documents pertaining to this review. They are the main estimates and the business plan for the department. It is obvious that members will have questions on the details contained in any of the documents and for the benefit of the Chair and the minister, I would suggest that you identify the page number and document you are referring to or are questioning in order to have this meeting run smoothly.

With that being the case, I would like to move to page H-4. We will begin the page-by-page review of the main estimates. Let us start with page H-4. If you have any questions while I am reading the summaries, please feel free to raise your hand and the table officers will write down your names.

Health. Branch Summary. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$27,280,000. Do you agree? Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): I didn't immediately agree.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the minister and welcome to his colleagues. My first question, and I'm just looking at your business plan just for reference under your core business, you make reference in your business plan about implementing the review of the

Extended Health Benefits Policy. Can you perhaps tell us how this review is coming along and give us an updated status on that file? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, we will need more time in reviewing it, so we will be extending it by another year, as it is rather complex. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister explain why it's so complex? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I will pass that off to my deputy. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Deputy Stockley.

Ms. Stockley: Thank you. There are a number of things that need to be looked at when you look at extended health benefits. One of the things that we needed to really delve into was a cross-jurisdictional scan, which took a lot longer to complete than we anticipated. When we got the results of the cross-jurisdictional scan of all provinces and territories, it actually became very

evident that it was a very mixed bag of benefits right across the jurisdictions.

There are wide variances as to what is offered in the other jurisdictions. They can be depending the age of people who are covered. It could be the kinds of items that are covered. It could be the kinds of health problems that are covered. It could be particular things for diabetes and particular things for cystic fibrosis. It very much depends on the jurisdiction.

What we got in terms of our cross-jurisdictional scan was actually very helpful, but it is very complex and very deep, and we need the time to delve into it to find the right mix of benefits and the right changes that need to be done for the people of Nunavut.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am really disappointed to hear that. This is something I have raised in the House a number of times. It's desperately needed. The rates are so low. For \$20 a day you give elders to go when they're on medical travel and they don't have their own insurance, their rates are really low. What are you going to do in the meantime while you're conducting this research for those who need the service now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik: Yes, what we are offering will continue and at the same time, we are continuing with the work that needs to be done to make sure we

come up with the best plan for our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't accept that. Why does it take what everybody else has to figure out what we want? Don't you know what the needs are here? We have elders who are in need. Why does it take you to go everywhere else in Canada and figure this out? Why can't you figure it out here and take half the time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We are doing our best to make sure we come up with the best plan for our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are you telling me that this is the very best you can do for elders right now? Is this the service that you're going to provide them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) No, we are trying to find the best plan for our territory for our

elders in the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps if I can make a request, you can request to break down this research so that if you want to find out other information about diabetes and whatever it was that you were saying, the other thing, if you can look at perhaps helping elders now that need to travel outside of this territory who don't have insurance, can you at least address that part so that we can get something in place sooner than a year? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, what we are doing is doing what we can and offering what we can for now. We are always looking for ways to improve our services for our territory and for our residents, so we will continue to find ways and hopefully it will be done sooner than a year. We're trying to find something. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that you are trying to do the best in research, but what I was asking for I don't believe I got an answer. Can you look at just that portion? Can you divide it up and look at that portion and see what you can do so that you can meet some of the elder

needs now while you're doing all that other research? Is this possible, yes or no? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We will need more money if we're going to extend benefits right now. The budget that we have does not accommodate it for now, but we are open to finding ways to try and get a new plan in place within the extended period. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am open for appropriation financial requests.

I'll go on to my next question. What goals has your department set in regard to your human resource plan? I'm just looking at this from your Directorate plan where you have human resource development. I think that over the years, there has been a lot of talk about hiring more Inuit nurses and there have been some challenges there. What goals have you set for this area? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder which section the member is referring to in her question. Is it under the business plan and, if so, on what page? Can she clarify the section she is referring to so that we can provide a faster response? I

have no idea what she is referring to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Angnakak, can you clarify that, (interpretation ends) please.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am reading from the business plan and it says, "Review the department's human resources plan." I'm wondering, now that that is being reviewed or in the process...

Chairman: Excuse me. Ms. Angnakak, can you give us the page number, please. (interpretation) Thank you.

Ms. Angnakak: I'm sorry. I'm on page 105 of the business plan at the top. It just says, "Review the department's human resources plan," and we are under H-4, which is the Directorate. In the Directorate, it does say that part of the Directorate's responsibilities is human resource development.

