

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

HSS HOT TOPICS		Joint Note
1	Accomplishments – HSS	
2	Budget – HSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTEs • Federal funding • NGO Agreement Management • SUHE • Hospital 	
3	Health Human Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Federal Funding • Education and Bursaries • Retention Bonuses • Working Groups 	
4	Health and Wellness Yukon (PPF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships • Staff 	
5	Joint Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan • MMIWG – Yukon Strategy • SART 	Joint
6	MAID <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committee 	
7	Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Nurses • Bursaries • Education • Inter Professional Practices and Chief Nursing Officer • Nurse Practitioners • Recruitment • Shortages 	
8	Physicians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts • Claims & Billing 	

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee-for-Services • Find a Primary Care Provider Program (Family Doctor Program) • Licensing and International Medical Graduates • Medical Walk-in Clinic • Memorandum of Understanding 	
9	Safer Supply and Prescribing (Opioids) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding Safer Supply • Prescribing Authorities • Opioid Treatment Services 	
10	Substance Use Health Emergency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to Date • Alcohol Strategy • Awareness Campaign • Car 867 • Community Outreach • Coroner's Report • Decriminalization of Substances • Managed Alcohol Program • Mental Wellness Summit • Naloxone • Out-of-Territory Treatment • Overdose Outreach Team • SUAP • Supervised Consumption Site • Youth Roots 	
Capital		
15	Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellness Centre • 10-Plex Housing Unit 	
Continuing Care		
18	Continuing Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridges to Home • Communities • Dementia Care • National Care Standards 	

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term Care Staffing • Thomson Centre 	
Health Professionals		
21	Midwifery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Compensation • Implementation plan and Model of Care • Regulation • Solstice Maternity • Staffing 	
22	Pediatrician Services	
23	Pharmacists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded Scope • Initial Prescribing Program • Pharmaceutical Markup 	
24	Psychiatry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • ECT and Ketamine 	
Medical Services		
27	Bilingual Health Centre (Constellation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client Application • Model of Care • Program Launch and Space • Staffing and recruitment 	
28	Chronic Conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Conditions Support Program • Diabetes 	
29	Dental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itinerant Dentist • Yukon Children's Dental Program • Yukon Dental Program (CASA) • Federal Program 	
30	EMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambulances 	

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities • Drug Testing • Shortages • Code Red/Yellow • Training • Transfer to HSS 	
31	Gender and Reproductive Health Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abortion (US Residents) • Birth Control • Endometriosis • Fertility Treatments • Gender-Affirming Care • PAP Tests • Period Products • Syphilis 	
32	Insured Health Coverage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby Formula / EpiPens Coverage • Biosimilars • The Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan • Children's Drug and Optical Program • Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program • Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits Program • Pharmaceutical Announcement 	
35	Medical Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Coordination • Medical Travel Review and Putting People First • Residences 	
36	Specialized Medical Treatments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Shortages • Hemodialysis • Spirometry • Trikafta 	
Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services		
39	NGO Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Genders Yukon 	

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood Ties • CMHA-Y (CASA) • Opportunities Yukon • Queer Yukon • Second Opinion Society 	
40	Land-Based Healing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives 	
41	Services (Communities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub Wait Times • Carmacks • Dawson City • Haines Junction/ Carcross • Watson Lake • Community Aftercare • Roots of Hope 	
42	Services (Whitehorse) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team • Counselling Services • Forensic Complex Care Team • Intensive Treatment Services • Psychiatric Outreach Program • Referred Care Clinic • Overdose Outreach Team • Supervised Consumption Site • Withdrawal Management 	
Public Health		
45	COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosters • CEMA/ PHSA Review • Communication • Public reporting • Self-isolation and facilities • Testing • Treatment • Vaccination 	

