

## Leadership Council Public Meeting - Minutes

December 1-2, 2021 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. Patsy Schaefer, 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, Chair, Beaufort Delta Regional Wellness Council (by phone)
- Ms. Nancy Trotter, Chair, Yellowknife Regional Wellness Council (by phone)
- Mr. Bruce Cooper, Deputy Minister, GNWT DHSS
  
- Ms. Kim Riles, Chief Executive Officer, NTHSSA
- Ms. Joanne Engram, Acting Executive Director – Clinical Integration, NTHSSA
- Dr. AnneMarie Pegg, Territorial Medical Director, NTHSSA
- Ms. Elizabeth Johnson, Acting Chief Financial Officer, NTHSSA
- Ms. Nathalie Nadeau, Executive Director, Child, Family and Community Wellness, NTHSSA
- Mr. Tim VanOverliw, Executive Director – Corporate & Support Services, NTHSSA
- Ms. Lorie-Anne Danielson, Chief Operating Officer, Yellowknife Region, NTHSSA
- Ms. Mimi Hamelin, Chief Operating Officer, Sahtu Region, NTHSSA
- Ms. Georgina Veldhorst, Chief Operating Officer, Stanton Terr. Hospital, NTHSSA
- 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
- Ms. Debbie Meade, Director, Talent and Organizational Development, NTHSSA
- Mr. Derek Elkin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, GNWT DHSS
- Mr. Chucker Dewar, Territorial Fire Marshall, GNWT MACA
- Mr. Ivan Russell, Director of Public Safety, GNWT MACA
- Mr. Tony Ondrack, Sr. Policy Analyst, GNWT MACA

### OBSERVERS:

- Ms. Nancy Cymbalisky

## 1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM.

- a) The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting, asking everyone around the table to introduce themselves, and recognized new RWC Chair Phyllis Mawdsley, and re-appointed RWC Chairs Ethel-Jean Gruben and Ruby Simba. An acknowledgement of Chief Drygeese Traditional Territory, home of the Yellowknives Dene and traditional lands of the North Slave Metis, followed.
- b) Ms. Dolphus led the meeting in an opening prayer.
- c) The Chairperson highlighted COVID-19 protocols, and a safety overview was provided by the Senior Advisor, Governance.
- d) Attendance was recorded, total attendance over 2 days as above.
- e) There were no conflicts of interest declared for this meeting.
- f) It was noted questions from the public could be emailed to [ntsssafeedback@gov.nt.ca](mailto:ntsssafeedback@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. The Chairperson advised the meeting that he and the CEO would be participating in a media briefing starting at 11:30 am. Mr. Cooper would also not be able to deliver his report at 11:30 am.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority approved the December 1-2, 2021 agenda, as presented.

**Motion: Ms. Gruben**

**Second: Ms. Dolphus**

**LC21/12-002 – Carried Unanimously**

### b) Review/Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

The Leadership Council reviewed the minutes from the June 23-24, 2021 meeting. An amendment was made to the summary of the Yellowknife RWC report.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority approved the June 23-24, 2021 meeting minutes, as amended.

**Motion: Ms. Dolphus**

**Second: Mr. Willows**

**LC21/12-003 – 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 summarized her report:
- The RWC met on October 29-30, 2021 with updates/presentations from Child, Family and Community Wellness, Home Care and Long-Term Care Services to Support Aging in Place with Dignity, Community Culture and Innovation, and Primary Health Care Reform demonstration project ideas for the region.
  - In addition, the Beaufort Delta RWC has several ongoing issues/concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA in the areas of:
    - 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 will be January 14-15, 2022.

- b) **Sahtu** – RWC Chair Gina Dolphus reported:
- The RWC did not hold any meetings since June 2021, mostly due to a regional outbreak of COVID-19 in Sahtu communities through August and September.
  - Following a conversation with the Minister, the Chair reached out to leadership in Colville Lake and Tulita regarding vacancies on the RWC. No nominations have been received to date.
  - Two other RWC members were re-appointed for a 1-year term, bringing their total service time to the legislated maximum of 6 years each.