I'm thinking about your human resource development and I'm wondering: what is the mindset? What are you thinking? What goals have you set when it comes to human resources, either at the hospital, to provide more services in Inuktitut, or in your department? Can you talk a little bit more about that? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak, for that clarification. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We continue to make plans and it's an ongoing process in human resource development, particularly with respect to Inuit staff, as

we are lacking there. We continue to look at ways to hire more Inuit, but again, we need to conduct more research. We want to complete our Inuit employment plans and to work with our existing staff to provide more training, especially on day-to-day operations. We want to ensure that we provide opportunities, especially with new training courses being developed for our employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is in regard to human resource development. I would like know more about what the department is doing in regard to mental health workers. Can you tell us how many mental health workers we have in Nunavut and, if so, where are they employed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Okalik, can you answer the question, please.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thanks to my colleague, Minister Ell, we went through a supplementary appropriation and we now have mental health nurses in every community in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister tell us if that is enough? Is the need being met? Is this one mental health worker in every community? What about Iqaluit? How

many do we have here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It is a good start. I must say that there is a lot more to do, as evidenced by a lot of issues that we face in our territory.

In Iqaluit, there is the Akausisarvik, which has numerous workers, life skills workers, a psychiatric nurse, a youth counsellor, a manager, and we also have the Grinnell Place, which offers counselling for mental issues, so we have a number of employees here in Iqaluit.

Throughout the territory, there is a need for more and more work needs to be done. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the minister that there is a need for more mental health workers in every community. What is the department doing to address this need? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think it will take a lot more time to answer that, as we require more planning. We have a good foundation here in Iqaluit. If we can

spread that to other communities, I think it will definitely assist the territory.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister.
Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister tell us if their department has a strategy in place in regard to hiring and how they are going to hire? Do you already have a strategy in how you are going to hire more mental health workers or nurses or doctors? Is there such a thing in place or not? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) As I said, the hiring of mental health workers is a very good start and we need to do more work. We will take a bit more time to do more work and the work needs to be done.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Okalik.
Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: I'm going to go on to my last question for this section. What is the status of the Qikiqtani hospital board review and has your department conducted consultations on this issue yet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) Not yet.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Can the minister tell us what the expected timeframe is for this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik: As she may be aware, we have a lot of pressing matters at health. Mental health is my priority. We have a bit of time in reviewing the operations of one hospital for one community. My territory deserves a lot more help in terms of mental health. That's my focus. That is our government priority. I have to find a way to address that. That's the direction I have given to the department. In the meantime, we will continue to do work on other areas, such as reviewing the operations of the hospital. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the answer, but I must say that the hospital affects more than Iqaluit; it affects especially the Baffin and some with the Kivalliq, I believe. An agreement was made in this House through a motion that it would be ready for the fall. If it is going to take as much time as you are saying the extended health benefits is going to take in order to come up with a plan, I'm just encouraging you to maybe start looking at this now. I am hoping that proper consultations can be done in the

communities because they are going to be affected as well and it is the communities that have been calling for this. They want a board in place. That is where I coming from on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. I didn't really hear a question in that commentary. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, (interpretation) if you wish to respond, I give you the discretion to respond. I didn't hear a specific question. I believe it was a suggestion as opposed to a question. Ms. Angnakak, are you done with this page? Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of things here. To start with, with the number of the new positions that are being requested for funding, one of my written questions to the departments in the last sitting was to the Minister of Finance regarding the amounts paid to overtime for all the departments and agencies across the territory. On average, they total a little over \$20 million a year, almost \$21 million a year, and over half of that comes from the Department of Health.

How does the minister see the impact of these new positions influencing the amount of overtime that is going to be expended by his department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) These positions will definitely assist us in reducing the burden faced throughout Nunavut. At the

same time, we will continue to look for ways to reduce overtime and that will take a little bit of time. There are labour negotiations that are occurring, so that will take a bit of time to resolve. Those things will impact the proposals that we are working on for reducing overtime for health care workers in our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Prior to moving on to Mr. Hickes, let me remind you that if you and your staff wish to speak amongst each other, it is allowed in order to ensure that there is a proper response, but be aware that you press the mute button so that we don't hear your ongoing conversation or deliberations on the response. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You don't have to press the mute button. I like hearing some of the background information.

>> *Laughter*

Ms. Angnakak: We don't mind either.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in a quick calculation, I pulled out my calculator that Mr. Peterson says I am famous for, and out of the salary just for health care delivery, which again I hate using the word "assume," but I'm going to say it anyway, that probably the majority of the overtime comes from. It's 15 percent of that overall budget from last year just in overtime increases.

Now, a lot of our health care professionals, especially in some of the smaller communities, rely upon this overtime almost as an expected benefit,

I'm going say, of working in some remote locations. As you previously stated and as we all are very much aware, there are ongoing issues with filling some of these health care professional positions at the community level whereas agency nurses are being used or maybe more casual type positions are being used. Is this going to further hinder recruiting to fill these positions with indeterminate employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): I apologize. I will have my deputy respond to that question.

Chairman (interpretation): I will allow Ms. Stockley to respond.

