

Beaufort Delta Regional Wellness Council
March 11, 2023
Minutes

In Attendance: Deborah Gordon-Ruben, BDRWC Acting Chair
Peggy Day, BDRWC Member
Ruby McDonald, BDRWC Member
Sasha Blake, BDRWC Member
Arlene Jorgensen, Chief Operating Officer, NTHSSA-BDR
Roger Israel, Incoming Chief Operating Officer, NTHSSA-BDR

Apologies: None

Guests: None

Member of Public: Donnie Roberts, Programs Manager Gwichinya Gwich'in
via Telemerge

1.) Call to Order at 1:04 pm. by Deborah Gordon-Ruben, Acting Chair

Ms. Gordon-Ruben welcomed everyone in attendance.

2.) Reflection / Prayer led by Peggy Day at 1:05 pm

3.) Approval of the Agenda

Motion 2023-03-11-01 Moved by Ruby McDonald Seconded by Peggy Day that the agenda be accepted as presented.

4.) Previous Meeting Minutes – Review and Approval

Final minutes from the December 29 to 30, 2022 meeting were reviewed.

Motion 2023-03-11-02 Moved by Peggy Day seconded by Ruby McDonald.

That the Beaufort Delta Regional Wellness Council (BDRWC) minutes for December 29 to 30, 2022, be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

5.) Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- Ms. Ruby McDonald shared a follow-up on her comment on the last meeting's minute about hiring Homecare Support Worker staff in Fort McPherson. She saw an elder again when she went back to McPherson, and she found out that the elder is still not taken care well by the Homecare Support Workers. The elder has little help about their medicine and they found out that most of them are expired. She still thinks that there are more qualified staff in her community that can take care of the elders and the present Home Support Worker in her community is either not qualified or does not know how to take care of their elders. They are not doing enough to take care of them.
- In response to Ms. McDonald, Arlene Jorgensen, Chief Operating Officer (COO) for Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority - Beaufort Delta Region (NTHSSA – BDR) shared that the organization hired a Homecare Nurse-In-Charge (NIC) to provide direct supervision to all Homecare Support Worker in the region. They will also review all existing homecare list, guidelines and care plans regarding Homecare.
- Arlene Jorgensen asked if Ms. McDonald can forward to her and Roger Israel, incoming COO, the names of the elders she mentioned so she can forward them to Charlene Raddi, Regional Manager, Continuing Care.
- Arlene Jorgensen informed the council members that the position Ms. McDonald mentioned for Homecare Support Worker in Fort McPherson actually ended up not hiring staff permanently so there will be opportunity for the qualified community member to apply for the position.

Action Item: COO will bring the concern to Charlene Raddi, Regional Manager, Continuing Care and to prioritize Fort McPherson because of the concern brought forward to Beaufort Delta Regional Wellness Council.

- The Chair asked who comprises the hiring committee for the Homecare Support Worker position in the communities. Arlene shared that right now, the Manager, sometimes the Nurse-in-Charge of the particular community and an HR representative.
- The possibility of having a community representative in the hiring and selection process is a welcome idea and will ask for feedback from the community if the representative will be coming for the Hamlet or from the community corporation/band.
- Ms. McDonald asked for any update on the dental issues in the region raised last meeting. She shared that there are a lot of dental appointments in the communities and in the whole region that it may be worth it to go into a dental business.
- The Chair shared that the dental issue is one of the main discussions in the last Leadership Council meeting and they are gearing towards amending how

the dental care is processed in the NWT from NIHB so it can be managed better.