46	Vaccinations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Vaccines • Flu Vaccines • HPV Vaccines • MPox (Imvamune) • RSV • Shingrix • Travel Vaccines • Youth and Childhood Vaccines 	
47	Environmental Health Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmacks boil water advisory • Lodgepole Lane property • Sewage Disposal Systems (Dawson) 	
Seniors		
49	Aging in Place Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress 	
50	Seniors Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation • Normandy • Vimy 	
Social Services		
53	211 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership 	
54	Disability Services – Caregiver Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregiver Benefit • Disability Services Redesign & PPF Recommendations • Employment and Training Services 	
55	Family and Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report • Federal Compensation and Welfare Reform • Implementation of <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> • Prenatal Nutrition Funding 	
56	Food Security and Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities 	

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hotel • Meals on Wheels 	
57	Housing and Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Shelters • Funding NGO's • Hotels • Housing First • Housing Stock • OAG Report • High Country Inn (Safe at Home) • Supportive Housing (Cornerstone, Housing First, Watson Lake) • 405 Alexander 	
58	Income Supports (Social Assistance) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Benefit Exemption • Guaranteed Annual Income • Inflation • Pioneer Utility Grant (PUG) • Seniors Income Supplement • Rising Rental Costs • Social Assistance and Rate Review 	
Yukon Hospital Corporation		
61	1Health	
62	Hospital Corporation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Positions • COVID-19 • Discharges • Mental Wellness Unit • Staffing • Staff Survey 	
63	Specialist Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiology • MRI • OBGYNs • Ophthalmology • Orthopedic 	



HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SPRING 2023 Session Notes

	• Surgery Slowdown	
CORPORATE NOTES (GOVERNMENT-WIDE)		Lead Dept.
66	Housing Issues	YHC
67	Our Clean Future (Climate Strategy)	ENV
68	Inflation/Affordability	FIN/ECO
69	TRC Recommendations (progress)	ECO
70	Budget Highlights	FIN
71	2022-23 Supplementary Overview	FIN

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

Budget:

- In 2023-24, we are budgeting **\$512.3M** (\$512,302,000) in the Department of Health and Social Services.
- There are **1,573 (1573.4) FTEs** within the department.

Community and Primary Care:

- Worked closely with the Francophone community to open the **Centre de santé Constellation Health Centre** in Whitehorse (November 2022).
- Launched the **ColonCheck screening program** (March 2017).
- Introduced a trial **home health monitoring program for Yukoners living with COPD** (January 2017) to assist with monitoring their health from their homes and communities.
- **Midwifery:** Approved the *Midwives Regulation* and standards of practice (April 2021) and passed the *Midwifery Integration Amendments Act* to allow Registered Midwives to work to their full scope of practice (fall 2022).
- Launched **Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services** (May 2018).
 - Provided funding to Blood Ties Four directions to purchase and equip the **outreach van** (March 2019).
 - Released the first **Opioid Action Plan** (November 2018).
 - Opened four **Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Hubs** to service Yukon communities (spring 2018). Hubs opened in Watson Lake (March 2018); Dawson City (April 2018); and Carmacks and in Haines Junction (April 2018).
 - **Free naloxone** kits become available (February 2017). Today, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services provides nasal and injectable naloxone, and training to pharmacies, communities, partners, and the general public.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- Provided funding to **Queer Yukon** to hire a **health care navigator position** to support 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners by removing barriers and helping to identify pathways to care (November 2022).
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services assumed operations of the **Referred Care Clinic** (2018), as well as added all Opioid Treatment Services to the clinic.
- Joined the national **Roots of Hope** suicide prevention initiative (September 2021).
- Opened a **Supervised Consumption Site** in Whitehorse (September 2021) with Blood Ties Four Directions, and expanded services to include **inhalation** as a method of consumption (May 2022).
- Provided funding to the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon to increase mental health supports by offering extended hours of operation for the seven-days per week **walk-in mental health clinic**.
- Increased funding for primary health care services in communities to introduce **Nurse Practitioners** and dedicated public health nurses in several communities.
- **Preventative treatments:** Publicly funded Shingrix and PrEP (January 2021), and increased eligibility for the HPV vaccine (April 2017). In 2022, the **second annual CanAge Adult Vaccination Report** noted that the Yukon was the most improved Canadian jurisdiction (February 2022) for enhancements to the territory's vaccination program.
- Announced a **\$6M nurse retention and bonus package** for Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Licensed Practical Nurses employed by the Government of Yukon (December 2022).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- Launched the **Sexualized Assault Response Team** initiative (March 2020).