- The Integrated Care Team pilot project in Fort Good Hope was paused during the outbreaks, but face-to-face physician services continued through telehealth, with remote support in between telehealth appointments.

The next meeting of the Sahtu RWC will be held in January 2022.

c) **Yellowknife Region** – RWC Chair Nancy Trotter recognized Ms, Lorie-Anne Danielson as the new permanent Chief Operating Officer for the Yellowknife region. The Chair’s report included:

- The Yellowknife RWC met on September 15, 2021 for a planning meeting to discuss a meeting schedule and agenda topics; and on November 3, 2021, with presentations from Child, Family, and Community Wellness prevention and preservation services (Healthy Family Program).
- The RWC is recommending the hiring of indigenous language speaking candidates for the Healthy Family Program.
- The RWC member whose term was expiring was reappointed for a one-year term, bringing their total service time to the legislative maximum of 6 years.
- In addition, Yellowknife has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - Recommend a volunteer program at Stanton Territorial Hospital be implemented when pandemic restrictions ease.
  - 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 RWC Chair thanked management and staff for their tireless work during the pandemic. The next Yellowknife RWC meeting will take place December 1, 2021.

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

- The RWC met for a regular meeting on November 24, 2021, with discussions focussed on the COVID-19 pandemic (vaccinations, recent outbreak, testing, staff redeployments, and proof of vaccine credential), staffing (staffing levels, recruitment, succession planning, vacancy rates) and HRHSSA infrastructure in the region

(4 existing facilities, new long term care facility), and impacts of the Stanton obstetrics service reductions.

- The Hay River RWC has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - Seniors are concerned about ongoing masking requirements affecting their group social activities;
  - Community leadership feel the responsibility for proof of vaccines had been downloaded to them, worsened by a lack of information and coordination; and
  - Medical travel and ambulance services concerns are well known.

The next Hay River RWC meeting will be held in February 2022.

e) **Dehcho** – RWC Chair Ruby Simba, reported on 2 recent meetings:

- At their July 7 meeting, the RWC received an update of regional Mental Health and Addictions services, and updates on dental services in the Dehcho, COVID-19 vaccinations and the process for obtaining proof of vaccine credentials.
- At their November 23 meeting the main topics included a Child, Family and Community Wellness update on Prevention and Preservation Services, and a further update on regional Mental Health and Addictions services.
- There are 2 vacancies on the Dehcho RWC, with nominations for RWC membership from Wrigley and Nahanni Butte pending Ministerial consideration.
- The Dehcho has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
  - Follow-up of RWC issues/concerns from the Leadership Council, action item list should be added to Chair's report;
  - There is a need for counselling services for men in remote communities, and overall services related to the regional flooding in Fort Simpson and Jean-Marie River;
  - Medical travel communication and confirmation to patients is lacking. Patients are bringing alcohol back to restricted communities. Taxi service quality and ferry services change notifications need to be improved; and
  - Isolation requirements and testing for travellers to remote communities is inconsistent.

The next meeting of the Dehcho RWC will be confirmed early in 2022.

- f) **Fort Smith** – RWC Chair Phyllis Mawdsley highlighted:
- The RWC met on November 9, and set a schedule of 9 monthly meetings per year (except July, August, and December), every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday from 3 pm to 5 pm. An orientation presentation was reviewed with 3 new appointees at their first meeting.
  - Main topics included the COVID-19 pandemic (regional status and proof of vaccine credentials), recruitment and retention of physicians and staff, space requirement needs, access to mental health services, and the regional Dental Therapy Program.
  - In addition, the Fort Smith RWC has the following issues and/or concerns for the Leadership Council and NTHSSA:
    - Recruitment and retention of physicians and professional health and social services staff in the region; and
    - Improving the scope of regional mental health services beyond appointments with counsellors.

The next meeting of the Fort Smith RWC will be on January 19, 2022.

- g) **Tlcho Community Services Agency** – this report was deferred until the TCSA Chair could join the meeting.