- Ms. Peggy Day shared that the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) hired a dental hygienist to come to Inuvik to work for the organization and did a tremendous and excellent job. They focus on the preventive dental work which is very appropriate.
- Roger Israel, incoming COO, shares that a dental hygienist for the region is very beneficial and supports having them in the region. NTHSSA is not involved in dental care, but they are commonly associated with it because it is a healthcare which confuses community members.
- The Chair shared that the Leadership Council also discussed bringing back Dental Therapist position in every region. Roger shared that we still have dental therapist in East Three Elementary School but due to colleges and universities not offering dental therapist courses, it is getting harder to fill dental therapist positions.
- Donnie Roberts shared the dental care situation in his community in Tsiigehtchic. He mentioned 3 main issues one of which are the outdated dental equipment in the community. Another one is the inconsistent and varying assessments by dental practitioners. There are instances that the assessment provided in Tsiigehtchic are different when assessment is done in Inuvik. Lastly is the Dental Travel Escort if the patient needs to be sedated. They would not approve an escort which is unfortunate in this situation.

Chief Operating Officer Action Items

Included in the meeting package:

- NTHSSA – BDR is still in the process of identifying where the bottleneck in Medical Travel. They recognize that if it is community health center staff is the reason then the regional management will deal with it. If it is the Medical Travel Staff, they will need to coordinate with the Territorial Department.
- Roger Israel shared that the Medical Travel process is too complicated because it involves NIHB which is a different organization outside of the GNWT.

Action Item: The COO will ask The Executive Assistant to invite the Territorial Medical Travel Department to make a presentation at the next BDRWC Meeting.

- IRC who manages the processing plant informed the NTHSAA – BDR that the Inuvik Regional Hospital is not yet a priority to receive processed traditional meat. The hospital canteen cannot yet serve traditional food because they cannot receive and cook traditional meat due to regulations like different room to store and cook which the kitchen doesn't have as of this time.
- Arlene provided the contact information of the review officer under the Dental Profession Act

Action Item: The COO will ask the Executive Assistant to include in the next meeting the professional registries link for public to make a complaint on dentists.

- Arlene Jorgensen informed Charlene Raddi that Ms. McDonald is willing and available to be part of the interview committee for the reposted Homecare position in Fort McPherson.
- The Child and Family Services (CFS) Department is invited and ready to present in the meeting, but last-minute unavoidable circumstances prevented them from presenting and sent their regrets.
- The NTHSSA is working with GTC on the billing issues with LARGA facilities. Arlene Jorgensen will present a letter received from Allen Stanzel, Governance Advisor, NTHSSA coming from GTC acknowledging that the issue has been resolved.
- Dental services do not go through accreditation. The Chair shared that it was mentioned in the Leadership Council meeting that dental companies undergo a certain process in order to provide dental services in the territory. The Chair will share it once she gets more information in the Leadership Council Meetings.
- For community members, information is provided in the COO action list but for a GNWT employee who needs transportation from residence to the airport, Benefits states that the employee is responsible for arranging transportation and will reimburse up to \$12.00 without a receipt or the full amount of the receipt provided.
- Arlene Jorgensen provided a list of possible NTHSSA departments and contact person that the council can invite. It is decided that the Medical Travel, NWT Housing and Sallie Ross of DHSS are priorities to be invited next meeting.
- The council discussed reasons why these departments are a priority to be invited to present next meeting and shared some programs in the Beaufort-Delta Region (BDR) in the past that deals with Mental Health, Addictions, Homelessness and issues with Dental Services in the region.
- They also want to include the Medical Director and the Senior Manager for Health Services not in the next meeting but on the meeting after as a standing agenda item.

Action Item: The COO will ask Executive Assistant to invite the Territorial Medical Travel Department to make a presentation at the next BDRWC Meeting.

Action Item: The COO will ask The Executive Assistant to invite Sallie Ross, NIHB Manager to present about Dental Services in the Territories or to attend next meeting.

Action Item: The COO will ask The Executive Assistant to include the Medical Director and the Senior Manager for Health Services not in the next meeting but on the meeting after as a standing agenda item.