Ms. Stockley: Thank you for your question. There are a number of components to look at when you are looking at overtime and we have been "up to our elbows" looking at ways to understand what's going on with regard to the overtime. In some areas, there are vacancies. Clearly, the people who are already there would be working extra hours to provide the health care that is needed because the demands to the health system don't decrease if you have vacancies.

We're trying to be creative in order to get people who already live in communities into various, different kinds of roles into the communities to be able to provide health care services. That's where we're looking for mental health workers and we're looking for people to be able to staff, for example, the new eight beds in Cambridge Bay.

Some of the positions that you're seeing that Health has asked for in this budget are positions that are already filled by casuals. The work is being done and we're just trying to give them the opportunity to have a full-time job with benefits, and so on.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Stockley. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm trying to phrase this question in my head and that's why I'm hesitating for a moment, Mr. Chairman.

When you're looking at expanding some of the roles, especially at the community level, you talk of hiring from within the community. I saw an article recently talking about LPNs, or licensed practical nurses, and I happen to know a couple. From what I understand, the level of care that they provide, in some cases, is exceptional or at least it's equal to a lot of the nursing positions that are in the community. Are these all nursing positions that you're looking at putting out to the community or are there LPNs associated with that to ease in the hiring process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) As I alluded to in my opening comments, we're hiring nurse practitioners and this will definitely assist us in delivering a broader service level to the communities and at the same time, definitely assist those nurses in those communities in providing service and reducing the burden that they face throughout those communities. It's a very good start. We

tried it out in Pond Inlet and it worked out well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave the overtime alone for now; I may come back to it at a future point.

One of the things also in one of the written questions that I had from the last session specifically to the Department of Health, I had asked a question talking about all the indeterminate, casual, contract, and internal assignment positions. I'll be honest, I'm concerned. I understand internal assignments and the necessity of bringing in experienced workers, whether they be from another department or even internally, to alleviate some of the stresses for the department, but at the same time, as they're just internal transfers, there's an end date to their sitting in there.

In the document that I received, there were ten positions just in Iqaluit alone. I won't go into the other communities right now. Of those, seven positions are at a senior level. The director of finance, the director of mental health and addictions, a territorial director of medical affairs, executive director, Iqaluit Health Services, director of support services, and senior financial analysts: these are all very senior positions within the department.

I'm just wondering what strategy that the department has to fill these positions on an indeterminate basis so that there can be some positive developments for staffing and department continuity. We're talking about a lot of the work

that it's taking the department and a lot of the work we're giving you guys. When you're dealing with the people who are there on a temporary basis, it's got to create challenges. What is the plan to fill these positions indeterminately? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I fully agree with you. There's the issue of stability that we want to assure all employees that their work is valued and that they deserve permanency in terms of indeterminate employment. We are working with the Department of Finance to make sure that we fill these with indeterminate positions and create stability and make sure that these positions will be there for the long haul that we really need to work on. I look forward to more indeterminate positions as opposed to internal transfers or casuals for that matter. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I assure you that I'm not trying to knock the people who are in those positions right now. I'm sure they would appreciate some continuity in their employment as well.

Along the same line, the minister brought up the use of casuals. That was another component of the information that I had received from the minister in my written response. I'm going to use Iqaluit again as an example because

that's the community that I represent a portion of.

There are 86 casuals employed by the Department of Health and of those, I'm going to say that over a quarter of them are fairly senior positions. You're talking facility managers, the manager of rehabilitation, the territorial lead for long-term care and planning, the regional medical travel specialist, the health records coordinator, the mental health consultant. The list goes on and on and on. These are, again, fairly senior positions where the level of expertise is needed. Again, when you've got somebody in a casual position, there is nothing stopping them from applying for other positions, again leading to that discontinuity of service that can be provided to the directorate from their staff.

I understand that the minister, in his earlier response, was saying that they're working towards and trying to develop more indeterminate positions, but I guess you guys have delegated HR authority. I would like to see a little bit more action in filling these positions. If the people who are in the positions are audiologists, I don't know of many audiologists here in Iqaluit. There are direct appointment processes. There are advertising and competition processes to fill these positions whereas residents of Nunavut get priority hiring. Can the minister maybe explain some the actions that are going to be happening in the near future on that, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) I think, with this budget, we will create 16 permanent interpreter positions, for example, which were more or less casual positions. That will help in terms of reducing the burden on casuals and creating more indeterminate positions.

In terms of the reference to Health having control over HR matters, it's in relation to nursing only. The rest of the positions have to be worked out through Finance. It's one area that we continue to work with Finance to make sure that we come out with the best plan for our workforce and our department. I think that with this budget, it will definitely help us in creating more positions and more permanency. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go to the business plan on page 104, under the Priorities (2014-15), the very last bullet on that page. It talks about exploring and developing "a framework for enhancing performance management and accountability." In the departmental statement, it says that the "material has been created to support managers and employees" and saying that "...job descriptions have been converted to a generic format."

