

## Leadership Council Public Meeting - Minutes

February 17, 2022

Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NT

### PRESENT:

- Mr. Jim Antoine, Chairperson
- Ms. Gina Dolphus, Chair, Sahtu Regional Wellness Council
- Ms. Ruby Simba, Chair, Dehcho Regional Wellness Council
- Ms. Phyllis Mawdsley, Chair, Fort Smith Regional Wellness Council
- Mr. Ted Blondin, Chair, Tlicho Community Services Agency
- Mr. Brian Willows, Chair, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority
- Ms. Ethel-Jean Gruben, Vice-Chairperson and Chair, Beaufort Delta Regional Wellness Council
- Ms. Nancy Trotter, Chair, Yellowknife Regional Wellness Council
- Mr. Bruce Cooper, Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services
  
- Ms. Kim Riles, Chief Executive Officer, NTHSSA
- Ms. Joanne Engram, Acting Executive Director – Clinical Integration, NTHSSA
- Dr. AnneMarie Pegg, Territorial Medical Director, NTHSSA
- Ms. Marissa Martin, Chief Financial Officer, NTHSSA
- Ms. Nathalie Nadeau, Executive Director, Child, Family and Community Wellness, NTHSSA
- Mr. Tim VanOverliw, Executive Director – Corporate & Support Services, NTHSSA
- Mr. Bob Laramy, Executive Director, System Sustainability, NTHSSA
- Ms. Georgina Veldhorst, Chief Operating Officer, Stanton Terr. Hospital, NTHSSA
- Mrs. Erin Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer, Hay River HSSA
- Mr. Kevin Whitehead, Senior Advisor, CEO, NTHSSA
- Mr. Allen Stanzell, Senior Advisor, Governance, NTHSSA

### GUEST PRESENTERS:

- Dr. Andy Delli Pizzi, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, GNWT DHSS
- Mrs. Kyla Kakfei-Scott, Director, Community, Culture and Innovation, DHSS

### 1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 AM.

- a) The Chairperson welcomed the Council, presenters, and public to the meeting.
- b) Ms. Dolphus led the meeting in an opening prayer.

- c) Attendance was recorded by the Senior Advisor as above.
- d) There were no conflicts of interest declared for this meeting.
- e) It was noted questions from the public could be emailed to [rwc\\_nthssa@gov.nt.ca](mailto:rwc_nthssa@gov.nt.ca).

## 2.0 Agenda/Action Items/Minutes

### a) Review/Approve Agenda

The Leadership Council reviewed the agenda for the meeting, there were no changes.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority approved the February 17, 2022 agenda, as presented.

**Motion: Ms. Dolphus**

**Second: Ms. Trotter**

**LC22/02-001 – Carried Unanimously**

### b) Review/Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

The Leadership Council reviewed the minutes from the November 18, 2021 and December 1-2, 2021 meetings, and November 30, 2021 AGM.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority approved the November 18, 2021 and December 1-2, 2021 meeting minutes, and the November 30, 2021 AGM minutes, as presented.

**Motion: Mr. Blondin**

**Second: Mrs. Mawdsley**

**LC22/02-002 – Carried Unanimously**

## 3.0 Regional Wellness Council Reports

The Leadership Council received updates from each region during the meeting. Below are summaries of the actions, suggestions and activities of each region that provided a report:

- a) **Beaufort Delta** – RWC Chair Ethel-Jean Gruben discussed the impact of the omicron wave, the reappointment of an RWC member, and concerns over deaths and suicide in the region.

- The Beaufort Delta RWC issues and priorities for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA remain:
  - Organizational Safety/Cultural Safety;
  - Program and service delivery improvements;
  - Medical Travel policy and services;
  - Ambulance services for small communities;
  - Access to good quality dental care; and
  - Homelessness.

The next RWC meeting is planned for February 25, 2022.

b) **Sahtu** – RWC Chair Gina Dolphus reported:

- The RWC held a virtual meeting on February 9, 2022 with leadership from Colville Lake attending.
- The Sahtu RWC has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - Regional Wellness Council vacancies (3);
  - Regional program review of Mental Health and Addictions services;
  - Staffing issues in some communities affecting services; and
  - Delays to resumption of dental visits in the region.

The next meeting will be held in April 2022.

c) **Yellowknife Region** –RWC Chair Nancy Trotter summarized:

- The Yellowknife RWC met on December 1, 2021 and February 16, 2022. Key topics included improving services for immigrants settling in Yellowknife, morale of nurses and front-line staff, the phone system at Yellowknife Primary Care Clinic, and impacts of the Stanton OBS service reductions.
- In addition, Yellowknife has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - A volunteer program for Stanton Territorial Hospital;
  - The name of the Stanton Legacy Building should be indigenous to reflect the spirit of truth and reconciliation; and
  - Core funding is critical to continue organized screening programs for breast, colorectal, and cervical cancer.