6.) Chairpersons Report:

- The Acting Chair mentioned she just recently came back from the Leadership Council Meeting in Yellowknife. She mentioned that the other regions are also in the same situation with BDR on challenges in membership in their respective Wellness Councils and still on the process of filling up vacant positions in their wellness councils.
- The Acting Chair shared those challenges in Suicide, Mental Health, On-The-Land Programming, Traditional Food are discussed in the meeting because everyone in the different regions including Yellowknife and the Stanton Territorial Hospital is experiencing challenges on these.
- The Leadership Council discussed more about Medical Travel and Dental Services in the Regions and the Acting Chair believes NIHB don't understand the situation of Dental Services in the regions especially in the communities.
- Chairpersons asked Leadership to present the process map for Medical Travel and Dental Services so that they can clearly understand how it works and identify key persons responsible.
- Medical Travel in communities is underfunded and it shouldn't be the case because the Indigenous people are the majority of the population using this service. Medical Travel is also understaffed and service to patients are greatly affected which results in hardships and difficulties.
- Leadership Council also talked about Addictions and the A and D programs that existed before in the regions.
- The new Office of Client Experience and the new Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate position is also presented and introduced in the meeting. The Acting Chair feels it is an enormous task and concerned about not enough staff working on this role for the entire region.
- Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue is also discussed, and she believes it is under MACA, but they are still in the process of resolving this issue.
- The Minister is very willing to attend the Leadership Council meetings and MLA's attend them whenever their schedule permit them to attend. The Acting Chair also would like the Region's MLA's to attend our BD Regional Wellness Council.

Action Item: The COO will ask The Executive Assistant to send individual invitations to BDR MLA's to attend the Regional Wellness Council Meetings.

7.) Review of BDR RWC Issues and Priorities List

Deferred after Lunch Break.

8.) Public Feedback and Questions

- Donnie Roberts, Programs Manager of Gwichinya Gwich'in shared some feedback from community members in Tsiigehtchic in the meeting as guest from the public.
- One of the concerns he shared is in regards with spouse being approved to be medical escorts of patients having pre-natal checkup especially ultrasound in the hospital. It will be beneficial for the family as a unit to be together in these special moments in their lives.
- Social Worker visits in the community is getting fewer lately and they hope that there will be improvements in the coming months so community members will have a sense of familiarity and closeness with the social workers.
- Also asking for more frequency of nursing clinic visits in the community so that health concerns can be attended to immediately as possible to mitigate worsening the symptoms and needing medical travel.
- Some assistance to cancer patients in their income taxes. Cancer patients already are in health crisis physically and mentally so filling taxes is the least of their worries, but they still need to comply with it or experience tax and financial issues.
- Another is the issue of having escorts when going for day surgery. Medical travel informs patients that they cannot be accommodated in LARGA if they have escorts and need to arrange their own accommodation and transportation. Patient might end up paying for more if this issue is not resolved.
- Lastly, is the issue of funeral services when death happens in Edmonton hospital. Family members were told that they can only have funeral arrangement with the contracted funeral company of the hospital and cannot be with other companies. It is problematic because Donnie experience firsthand that the family he assisted had issues with the funeral company and gave them the run around. More importantly, family members lost the right to choose what funeral company they are comfortable with dealing and the last thing we want grieving family member to undergo is more hardship in this lowest moment in their life.
- Arlene Jorgensen answered some of the issues raised by Donnie and the first one is with the funeral service being contracted solely to McKenna Services. Kim Riles, Chief Executive Officer, NTHSSA promised to look into this as she is not aware of this process. There was an established process of giving the financial assistance directly to family members to arrange their own funeral service of their choice. They also have the option for NTHSSA to pay the funeral

company directly, so family members won't have to arrange the funeral service themselves and let the contracted company take care of funeral services.

- Next issue Arlene shared her thoughts of is the day surgery. There is inconsistency for patients having anesthesia and day surgery patients in Inuvik are typically released to the care of somebody. These are questions that can be taken back to Peter Long, Manager of Medical Travel to get clarity on the rules.
- In the past the Inuvik Public Health who provides nursing clinics in Tsiigehtchic, increase their visits whenever there is an increase demands but if there is not enough requested appointment scheduled, they need to balance their work between Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic. Let Barb Lennie, Nurse-In-Charge in Tsiigehtchic know about it when they are in the community so they can respond and schedule service frequently when demand rises.
- Arlene Jorgensen suggested Donnie to connect with Denise Ritas, Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate, to help the particular cancer patient with their tax or health benefit issues. Roger Israel shared that it might be about how to qualify for the extended health benefits with Blue Cross. Donnie will gather more information about the patient.
- Social Worker issues in the communities can be raised with the CFS Department during their presentation.