The Council expressed frustration at the lack of response to longstanding action items, leading to doubts about the role of Regional Wellness Councils and the Leadership Council, and the effectiveness of a Territorial board of management versus regional ones, that are affecting interest in being nominated for Regional Wellness Councils. The CEO informed members she will attend RWC meetings whenever possible, has directed the senior management team to include RWC positions in their work to improve programs and services, and would be reviewing the process of tracking and responding to action items.

Members expressed a desire for more decentralization, and feelings of empathy that not all action item responses are in control of NTHSSA. Senior management has needed to focus on more urgent operational issues, with residents demanding more from their health care system, highlighting the need to identify and focus on core services.

#### **4.0 Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Willows, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on the August 10 and

September 14 Committee meetings, attended by a quorum of Committee Members.

The Committee was updated on the 2020/21 NTHSSA financial position and audit, and the 2021/22 first quarter variance during their August meeting. Members are concerned about continued growth in deficits, pointing to growing urgency for a plan to improving financial results with clear actions and goals. With the current year operating deficit projected to be more than budgeted, Committee appreciated the CEOs commitment to engage in NTHSSA financial matters as a top priority.

At the September meeting, agenda items included the 2020/21 Audit and financial statements, and system sustainability planning. It's expected the extended deadline for the audited financial statements and Annual Report will be missed. \*It was determined after the meeting that Finance will work with the Office of the Controller General to ensure NTHSSA audited financial information is included in the 2020/21 GNWT public accounts. Members also reviewed progress on system sustainability, including staffing updates on project and other Finance positions. The urgency of advancing work on sustainability was highlighted.

The Leadership Council agreed to Mr. Willows recommendation for a letter of recognition be written to the Acting CFO, recognizing work to complete the 2020/21 Audit and Financial Statements and make improvements to NTHSSA finance systems and processes.

The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2022.

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

Committee Chair Mr. Antoine reviewed a summary of the September 15 Committee meeting. Members reviewed a draft of the 2020/21 Annual report, which was circulated to the Leadership Council for review and comment after the meeting. A draft of the System Human Resources Plan was shared with Committee, to be presented at the next Leadership Council meeting. Committee was updated on recent (re-)appointments to Regional Wellness Councils, and orientation planning for new Members.

The Chair confirmed he would initiate discussions with the CEO regarding preparation and review of performance goals objectives with the Leadership Council.

The next Governance and HR Committee meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2022.

## **6.0 Quality Committee Report**

On behalf of Committee Chair Mr. Blondin, Mr. Antoine summarized the Quality Committee report from the September 16 meeting.

Committee was updated on the completion of the 2019 Accreditation cycle. With evidence and Action plans for unmet criteria submitted, Accreditation Canada is expected to confirm NTHSSAs 2019 accreditation. Work has begun on the next cycle, with an update on the assessment standards to be used expected at the February Quality Committee meeting. Committee expressed great appreciation for NTHSSA achieving accredited status, and supports moving ahead with the 2023 survey despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Primary Health Care reform pilot projects continue in Phase 2 – stability and sustainability. New projects in the Beaufort Delta and Hay River are continuing with planning and research, with some delays due to pandemic impacts. Staffing and funding are 2 key areas of focus to maintain momentum with reforming primary care.

A new format for the Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Scorecard (QIPSS) was supported by Committee. The Report has been reorganized based on the overall system strategic plan developed by the Department of Health and Social Services. Members will receive the entire Report at each Committee meeting, and review a detailed presentation on select key indicators related to system priorities. Recommendations from the Report will be sorted and tracked through a new module in the RL6 incident reporting system.

The next Quality Committee meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2022.

## **7.0 Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Antoine spoke about his various meetings, calls, and activities since the June 2021 Leadership Council meeting, involving the Minister, NTHSSA senior management, and Council colleagues. The period covered the beginning of the new CEOs tenure, COVID-19 outbreaks in Sahtu, Yellowknife, Tlicho, and Beaufort Delta regions, completion of the 2020/21 OAG Audit, approval of

the 2020/21 Audited Financial Statements, and reductions in obstetrics services at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

The Chairperson confirmed the next round of meetings for Committees is tentatively set for February 8-10, 2022 and for Leadership Council February 22-24, 2021.