The next Yellowknife RWC meeting will take place March 30, 2022.

d) **Hay River** – Chair Brian Willows highlighted:

- The RWC has had no recent meetings due to omicron outbreaks in the region.
- Case numbers seem to be coming under control.

The next RWC meeting will be held February 23, 2022.

e) **Dehcho** – RWC Chair Ruby Simba, reported:

- The RWC has not met since their November 23, 2021 meeting.

The next RWC meeting will be planned for April 2022.

f) **Fort Smith** – RWC Chair Phyllis Mawdsley summarized:

- The RWC cancelled their January meeting due to the omicron outbreaks, but met on February 16 with presentations on regional Child, Family and Community Wellness programs and services and the Primary Health Care Reform Integrated Care Team project.
- This wave has impacted health care staff and services in the community. The RWC reviewed and signed the Code of Conduct.
- In addition, the Fort Smith RWC has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - Medical Travel per diem rates should be reviewed;
  - Regional staff vacancies and locum shortages, dental therapist position; and
  - Ground ambulance and highway rescue services in the region.

The next meeting of the Fort Smith RWC will be on March 16, 2022.

g) **Tlicho Community Services Agency** – Mr. Blondin highlighted the impact of the omicron wave on communities in the Tlicho region, including reductions in government office hours and school openings. Closing these hubs of community activities has disrupted community life. Staffing issues are also affecting Tlicho communities, with recruitment for hard-to-fill positions subject to national shortages.

The next TCSA board meeting will be in person March 8-10 in Yellowknife.

#### 4.0 Finance Committee Report

As Chair of the Finance Committee, Mr. Willows reported on the February 8 Committee meeting.

The Committee was updated on the 2020/21 NTHSSA financial position and projections for year-end results. The projected deficit of \$28.2 million was based on higher spending in several areas. Staffing challenges continue to impact financial results, with more casual or locum staff required to maintain minimum levels of service. Members look forward to continuing to receive details of variance drivers at each update.

Members were pleased with the work done to prepare for the 2021/22 OAG Audit, including the schedule of work prepared by the Finance team, and the availability of additional accounting staff.

The 2022-23 Operating Budget is being prepared to reflect a realistic estimate of revenue and expenses, based on year-prior actuals and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarter variance results. It's expected the Budget will be ready for LC approval in March, prior to submission to the Minister. Committee reviewed a corresponding draft Operational Plan, which will be finalized for Leadership Council consideration after the GNWT Budget is approved.

An update on System Sustainability initiatives was also reviewed at this meeting. The hiring of an Executive Director to lead the sustainability office within HTSSA should drive focus and progress in this area going forward. Committee looks forward to hearing the recommendations from the review of NTHSSA structure, and regular updates on this key initiative.

Finally, Committee reviewed their Terms of Reference, with any suggested changes to be incorporated into the broader update to the Governance Manual expected to be finalized in June.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2022.

## **5.0 Governance and HR Committee Report**

A report on the February 9 Committee meeting was delivered by Chair Mr. Antoine. Members discussed a preliminary approach to performance evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer, an update on planning for a strategic planning workshop, and the need to update the Council training and development plan after RWC appointments are made in July.

Committee also considered proposed changes to the Governance Manual, an updated Planning Calendar for 2022-23 Leadership Council Meetings, and the Committee Terms of Reference. Members agreed suggested changes to all

these documents should be incorporated into the broader update to the Governance Manual expected to be finalized in June.

The next Governance/HR Committee meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022.

## **6.0 Quality Committee Report**

Committee Chair Mr. Blondin asked Mr. VanOverliw to review the Committee report from their February 10 meeting.

The quarterly update on Accreditation focused on preparation and planning underway for the 2023 Accreditation Survey. Compliance with 27 national standards, including Governance, will be evaluated, with senior management co-sponsors working with team leads to complete individual and group assessment surveys, leading to work plans to address gaps.

Primary Health Care reform pilot projects continue in Phase 2 – stability and sustainability. Evaluation of ICT projects is being led by Hotii ts'eeda, with a report expected by summer. New projects in the Beaufort Delta and Hay River, and Indigenous-led diabetes prevention in the Dehcho and Tlicho regions, are continuing with planning and research. Federal funding has been secured for projects this fiscal year and next.

Committee reviewed key July through September 2021 quality and patient safety indicators for Seniors/Elders (New Pressure Injuries, Fall Injuries, and Staff Shift Change Form Completion); Community Mental Health and Adult Services (Child and Youth Services, and Enhanced Access to Community Services); and Child, Family and Community Wellness (Minimum Contacts for Out-of-Territory Placements, Children Receiving Care).

Members encouraged community engagement to confirm residents experiences match the positive trends suggested in the QIPSS Report.