9.) Presentation

Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate Update

The Acting Chair welcomed Denise Ritas to the meeting.

Denise Ritas is the new Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate.

Presentation Highlight:

- A. What is the Office of Client Experience?
 - ✓ The Office of Client Experience is a new office that is providing support to all residents and guests of the Northwest Territories.
- B. New Indigenous Patient Advocates!
 - ✓ Four new Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate Positions were created to advocate and assist Indigenous residents and guests in the NWT
- C. How to request services from the Office of Client Experience...
 - ✓ Centralized intake process by calling 1-855-846-9601 or Email HSS_Clientexperience@gov.nt.ca
- D. Updates on the Office of Client Experience
 - ✓ Soft launch! The office began providing services on January 17, 2023
- E. The Data...

- ✓ The Office of Client Experience began Providing services on January 16, 2023. As of February 22,2023, we had 55 requests for services.
- F. Promotion of the Office of Client Experience...
 - ✓ Advertising in all 33 communities in official languages
- G. Council of Indigenous Client Experience
 - ✓ Provide a forum for Indigenous experiences to be shared and addressed

10.) Chief Operating Officer Report

Ms. Jorgensen went over her written report. Discussion highlights:

- **Key Initiative Highlights**

- Beaufort Delta Mental Health and Addictions Renewal Project
 - New job descriptions for Community Counselling and Support services are written and submitted. The change will be effective June 2023.
 - Ms. Day asked if the Council could advocate to change the criteria to apply for a counsellor position within Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), Indigenous Service Canada.
 - Arlene Jorgensen suggested to include the request on the Issues and Priorities list because NIHB is under the Dept. of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and not under NTHSSA.
 - The Acting Chair shared the value of traditional healing and knowledge in our community counselling.
- Inuvik Regional Hospital.
 - The Medical Director implemented to have a Hospitalist in the Inuvik Regional Hospital. The Hospitalist is a doctor who is responsible for acute care patients and is a dedicated doctor for the whole morning. The hospitalist can also help during emergencies when ER doctor need assistance from another doctor in short notice.
 - There is Medical Rounds happening every Monday and Thursday at the Large Boardroom.

- **Operational Updates**

- NTHSSA Leadership Changes in the Beaufort-Delta Region.

- Arlene Jorgensen introduced Roger Israel as the incoming Chief Operations Officer in a Transfer Assignment. Officially took over on Feb. 6, 2023.
- Roger worked with NTHSSA in Inuvik for many years and is a Certified General Accountant.

- Staff Education Opportunities Resumed

NIC Conference – February 13-18

- After a couple of years due to COVID, NTHSSA – BDR finally held the NIC Conference here in Inuvik where all Nurse in Charge in the communities gather for education and learning opportunities.

Counselling Services Visioning Days February 21-23

- Counsellors from all communities gather once again here in Inuvik to plan and discuss the vision for the department.

- Staffing Challenges

- Staffing issues continue to be a challenge especially in recruiting front line workers especially nurses, social workers, counsellors' diagnostic and laboratory technicians.
- We still have vacancies in management such as our acute care and primary care departments where the regional manager position is still vacant.
- Housing and accommodation is one of the barriers in attracting frontline workers. NTHSSA is committed to support staff who is committed in staying in the region but also balancing the need to recruit much needed staff to service healthcare in the region.
- Four new RN positions in the Emergency Room is approved to help staffing challenges.

- **Service Delivery Highlights**

- Chicken Pox outbreak in Tuktoyaktuk.

- Five patient have been diagnosed with Chickenpox in Tuktoyaktuk. Contact tracing is done, and the outbreak is contained.