Going back to performance management, the material itself, maybe the minister could give me a little bit of detail so that I can kind of know where I'm going along this line of thought of what that performance management and accountability structure is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: Yes, we have hired a new director of human resources who has been very helpful and is working on trying to make sure that new initiatives are in place to address the higher priority areas in nursing as well as beneficiary hiring and addressing the health and safety of our workers throughout the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't have a chance to go through my written response, but hopefully that is an indeterminate position.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question regarding patient relations, which I believe falls under this category, but if I could just get the Chair's confirmation, please.

Chairman: I don't see it anywhere else, so give it a try and let the Chair rule you out.

>>Laughter

Go ahead, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't positive whether it would be under this or under Public Health, so I appreciate the leeway.

The patient relations office has been in place for a little while now. I have sent a number of constituents and put them in contact with that office. They're not always happy with the response that they

get, but they're satisfied with the service that they're given through that office. What I would like to hear from the minister is: what kind of tracking is done on the volume of calls that office receives and what type of issues is that office predominantly dealing with? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) From April 1, 2014 to January 22, 2015, there were 147 concerns addressed through that office, so there is tracking that occurs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if the minister could elaborate a little on the focus of some of those issues that are being brought to the concern of the patient relations office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Although I can't divulge all the contents of the issues raised, primarily medical travel, communications issues, and issues relating to health centre visits have been the focus of those concerns, but I can't provide much more detail than that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, when you are talking medical travel, it is often the contact that I have to put my constituents in touch with that office. That leads to my next question. I'm sure one of my colleagues may have further detailed questions on this, but the overall policy on medical travel right now has been revamped fairly recently. What has been the response to the Department of Health regarding the new policy? Is it working? Is it saving money, yet is it still meeting the needs of our residents? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Like everybody, I get phone calls on medical travel throughout my term. It's something that we will need to continue to work on and I look forward to finding some solutions in the near future, but that will require some more work and hopefully we can get that done. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Okalik. With a little bit of time on the clock, Mr. Hickes, one more to finish it off or are we okay?

Mr. Hickes: I'll leave it for the others.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. We are on page H-4. Health. Branch Summary. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$27,280,000. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Turn to page H-5. I'll read it out and if you have any questions, please raise your hand. Branch Summary. Health. Public Health. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just going to touch on the Food Security Strategy. In our chair's opening comments, he alluded to the fact that there seemed to be a little, I'm not going to say disagreement, but maybe lack of clarity to the members on who is actually leading that endeavour and what type of communication is occurring with the Department of Family Services and other stakeholders to move that strategy forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Our department has provided administrative and technical expertise to the health security file and we will continue to do so.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister answered a portion of my question. How frequently are officials and stakeholders in the Department of Family Services getting together to further the strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik: From what I understand, they met as recently as two weeks ago. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again the minister answered part of my question.

>> *Laughter*

We all realize that the food security issue has been brought up a number of times in this House by different Members of the Legislative Assembly and we just don't want this to fall by the wayside. I know that the minister has stated a few times now that there are a number of different initiatives that his staff is working on and my colleague, Ms. Angnakak, brought up the time that's needed to be committed to further some of these services and strategies forward, and I don't want this one to fall by the wayside.

How frequently or how often do his officials and official stakeholders meet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As we are there for administrative and other technical support, we are there to support whatever the Department of Family

Services may call on us to attend to meetings, so I can't really determine how frequently at this time, but I'll get back to my colleagues and make sure that they know how frequently we are involved as a department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are references here in the main estimates under Public Health that talk about communicable diseases and stuff like injury prevention. Under the main estimates, if we look at page A-IV-2, at the very back in the main estimates, your main estimates... Do they have this? You have it.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak, can you remind us which page it is on?

Ms. Angnakak: Okay. It is in the main estimates on the appendix at the very back, A-IV-2.

Chairman (interpretation): I think you're the only one who has a copy of this.

>> *Laughter*

Are you looking at A-IV-2? Okay. I believe I have that. I'm looking at it now. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, (interpretation) did you find it? My apologies, Ms. Angnakak, go ahead.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry I created a bit of fuss there. I wanted to bring attention to some of the programs there that aren't... There is no budget for them right now,

but there used to be, such as the diabetes screening project. In 2013-14, you had \$62,000 towards that. Since the 2013-14 fiscal year, no budget has been allocated towards that kind of a program. Can you tell me why? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) These are funds that we use from other parties, so I can't really answer that one because these aren't our funds. Wherever we receive them is where we spend them and use them for those purposes. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I realize that. I guess I didn't make my question clear enough. What I'm asking is: what kind of efforts have you made so that those kinds of programs, such as the diabetes screening project, I'm just using that as an example that is written here, can continue? Is this now by the wayside? We don't do this anymore? Is this now funded internally or is this a program that doesn't exist anymore? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I must say that diabetes is one area where we are not leading the country in terms of something negative. We are actually doing quite well in terms of diabetes for

our territory. It is one area that we can focus our attention on areas that really need our attention in our department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree that diabetes is low here in Nunavut, but we want to keep it low. One way of keeping it low is keeping an eye on it and doing different initiatives in that area just to be proactive so that 20 years from now, we don't have the same conditions that the First Nations are facing in Canada. That's my point there.