The next Quality Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2022.

## **7.0 Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Antoine reviewed his activities since the December 2021 Leadership Council meeting, including interactions with the Minister, NTHSSA senior management, and Council colleagues. Over the period covered by his Report, the Chairperson also met virtually with MNP to discuss system sustainability and with the Acting CPHO in Fort Simpson.

The Chairperson confirmed the next round of meetings for Committees and Leadership Council is tentatively set for May 2022.

## **8.0 Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services Report**

The Deputy Minister Report was well-received by the Council. Highlights included preparations for the end of public health orders for COVID-19, providing health authorities with adequate resources for surge response and return focus to deferred health services. Public engagement on draft Alcohol Strategy recommendations, proposed changes to update the Pharmacy Act (substitution of generic drugs) and the banning of flavoured vape products were also noted by Members.

Council discussed the impact and legacy of addictions on communities, and the need to invest in community level programs and services, that coping with trauma requires the removal of barriers to wellness.

**Break for lunch commenced at 11:45 am, the meeting resumed at 1:01 pm.**

## **9.0 Chief Executive Officer Report**

Ms. Riles reviewed her quarterly update with the Council. first operational update

Accreditation – Individual and group assessment surveys for each of 27 standards are underway, followed by mock tracers to begin evaluate delivery of programs and services against the standard. Work plans will follow to address gaps in meeting the standard, leading to the submission of evidence proving standard compliance for the 2023 survey.

COVID-19 – Omicron case numbers are high, with several simultaneous outbreaks across the NWT, health with by regional staff and resources. Testing and contact tracing are overwhelmed, with more reliance on Rapid Antigen Tests and self-notification of positive tests, similar to other jurisdictions. Vaccine rates are climbing slightly, with over 100 administered per day NWT-wide. A limited supply of Paxlovid has been received, IV infusion therapy is another treatment recently initiated; both are subject to strict clinical protocols for who should receive them.

Human Resources – Challenges to operational integrity continue with more staff leaving due to the pandemic, and more COVID infection. While the overall vacancy rate is down from June 2021, key front-line areas remain

short staffed, including OBS at Stanton, which will partially re-open February 21 using agency nurses. Long term solutions through the System HR plan and targeted recruitment and retention initiatives will take time to show positive results.

Finance – planning for the 2021-22 Audit is well underway with the CFO and her team. The extended deadline of August 28 for the submission of audited financial statements to the Minister should be met. Q2 and Q3 variance results will inform finalization of the 2022-23 Budget. Hiring to fill out the Finance team continues.

Council supported consideration of local education options for current nurses to become home grown nurse practitioners, as an example of initiatives to reduce long term staff shortages. Members look forward to employee engagement at all levels of NTHSSA as part of the work to change organizational culture and improve staff morale.

## **10.0 COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Delli Pizzi and Dr. Pegg presented an update on the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting lower to stable death rates but higher infection rates from the Omicron variant. NWT vaccination rates are high, with 83% of NWT residents 12 and over having received 2 shots. Members welcomed information on pandemic modelling, the importance of the social determinants of health, and encouraging NWT communities and local governments to share covid health outcomes to help close gaps in health outcomes for indigenous people and address hesitancy from misinformation.

Prevention measures will shift to more individual responsibility as formal public health restrictions end in April as the balance of risks and benefits of public health measures shifts. COVID-19 will still be a significant health risk, but rapid antigen tests will be available to all residents, with positive tests self-reported. Masking will likely become voluntary, vaccine boosters will continue to be made available.

Council thanked both presenters, with a special nod to Dr. Pegg for her hard work with NTHSSA during the pandemic, and wished her well as she moves on to other work.



### 11.0 Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Update

The Leadership Council was updated on hiring for the Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism Unit, meetings of the Indigenous Advisory Body in 2021, and the Cultural Safety Training framework currently in development. Council appreciated new content on privilege developed for the near-monthly training sessions offered to all GNWT employees. Council also supports work to embed cultural safety in Child and Family Services, and develop a Cultural Safety & Anti-racism newsletter to Health and Social Services staff.

### 12.0 Governance Manual

Council received in their meeting package, a track changes version of the annually updated manual. This will be sent out to Members by the Senior Advisor electronically, with an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions prior to being finalized.

### 13.0 In-Camera Session

No additional in-camera session was required.

### 14.0 Reflection, Prayer

Mr. Antoine offered a closing prayer in his language.

### 15.0 Adjournment

The Leadership Council formally ended its business and closed its meeting at 3:52 pm.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority closed its February 17, 2022 meeting.

**Motion: Ms. Trotter**

**Second: Mrs. Mawdsley**

**LC22/02-003 – Carried Unanimously**



Chairperson Approval Signature

June 16, 2022

Date