- Issues of Sterilizer in Reprocessing inside OR
 - Maintenance is needed in the Sterilizer Equipment in OR. Same issue they are having in Stanton Territorial Hospital.
- New Morgue in the Communities
 - New morgue will be available in Fort McPherson and in Aklavik. There is an existing morgue in Tuktoyaktuk. Still on the process of establishing how to manage the morgues between the Hamlet and the Health Centers.
- Accreditation
 - List of the standards to be reviewed in this region is shared in the meeting binder.
- Farewell from Arlene Jorgensen
 - This will be Arlene's last BDRWC Meeting as she steps down as Chief Operating Officer for NTHSSA – BDR. She thanked everyone in the council from past members to the current one. She appreciates all the support from the community members who the council member represent and she values every BDRWC meetings throughout the years because it is very important to hear the feedback and concern of the people we are serving.

11.) BDRWC Members Roundtable

Ms. McDonald

- Ms. McDonald is looking forward to communicating with Denise Ritas, our new Senior Indigenous Patient Advocate to assist community members in Fort McPherson if they have any concerns.
- Ms. McDonald will continue to gather more information and advocate for the elders in Fort McPherson on their health care needs.
- Ms. McDonald is looking into the Homecare Support Workers in McPherson and will share information in the next meeting.

Ms. Day

- Ms. Day is very appreciative of all the counsellors and wellness workers here in Inuvik who are working closely with Hope House. They are really amazing and wonderful to work with.

- Ms. Day encourage to avail the services of Goba Care for Medical Travel Patients especially those who will be Travelling to Edmonton Health Facilities.
- Ms. Day shared that IRC implemented the Inuvialuit Suicide Plan and had a roundtable meeting with DHSS in Yellowknife. IRC and DHSS developed a very good working group and now working successfully with an agreement.

Action Item: The COO will ask the Executive Assistant to provide the link of Goba Care website next meeting.

Ms. Blake

- Ms. Blake shared that she is working with the community of Tsiigehtchic doing community and elders programming.
- Ms. Blake asks community members she interact with about their health concerns and let them know to share it to her so she can assist or gather that information and share them with in the meetings.
- Dental services is one of the main concern in the community of Tsiigehtchic.

Ms. Gordon-Ruben

- Ms. Gordon-Ruben shared that she did a lot of traveling the past couple of months for work and for her other volunteer duties including attending the Leadership Council
- Ms. Gordon appreciates the work done by the Beaufort Delta Mental Health and Addictions Renewal Project. It will definitely help the department with staffing issues and will make the positions more open and to the members the community.

7.) Review of BDR RWC Issues and Priorities list

Discussion Points:

- The Acting Chair asked members to review the Issues and Priorities list and share their feedback next meeting.
- Arlene suggests council members to think about taking out some items that need to be taken out and chose the items they want to remain or prioritize.
- Members will discuss the list one by one next meeting and update them for next Leadership Council Meeting
- The Acting Chair agreed that some of the items in the list will take a longer time to resolve and need further discussion with the Leadership Council.

12.) Decision Items and Recommendations to the NTHSSA Leadership Council

- The Chair will work on a report with all the concerns raised with some of the priorities on the list and bring it to the next Leadership Meeting.

13.) Adjournment/Date of Next BDRWC Meeting

- The council decided to have the next Beaufort-Delta Regional Wellness Council Meeting in Inuvik this coming June or July 2023. The tentative dates will be sent to all members before June 2023 for confirmation and to finalize the date of the meeting.
- The Acting Chair informed the members that the Leadership Council is looking into coming into Inuvik in September 2023.

Closing Prayer

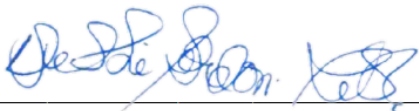
Ms. Day led the closing prayer.

Motion 2023-03-11-03 Motion for the meeting to be adjourned Moved by Ms. Ruby McDonald Seconded by Ms. Sasha Blake

Recorded by: Dennis Dulay, Executive Assistant, NTHSSA - BDR

Minutes approved by the NTHSSA – BDRWC

On the 15th day of July, 2023



Deborah Gordon-Ruben, BDRWC Acting Chair