The question I would like to ask is: is the Territorial Health Investment Fund that has gone down in numbers, can you explain to us first of all what those funds are used for and why the drop? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As I said, these are federal funds that we use. I can't really respond as to what rationale they used to drop their funding for these programs at this time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find it a little hard to understand his answer because when you have a contract with the federal

government, they tell you what the money is for. If there's a drop, they usually tell you why there's a drop in the amount that they're giving you. Perhaps his deputy minister might know. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Okay, then my deputy will answer the question.
(interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Ms. Stockley.

Ms. Stockley: Thank you for your question. With regard to federal monies, it depends on the funding envelope, what's allowed to be done within the funding envelope. When we have monies for a particular project, we would have to use those funds in regard to whatever the parameters of the project are. In some instances, we're allowed to carry monies forward from year to year. You could see a slight variation in the budget from year to year if we're carrying funds forward.

With regard to the example you used with regard to diabetes, once we do projects and identify any areas of issues, we would look to have, for example, chronic disease screening happening within regular visits with nurse practitioners and with nursing, and so on. It becomes part of our practice. Does that answer your question?

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Stockley. Ms. Angnakak, did that answer your question?

Ms. Angnakak: I guess, to some degree, yes, but not really. Perhaps what we could do now here with this question is just give a brief overview of what the Territorial Health Investment Fund, first of all, is used for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) The fund is used for a variety of areas and we submit proposals and then they fund those specific proposals. For example, for the next three years, the fund will be used for mental wellness, chronic diseases, and children's oral health.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for his answer. I understand, I think, a while back ago, there were some difficulties in negotiating this fund. I think you mentioned something like this is a three-year program. Can you confirm that?
Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Yes.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. When we talk about communicable diseases, I think about the rising TB rates we're having in Nunavut. How are you addressing this and what kind of a percentage are we talking about in regard to the number of people contracting TB? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Unfortunately, there has been a rise in a number of cases and in 2014, there were 83. So far to date, there has been one new case confirmed. Places that we have identified them are where we're investing more nursing to try and turn the tide on tuberculosis here in our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Over the years where you have seen a rise, have we been able to stop the rise now or is it continuing to climb? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We are doing what we can to turn the tide. We need to stop it and we are doing our best right now to identify and track where the cases are and we have workers that track where they have been. We're following this

situation very closely and we are investing money to try and put a stop to this because it's something that shouldn't be in our territory. We are doing our best to try and make sure it is eliminated in our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my last question with regard to TB. Is this only happening in Nunavut or is TB on the rise elsewhere in Canada? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) It's on the rise primarily in Nunavut. Our rates are 49 times higher than the rest of the country, so we have to put an end to this. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. We are on page H-5. Branch Summary. Health. Public Health. Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$18,575,000. Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Turn the page. H-6. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I can add my comments to this issue of (interpretation ends) medical travel (interpretation) and if I am in the wrong

category, I know you will correct me, Mr. Chairman, but I believe it is in this section.

Mr. Chairman, ever since Repulse Bay ended up being served by only one airline, it has become quite problematic and you can see the problems faced by people who are on medical travel, and the result has been delayed flights and space limitations, causing them to be bumped off. That has been the situation in our community. Further, our community of Repulse Bay is no longer a small community, as the population now exceeds 1,000 residents. That number of residents is served by only one airline, Calm Air.

Nonetheless, I want to raise this question as to the way the Government of Nunavut hands out medical travel contracts to each airline. Is this part of this section or is it part of the capital estimates? That is my first request for clarification and whether you can provide that information to me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, these are excellent questions and I believe they are under this section and I believe we do have a contract with the airlines with respect to medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Thank you, Minister Okalik. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I am glad to be able to raise questions in this section.

Indeed, ever since our community started being served by only one airline, Calm Air, our residents have been faced with growing problems due to the limitations of the plane. Ever since a single airline started to provide this service to our community upon the cancellation of First Air's routes, it resulted almost immediately in problems.

As soon as First Air stopped their services with the last flight on October 30 to Repulse Bay, ever since that time, the airline arrival time is continually delayed by three or four hours. When that situation arises, some of the medical travel patients are also faced with the prospect of the pilot daily hours being reached and they can no longer catch the connecting flight, so they only reach their destination late.