Continuing Care / Seniors:

- Released the *Aging in Place: Action Plan* (September 2020).
 - 55 of the 56 recommendations are either operational, in progress, or in development.
- Twenty two actions are complete as of January 2023, including:
 - integrated intergenerational programming with pre-school and school-age children in long-term care homes;
 - connected seniors with technology literacy training in partnership with Yukon Learn;
 - finalized a new agreement to recruit seniors for the tutoring program offered by Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon; and,
 - implemented a virtual exercise program, available to seniors enrolled in the Chronic Conditions Support Program.
 - establishing an Aging in Place Seniors Advisory Committee;
 - maintaining high-quality infection control practices in long-term care homes;
 - opening Wind River Hospice at Whistle Bend Place;
 - implementing the Shine a Light on Dementia program to provide education and training to support caregivers (available in both French and English);
 - developing a new Rural End-of-Life Care program which offers direct funding to Yukoners in rural communities who have a progressive, life-limiting illness and are at end-of-life;
 - engaging Yukoners in a review of the Travel for Medical Treatment Program;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Accomplishments**Health and Social
Services

- completing a service evaluation to ensure that Senior Services and Adult Protection Services are effective and accessible;
- expanding the Handy Bus service in Whitehorse to offer seven days per week of service and funding provided for the operational costs of a second bus anticipated to be operational in July of 2023;
- implementing best practices for ongoing vaccination schedules for seniors and Elders, such as publicly funding Shingrix for all Yukoners 65 – 79 years old, offering the Fluzone High Dose vaccine to eligible long-term care residents, and ensuring long-term care residents were among the first Yukoners eligible for COVID-19 boosters.
- Expanded the **Community Day Program** at Whistle Bend Place (April 2021).
- Established a **First Nations Advisory Committee** to review policies and provide input into services.
- Working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to integrate two **long-term care beds within the Watson Lake Community Hospital** (November 2022).
- Partnered with the Yukon Housing Corporation to support the development of **Normandy Living**, which officially opened in December 2022.
- **Renovated Thomson Centre** to add ten additional long-term care beds (March 2018).
- Introduced the **respite and reablement** unit at Thomson Centre (October 2018).
- Opened and staffed **Whistle Bend Place** (September 2018).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- Fund **\$76K** (76,288.98) in the 2022-23 fiscal year to the Yukon Council on Aging for the **Seniors Information Centre** to provide up-to-date information to Yukon Seniors on all relevant seniors' Federal, Territorial and Municipal programs and services.
- **Demonstrated a commitment to reconciliation and honoured the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** by reading one call to action, as outlined in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Videos of the calls being read were posted on the Department of Health and Social Services' Facebook page for 94 days leading up to September 30, 2022, and used to initiate discussions about culturally safe and appropriate care with staff and residents of the Yukon's long-term care homes (June 2022).

Insured Health:

- Permanently funded **Continuous Glucose Monitors** for all Yukoners living with type 1 diabetes, and **Flash Glucose Monitors** for Yukoners living with type 1 diabetes over the age of 18 (October 2020).
- In partnership with the Yukon T1D Support Network collected public input towards the development of a type 1 **diabetes strategy**.
- Launched the **Yukon Dental Program** on January 4, 2023, to provide \$1,300 per year in dental benefits to eligible Yukoners.
- In partnership with the Yukon Medical Association, started the **Find a Primary Care Provider** program (November 2019), which has connected 1,238 Yukoners with a physician.
- Became a nationally leader in providing access to **gender-affirming care services** (2021) and completed regulatory amendments to allow Yukoners to receive health care insurance coverage for gender-affirming care that is provided through private facilities (December 2022).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