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

The Deputy Minister was unable to attend and brief the Council on his Report. It was agreed the Report would be tabled and either discussed later during the 2 days of meetings, or circulated to the Leadership Council after the meeting with any questions forward to the DM through the Senior Advisor, Governance, for response.

## **9.0 Chief Executive Officer Report**

Ms. Riles delivered her first operational update Report at a quarterly Leadership Council meeting, as the new Chief Executive Officer for NTHSSA.

The Report highlighted the final approval of the evidence submitted from the 2019 Accreditation survey, and the preparation work started for the 2023 survey.

COVID-19 activities included regional outbreak responses and Rapid Response Team deployment, climbing vaccination rates across the NWT and availability of 3<sup>rd</sup> dose vaccines for ages 18+ and children ages 5-11, and collaborative work with the GNWT to plan for ongoing COVID-19 response capabilities.

Human Resource challenges have caused reduction in services at Stanton Territorial Hospital and in many community health centres. Staff concerns will be addressed to ensure morale, causes of fatigue and burnout have the least possible impact. Recruitment of a new Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director Clinical Integration should be concluded in a few weeks.

After a challenging audit process, the 2020/21 Audit was completed by the OAG, with Audited Financial Statements approved by the Leadership Council on November 18. Planning for the 2021/22 Audit has begun to ensure a more streamlined and timely process for next year. The second quarter variance will show an improved but still over-budget deficit forecast for this fiscal year, based on higher than expected costs for staffing, supplies, foster care,

and southern placements. Critical work on the NTHSSA chart of accounts will be a focus going forward, based on coding inaccuracies and Audit advice from the OAG.

**Break for lunch, media briefing at 11:23 am, meeting resumed at 1:15 pm.**

### **10.0 Selection of Vice Chairperson**

The Leadership Council considered information and options for the selection of a Vice Chairperson.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority approved the selection of Ms. Ethel-Jean Gruben as Vice Chairperson, for a 1-year term.

**Motion: Ms. Dolphus**

**Second: Ms. Trotter**

**LC21/12-004 – Carried Unanimously**

### **11.0 COVID-19 Update**

The Territorial Medical Director reviewed the latest COVID-19 statistics with the Council, with cases decreasing across Canada, and no cases in the NWT. Community vaccination rates and next steps in the vaccine roll-out were discussed. The Council was interested in ways they could assist vaccination efforts in their communities and regions. The TMD stressed the importance of our flexible testing system during the surge response to the outbreak at NJ McPherson School. It remains critical to protect health system capacity through vigilant vaccine efforts and following public health advice and orders.

Council stressed the importance of communicating with residents in an appropriate forum and language for them. There was recognition that pandemic restrictions are a continuum to move in and out of as pandemic case numbers and conditions fluctuate.

### **12.0 Regional Issues, Action Item List**

The Council was updated that COVID-19 outbreaks had impacted new responses to outstanding action items. Council expressed frustration at being held back by current policy, receiving policy responses to policy change

requests. Council agreed policy changes should be used as a tool to improve the organization, reduce debt, and rationalize programs and services.

Council agreed to the suggestion to separate operational guidance and direction to NTHSSA from formal policy advice to the Minister, when considering Action Items. Council supported the use of formal resolutions to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister.

Commitments from this meeting include:

1. Follow-up from Dec 2020 meeting, whether an update on the signage pilot in Yellowknife was provided for regions to choose a direction;
2. Recognize efforts of the Acting CFO for her support through the OAG audit, by letter from the Chairperson on behalf of the Finance Committee and Leadership Council;
3. Confirm the employment status of departing nurses, ie permanent vs job share;
4. Provide a recording of the media briefing on Stanton OBS service reductions;
5. In anticipation of further review, re-work the action item list to reflect the separation of operational and policy action items;
6. Confirm a timeline for the Ground Ambulance working group to re-engage following pandemic-related delays;
7. Provide an updated report on sustainability as of late December, including priorities and achievements.