Calm Air, with the current monopoly, is concentrating on freight delivery, with most of the plane converted to freight, and they only offer a limited amount of seats for their passengers. That results in overbooked flights and lack of space for medical travel patients.

With that being the case, I wonder what improvements could be made to lower the late arrivals of medical patients and to ensure that medical travel patients are not bumped off. Does the government have any stipulations in their contracts about these problems? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we meet periodically with the airline companies to discuss their efforts to deal with the

medical travel patients. We will be able to raise this concern at the next meeting with the airline, as the member has identified the areas that require improvement. From my perspective, they require resolution. I will ask my officials to add this item as part of their discussions with the airline companies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier in the minister's opening comments, he talked about health centres being 24/7. Just for clarification, is he talking all the centres throughout Nunavut will move towards being open 24/7? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) All our health centres are 24/7 operations pretty much and they're there for emergencies at all hours. They are now and will continue to be. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the present time, I'll just use my community as an example. It's basically a nine to five operation and after hours, it's all callout, nurses are on call. If you move to 24/7 where nurses are at the desk during the evenings, I'm just wondering: have you decided how many additional nurses you will need in the communities in order to fulfill this obligation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As I said, they are available 24/7 for emergencies after hours. They have regular hours. We are looking to work on adjusted hours to reduce the burden on the nurses so that they can work at adjusted hours and at the same time, provide more services for the communities. Those discussions are ongoing and will take a little bit of time. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With these adjusted hours for our health care staff, do you anticipate that additional staff will be required? For example, in Sanikiluaq, we have three staff members who are there on a regular basis. If you move to staggering their hours, will it require additional staff? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) You probably are aware that we come forward with supplementary appropriations quite regularly because we have to provide a 24/7 service, so we never know when and at what time the nurses may be called upon to perform a service for clients.

What we have looked at are hours where they are busiest, for example, and probably from five to eight o'clock in the evening is when they're very busy and providing care and attention to patients. We could adjust the hours to accommodate that so that we reduce the

overtime that may have to be paid out for the nurses during those hours and adjusting them so that they start a little later. We're looking at that and that will require more discussions with the union and that is something that we're working on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At present in our health centres, patients are mostly seen for regular, day-to-day needs by our health professionals in the mornings to afternoons. If you stagger the staff to now move to work some evenings, it will require a lot of patience, staggering their appointments, to work in the evenings too. I'm just wondering... .

>> *Laughter*

Working the evenings, yes, I guess. I'm just trying to get around... . I just can't see this being operational 24/7 without additional health care professionals in our communities. Can the minister just confirm that we are going to work with what we have in our communities at the present time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We are not looking at increasing more PYs, but we're looking at adjusting their hours to accommodate the level of care that they're providing now. A lot of calls are between 5:00 and 8:00 for nursing throughout the communities. We will look at adjusting the hours, but providing that service. 24/7 service will

continue to be there. It is there now. It is there so that whoever needs immediate medical attention after hours is going to continue to be served. We're not looking at providing a 24-hour service; we're just looking at providing a better service when it's needed, where it's needed, at those hours. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If no additional staff is required and you're just staggering the hours of the staff we do have, I wonder if you can explain why your department needs another \$5.56 million in order to provide a service that you're already providing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Those discussions are ongoing. As I said, they will require an agreement with the union to adjust the hours. Those are more monies that may be needed to deliver the service. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question to you in this area is about the client relations office. Perhaps you can start off by telling us how many people use the office. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(interpretation ends) We just dealt with that on the last page. I believe there were 147 concerns raised in the last few months to January. We just dealt with that item. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) From April 1, 2014 to January 22, 2015, 147 concerns were raised with the office. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I must have missed that, but let me go on. From those 147 calls or raised complaints, what kind of tracking do you do to see if those complaints were actually addressed and resolved? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: As I said when it was raised last, a lot of them relate to medical travel, nursing, as well as communications issues. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I'm trying to get at: when the office receives a call, is it logged somewhere and from the log, after a year, would you look at it and say, "How many calls did we get? What were the common complaints? Were they resolved?" I'm just trying to get what... Is this person just answering the phone and saying, "Yay, baby," or is the department...

>>Laughter

...using that information? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We dealt with this at the Directorate. We explained that yes, we log and track the calls. I cannot divulge a lot of the details that may be discussed because those relate to privacy matters. They are tracked by community and the issues they may have. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I should put a little bit of humour in this heavy discussion.

Let me go on to home care. I have a number of constituents who are elderly and in Iqaluit lately, the service has been cut back, although budgets seem to have remained the same. I'm wondering if you can tell me why home service has been cut back. Some of them were getting service three times a week and now it's only once. I just want to get your take on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you. I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) I'm lost. Where are we on this? We are going back and forth from Directorate and now we are working on H-6 right now because we approved the other ones already. Can I get some direction where we are? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Home care is under H-6. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) We need a bit of time to review.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The assurance I have is that home care has not been cut, that the service is still there. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to hear that because I'm going to go back now to the constituents who had their home care cut and I guess they will be able to... I will look more into this and get back to you because it seems like it has been cut. Maybe there is just a break in communication here between your office and those delivering home care.