-
- **Medical travel:** Created a Care Coordination and Medical Travel Unit; doubled the medical travel subsidy and indexed it to inflation; removed gateway cities.
 - Reduced barriers for accessing **Mifegymiso** by publicly funding this medication used for medical abortion (October 2018).
 - Negotiated a new pharmaceutical markup and cap with Yukon **pharmacists** (November 2020), and continue to work to further integrate pharmacists into our health care system. Supported expansion of pharmacist's scope to allow pharmacists to deliver some vaccines, prescribe for minor ailments, extend prescriptions, and deliver controlled substances, amongst others (June 2022).
 - Increased resident **psychiatric specialist services** and introduced a new model of care (January 2020).
 - **Trikafta**, a drug for cystic fibrosis, added to the Yukon's Drug Formulary for coverage (October 2021).
 - Worked with the **World Professional Association for Transgender Health** to provide education and training to Yukon health professionals (June 2019).
 - Reached a new three-year agreement with the **Yukon Medical Association on the next Memorandum of Understanding**, which included a new Attachment and Attraction program. (October 2022). This agreement will work to increase Yukoner's access to primary and specialty care, while supporting physician's operating costs. The agreement also saw the creation of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Learning Program and a commitment to end help end systemic racism and discrimination in the Yukon's health care system; and a commitment to work with Yukon First Nations, health system partners and providers to support collaborative maternity and early years care.
-

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Accomplishments**Health and Social
Services

Social Services / Family and Children:

- Matched federal funding to the eight **Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs** and provided funding to the Council of Yukon First Nations to develop prenatal and infant supports (November 2021).
- Completed amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act* which came into force on November 30, 2022.
- In partnership with Indigenous Services Canada, Yukon First Nations, and the Council of Yukon First Nations launched the **Cultural Connections Project** (February 2022) for Yukon First Nations and Indigenous children in out-of-home care.
- Income Support Services transitioned to person-centered service delivery staffed primarily by social workers and implemented a new case management system in 2018.
- In 2018, the Developmental Diagnostic and Support Clinic expanded its mandate to include **autism spectrum disorder** assessments and diagnosis for school aged children.
- Aligned **Children's Disability Services and Adult Disability Services** in 2016 to facilitate a lifespan approach to providing supports and services.
- In 2018, Disability Services opened **Aurora House**, a group home for three women living with FASD.
- In 2019, Disability Services opened **Max's Place**, a group residence based on a harm reduction model for three adults living with FASD.
- Increased direct operating grant funding to **Early Learning and Child Care Centres** (February 2018) for the first time since 2008.
- Increased financial assistance provided through **Extended Family Care Agreements** to match funding levels received by foster parents (November 2017).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Plan** released in September 2019.
- With the Council of Yukon First Nations and First Nations governments, committed to the **Honouring Connections** initiative (December 2019) to address systemic over-representation of First Nations children in the child-welfare system, advance reconciliation, and promote reunification with family, community and culture.
- Provided social assistance and Seniors Income Supplement clients with a one-time \$150 top-up **payment to address inflation** and the rising cost of living (November 2022).
 - Provided Pioneer Utility Grant recipients for the 2022 calendar year with a one-time 10% top-up payment, which was distributed in February 2023.
- Increased access to emergency shelter facilities through the provision of low-barrier, trauma-informed, and culturally-appropriate emergency shelter and drop-in services at **405 Alexander** since 2019 as well as opening the **men's shelter in Dawson City** with Tron'dek Hwech'in in 2019.
 - Transferred the operations of 405 Alexander (October 2022) to Connective in partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations.
- Increased access to supportive housing including opening units at **Housing First Residence** on Wood St. in 2019 and at the Shelter in 2020, added new residential supports in territory for adults with disabilities, and opened Cornerstone housing with supported independent living services in June 2022.