Leadership Council agreed to return to 3.0 Regional Wellness Council Reports for TCSA Chair Ted Blondin to deliver his report.

**3.0.g) Tlicho Community Services Agency** – TCSA Chair Ted Blondin discussed the main challenge currently facing TCSA, recruitment and retention of health and social services professionals. His report detailed:

- TCSA meetings were held August 18 (Annual Gathering), September 2 (approve school re-opening), October 19 (Education leaders with Minister), and November 4 (approve vaccination policy and school re-opening).
- Staffing issues have and will continue to reduce services available
- in Tlicho community health centres for the foreseeable future.
- High vacancy rates in nursing, social work, and community youth and child counsellor positions persist despite ongoing recruitment

- and retention efforts.

The next TCSA board meeting will take place December 1-3, 2021 in Yellowknife.

### **13.0 In Camera Session**

The Leadership Council considered a motion to go in camera.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority moved in camera.

**Motion: Ms. Gruben**

**Second: Mr. Blondin**

**LC21/12-005 – Carried Unanimously**

The Leadership Council discussed an NTHSSA operational issue.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority moved out of camera.

**Motion: Mr. Blondin**

**Second: Ms. Mawdsley**

**LC21/12-006 – Carried Unanimously**

The Council was reminded their meeting with the Minister of Health and Social Services would take place over breakfast the following morning at 7:30 am.

### **14.0 Adjournment – December 1, 2021**

The Leadership Council adjourned for the day at 4:15 pm.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority adjourned its December 1, 2021 proceedings.

**Motion: Ms. Gruben**

**Second: Ms. Simba**

**LC21/12-007 – Carried Unanimously**

**15.0 Call to Order Day 2** – the Chairperson called the meeting back to Order on December 2, 2021 at 9:04 am.

Ms. Dolphus led the meeting in an opening prayer for Day 2.

The Leadership Council held a number of private meetings with management, to learn more about human resource planning for the health and social services system, the background for the current medical travel escort policy, the current status of ground ambulance and highway rescue services in the NWT, NTHSSA operational planning based on the system strategic framework, and collaborative work with the GNWT to improve the long-term system sustainability.

### **16.0 NTHSSA Operational Plan**

Council reviewed a proposal for NTHSSA to adopt a 2-year Operational Plan for 2022/23 and 2023/24, subject to an annual update, to synchronize NTHSSA planning with the Department of Health and Social Services strategic and business planning cycle.

A draft 2-year Plan will be presented for approval at the next quarterly meeting of the Leadership Council in February or March 2022, to be released with system Budgets in April of 2022.

Members discussed the value of a Board of Management strategic plan that would provide vision and guidance to tie together NTHSSA operational planning, budgeting and system sustainability planning, all based on DHSS strategic and business plans. Council agreed to move forward with a Board strategic plan as soon as possible to meet Spring 2022 timelines for other system plans.

The Leadership Council formally endorsed the proposed approach above.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority agreed the next NTHSSA Operational Plan will cover the 2-year planning horizon of 2022-2024, and will be reviewed for approval at the next quarterly Leadership Council meeting.

**Motion: Mr. Blondin**

**Second: Mr. Willows**

**LC21/12-008 – Carried Unanimously**

### **17.0 Leadership Council Meeting Evaluation**

The Leadership Council completed the meeting evaluation forms and returned them to the Senior Advisor, Governance for tracking, follow up.

### **18.0 In-Camera Session**

No additional in-camera session was required.

### **19.0 Reflection, Prayer**

Ms. Dolphus offered a closing prayer in her language.

### **20.0 Adjournment**

The Leadership Council formally ended its business and closed its meeting at 4:03 pm.

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Leadership Council of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority closed its December 1-2, 2021 meeting.

**Motion: Ms. Gruben**

**Second: Ms. Trotter**

**LC21/12-009 – Carried Unanimously**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Approval Signature

February 17, 2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date