Just to go on to my next question, and it is under H-6 by the way, what are the long- and short-term plans of the department when it comes to residential care to elders and other adults who may need this kind of service? This whole issue has been raised time and time again and as the new minister, perhaps you would like to give us your take on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As I alluded to in my opening comments, we're increasing more services for those in need and repatriating as much as we can for this

year and we will continue to work on other plans to try and increase capacity for elderly care in our territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Can the minister give us a timeframe where he feels that, for example, Iqaluit, who I represent, and Niaqunnguut, will have a place for elders to go to when they no longer can live at home? Right now, what we have is not only used by Iqalummiut; it's also used by other communities, even as far as Kugluktuk. Obviously, there is a real need to do something about this now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What we are doing is looking at a needs assessment throughout the territory and looking at where we can be strategic in investing our dollars for the coming years. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister tell us when this needs plan is going to be carried out, when it is going to be completed, and when we will know the results? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We hope to have something by

this fall. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's great to hear. I look forward to learning more about what you guys found out. In keeping in line with that, I'm wondering with my next question: is the hospital in Nunavut here, the one we have in Iqaluit, required to provide hospice care? Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) They do provide palliative care. I have not heard of hospice. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I'm going to another topic and it fits under this and it has been raised, but I'm going to take a little bit of a different angle on it and that has to do with the medical boarding home contracts. How often does your department converse with the managers of the boarding homes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We're having a little caucus. We're trying to get an idea of how often we meet and I can't answer that at this time, but I know that we do have regular updates from the main contractors on what service they're

providing. I went to the one in Ottawa when I was down recently and I was quite impressed with what they do. We will get back to the House on how frequently we meet with our officials and those contractors. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to go on and ask some more questions in regard to that. You might not have the information. Perhaps you can get back to us on it. I want to ask: what kind of measures does the department have in place to assess whether or not the boarding homes in the south for people on medical travel are meeting the needs of those people? How do you know that and what kind of oversight is provided? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: They are contractually bound to provide the service and they are required by the contract to meet our needs and the patients as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know they are bound. I'm not saying that they're not following the rules; I'm just saying, to be accountable for the funds, are we getting the service that is promised and who oversees that? That's what I'm getting at with this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Our regional directors monitor the contracts, visit the facilities, and ensure that they are following through with the contract obligations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. I want to go on to something else. I'm going back to H-6. It's under the delivery. It's under mental health. We were talking with the education minister regarding the training of mental health workers. I was asking why that program no longer existed at Arctic College, seeing that the need is so great to have mental health workers in our community. I was told by the minister of Arctic College that Health is the one that contracts the college to deliver this program and that this contract was cancelled. Can you tell me why this contract to provide mental health training was...? Why did you kill the project when it's something that's greatly needed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) I can't answer that at this time because none of us were involved in that discussion, but we are having discussions with the college to start the program. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Maybe you can clarify for me whether or not your department is

responsible for the ASIST program in suicide intervention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) We provide the funding and they deliver the program. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Will this contract with Nunavut Arctic College to deliver the ASIST program be ongoing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) We are funding it until June 30 and ongoing discussions need to be continued for space. Those things have to be worked out with the college. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Your *Mental Health Act* has been identified as outdated in your business plan. What is the status of the review of the *Mental Health Act* and amendments to the Act? What's the status on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation):
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
(interpretation ends) Yes, this Act

requires more work and we will be undertaking extensive consultations throughout our territory to make sure that this Act is up to date. We're looking to revise this Act to make sure that it meets our needs and requirements. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was raised earlier as a question, but I want to briefly return to the matter and I stepped down from the Chairman's role to ask questions. I wanted clarification on page 110 on the top line item speaking to medical travel patients.

I believe it was last year where we brought up the mandate that caused a lot of problems, particularly our elder patients and the aged, as the policy now stated that even elders were to travel alone. This has been very stressful and difficult for our elders in particular. You are well aware of the background, as I have raised questions about this matter in the House to the previous minister, and that they needed some time to enact the changes requested by the members. These issues haven't disappeared yet, which has resulted in problematic situations for members of the public.

Has the department commenced any planning on this issue? I believe you answered part of the question, but in my role as the Chairman, you are also busy with other matters. Can you provide clarification up to now, whether or not the Medical Travel Policy has been discussed and whether changes are needed? Let me first get clarification on that issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is a pertinent question and we are in the midst of reviewing the issue. If we are going to move ahead with changes, it has to first go through cabinet. That is why I can't provide a concrete answer at this time, but it is obviously a matter we will deal with in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While on this selfsame issue, medical travel, perhaps it is somewhat related to the situation my colleague, Mr. Mapsalak, spoke to. I will use an example I am familiar with. In our community, we receive daily flights from two airlines. It is when the planes don't land or arrive into the community, either due to inclement weather or mechanical issues, a number of medical travel patients have had their flights delayed and these patients were to attend to appointments outside the community.