Yukon Hospital Corporation:

- Supported the opening of the **new Emergency Department** at Whitehorse General Hospital (January 2018).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- Developed an **Ophthalmology** wait time strategy with the Yukon Hospital Corporation (January 2019).
 - Cataract assessment wait times reduced to four months.
 - 870 cataract surgeries completed between 2019 and 2020.
 - 450 cataract surgeries completed in 2021.
- Increased Ophthalmology funding to support 600 cataract surgeries per year moving forward (March 2020).
- Launched and expanded the **Orthopedic Program** at Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - Introduced two resident orthopedic surgeons and supported the program to access a third surgeon with services provided by a series of locums.
 - Completed the first in-territory hip replacement surgery (November 2021).
- Launched **1Health** in Yukon Hospitals (December 2021).
- Began collaboration on the Bridge-to-Home quality improvement initiative to improve care transitions for patients from hospital to home and community with support from Healthcare Excellence Canada and the British Columbia Patient Safety and Quality Council (October 2022).

Other:

- Conducted a **Comprehensive Review** of the Yukon's health and social care system (November 2020).
 - Accepted the Independent Expert Panels' 76 recommendations in the *Putting People First* report (August 2020).
 - Released the first Putting People First Annual Report on November 23, 2022.
 - To date, 14 actions are operational and 39 actions are in progress.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- We have commenced work on developing Health and Wellness Yukon.
- Transferred **Early Learning and Child Care** to the Department of Education as part of our implementation of universal childcare for Yukon families (April 2021).
- Guided the Yukon through the **COVID-19 response**, quickly introducing:
 - The largest vaccine rollout in the Yukon's history. Developed the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy for the Yukon (December 2020) and became the first Canadian capital city to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to the general public (March 2021). Continue to deliver COVID-19 vaccines throughout the Yukon and in a central dedicated vaccine clinic in Whitehorse.
 - Delivering COVID-19 testing resources, including by opening a Respiratory Assessment Centre (March 2020), which became the COVID Testing and Assessment Centre; operating a drive-thru testing service; offering COVID testing in communities; and, by making at-home tests widely available to Yukoners.
 - Worked with the Yukon Medical Association to establish new virtual care options for Yukoners in response to COVID-19.
 - Supports for vulnerable populations.
 - Working with health and social care system partners to provide access to care, develop surge plans, and ensure the health and safety of Yukoners.
 - Released the *Charting the Course: Living with and managing COVID-19* to outline a sustainable approach to managing COVID-19 moving forward (November 2022).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Accomplishments

Health and Social
Services

- Supported the Post COVID-19 Working Group to release an online resource for Yukoners living with **post COVID-19 condition** (November 2022).
- As part of the response to the **Substance Use Health Emergency** declared on January 20, 2022, we have worked with all levels of governments, Yukon First Nations, and non-government organizations.
 - In 2022, we have hosted **two Mental Wellness Summits** (February and September 2022) that were attended by over 550 participants in February and nearly 350 participants in September.
 - Expanding **safer supply**, including by improving access to safer supply for clients through Opioid Treatment Services and by working with physicians and Nurse Practitioners.
 - Worked with our partners to increase access to **nasal and injectable naloxone** in all Yukon communities, as well as fentanyl testing kits.
 - Installed Brave alarms at 405 Alexander in single bathrooms and shower stalls.
 - On July 25, 2022 we launched a new **Overdose Outreach Team** through the Referred Care Clinic to provide harm reduction education, system navigation and connection to services related to substance use, and outreach to individuals at high risk of opioid overdose or those who have recently overdosed.
 - Launched the mobile crisis team, **Car 867**, in partnership with the RCMP (November 2022) to respond to calls related to mental health and suicide.
 - Launched the **Put the Person First campaign and the Support is Here for You campaign** to increase awareness of substance use supports (November 2022).

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Accomplishments**Health and Social
Services

- Hosted the Youth Roots: A Substance Use Prevention Gathering to discuss and promote approaches to prevent youth substance use (November 2022).
- Working in partnership with United Way Yukon to provide the free and confidential **211** helpline service to help connect Yukoners with available services and supports.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Budget**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring that Yukoners are supported by an accountable government that is fiscally responsible while investing in targeted measures to support the health and wellbeing of Yukoners.