In some cases, the medical travel patients whose travel has been delayed results in their appointment being cancelled and the end result is another interminable time period awaiting another appointment. I doubt this only occurs in Pond Inlet, as planes occasionally don't end up at their final destination throughout Nunavut.

Are the follow-up appointments rescheduled immediately after the patient is no longer able to travel? I know you will probably state that yes, this is done, but I know for a fact that patients in Pond Inlet have had to wait

for several months for another appointment due to the plane not arriving in the community. This is part of our problems faced in this field. I would like to get some details on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't respond to that right away because sometimes we get specialists like eye doctors who come in and other specialists for certain things. Oftentimes they can't stay up here very long and we know that causes problems. We know that causes problems for some people. I don't really have a good response for you right now, but it's a very good question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Enook.

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue you are speaking to, (interpretation ends) Hon. Minister, (interpretation) is true in that communities get specialists that visit the communities on occasion, such as the optometrists and other specialists. I agree with this approach personally, as wherever we have the specialists visit the communities, it results in major financial savings to the government and it is also convenient for local people.

However, it raises another issue I continue to voice, as well as by other members, where a person who feels that they really need an appointment with the specialist ends up being on the waiting list and the list grows with every trip. Although we get specialists visiting the communities, due to the interim period,

some patients don't see a specialist for many months or years.

I would really like more thought put into maybe having the specialist spend more time in the communities or to stay until all people needing to see the specialist have seen them. This causes problems because a specialist is in town, but the person who wants to see the specialist may be themselves out hunting or on a trip and by missing this appointment, the result is another lengthy period before that person has a chance to see them. I urge our government to review this further, as I know it saves our government large amounts of funds when the specialists go to the communities instead of the patients going to the specialist.

The other matter related to this issue that I wanted to voice which I feel needs to be reviewed... Let me return to my earlier comments. Hon. Minister, we have patients and I know of one elder who is in this situation, but I won't reveal the person or their particular situation. That elder now refuses to go on medical travel since the department refuses to provide an escort. That is an unfortunate development and that is how problematic this situation is becoming.

The elder really needs to be seen by a doctor due to their health issues, but the elder now refuses to go on travel, as they have requested an escort on more than one occasion. The elder stated that they required an escort and that they didn't want to travel alone. Since the department refuses to provide an escort, that elder refuses to undertake any further medical travel. How unfortunate for that elder.

It is due to situations like this that are deeply concerning that I urge the department to review this matter, and I am fine with the minister not responding to the question, as I know my concern has now been heard. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said, we are in the process of reviewing this. We will see what happens. When we have this review done, I will be able to respond properly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Shooyook.

Mr. Shooyook (interpretation): I will make it brief. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, this is a big problem for some communities facing medical travel when you have only one airline servicing your communities.

When I came from Resolute Bay, I flew down to Iqaluit. When we arrived into Arctic Bay, there were eight medical travel patients on the list, with one person with severe disabilities, who were due to travel. Since there was no room on the plane, these medical travel patients were just sent back home. You face this situation when you have only one airline.

Arctic Bay and Resolute Bay only have the one flight they share, and it is exacerbated when tourist season rolls around. Tourist season starts around spring and tourists book flights. This has another effect on our medical travel patients, as the tourists take up the room and the patients are bumped off. This is

quite disconcerting, especially in light of the person with severe disabilities who ended up arriving late and they were stuck with no ticket. This is very problematic and requires resolution to ensure their needs are met. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Enook)(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Shooyook.
(interpretation ends) Hon. Minister.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are aware of the challenge we face. Further, we encourage the airlines to expand their schedules and appreciate their changes, but they are private companies operating independently and we have no choice in the matter. However, it is something we would like to see changed if possible. The agreement will be expiring shortly in the future and we will have to explore options and ideas to review and present to the companies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Okalik. My colleagues, pursuant to Rule 6(1), I now recognize the clock and will report progress to the Speaker.

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) Item 22. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Enook.

Item 22: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Enook (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been

considering Bill 16 and the main estimates, and would like to report progress. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Hickes. The motion is in order. All in those in favour. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 23. Third Reading of Bills. Item 24. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 24: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder that there is a meeting tomorrow morning at ten o'clock in the Tuktu Boardroom for the Management and Services Board.

Orders of the Day for February 26:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions

12. Responses to Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 14
 - Bill 15
 - Bill 17
 - Bill 18
 - Bill 19
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 16
21. Report of the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 26, at 1:30 p.m.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:02*