Key messages:

- Our government is committed to ensuring Yukoners have access to the services and supports they need.
- We are providing a responsible and transparent budget that responds to the health and social care priorities of Yukoners.
- We have worked with our health and social care system partners, including the Yukon Hospital Corporation to meet core funding needs and improve access to services and supports.
- Alongside other provincial and territorial governments, we continue to work with the federal government to discuss funding, so that we may advance the Yukon's priorities.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$512.3M** (\$512,302,000) in the Department of Health and Social Services O&M.
 - This is an increase of **\$6.65M** (\$6,654,000) over the 2022-23 Main Estimates and represents an increase of 1.32%.
- In 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$15.9M** (\$15,933,000) for Capital expenditures.
 - This is a decrease of **\$1.7M** (\$1,662,000) over the 2022-23 Main Estimates and represents a **decrease** of **9.45%**.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Budget

Health and Social
Services

- Since 2017-18, the Department of Health and Social Services' O&M budget has increased from **\$373.35M** (\$373,349,000) to **\$512.3M** (\$512,302,000)
 - Between the 2020-21 and 2022-23 fiscal years, a projected total of **\$91.5M** (\$91,468,872) was spent over three years for the COVID-19 response.
- There is **\$55.6M** (\$55,569,000) of funding available in 2023-24 from the federal government through the Canada Health Transfer.
 - The federal government has also provided a one-time top up of \$2.2M through the Canada Health Transfer during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- We anticipate receiving an additional **\$20.8M** this fiscal year through federal transfers including \$10M through the Territorial Health Investment Fund, \$7.5M through bilateral agreements, and \$3.3M in funding for Proof of Vaccination.

FTE Summary:

Health and Social Services FTEs – Mains Budgets					
Fiscal Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total FTE Count	1,413.90	1,419.13	1,526.53	1,677.3	1,573.4
Change from Prior Fiscal Year	61.45	5.23	107.40	63.50	(103.90)

*(FTE counts between 2017-18 and 2021-22 do not include re-stated positions from EMS)

Budgeted FTEs:

- During the 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years, FTE changes were required to ensure the department had the capacity to respond effectively and quickly to the challenges of COVID-19.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Budget**Health and Social
Services

- As we shift away from the acute stage of the pandemic, we are adjusting our FTE count to reflect our ongoing needs while ensuring we remain responsive to the public health needs of Yukoners.
- In 2023-24, there are **1,573.4 FTEs** in the department compared to **1,677.3 FTEs** in the 2022-23 Main Estimates, inclusive of EMS. There is a decrease of **103.9 FTEs** between 2023-24 and 2022-23.
 - There is a decrease of 144.9 FTEs. This reduction is primarily driven by the transfer of 405 Alexander to Connective and the removal of the 103.4 temporary FTEs introduced in 2022-23.
 - There is also an increase of 41.0 FTEs. This increase is driven by permanently integrating 31.0 front-line, service delivery-oriented FTEs across the department to respond to ongoing and future public health challenges and maintain best practices learned during the COVID-19 response.
- 87.3 FTEs for EMS were transferred from Community Services to Health and Social Services in 2023-24.
- Since the 2017-18 fiscal year, FTE changes have been primarily driven by major initiatives such as:
 - In 2017-18, staffing Sarah Steele and expanding MacDonald Lodge, as well as the Thomson Centre Respite and Reablement Unit.
 - In 2018-19, staffing the first phase of Whistle Bend Place and increasing access to Home Care.
 - In 2019-20, staffing 405 Alexander and the second phase of Whistle Bend Place.
 - In 2021-22, FTE increases were related to the Yukon's response to COVID-19 and our vaccination rollout.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Budget**Health and Social
Services

- In 2022-23, there were 103.4 temporary FTEs, including 82.80 for the COVID-19 response.

Federal Funding:

- We continue to emphasize the unique needs of northern, rural, and remote areas and the challenges associated with health care service delivery in the territory, including during negotiations on bilateral funding agreements.
- New investments announced by the federal government in early February 2023 are informed by shared health indicators such as:
 - access to primary health care providers;
 - COVID-19 surgery backlogs;
 - net changes to the number of health care providers;
 - wait times for mental health and substance use services;
 - the percentage of youth between the ages of 12 and 25 with access to integrated youth services for mental health and substance use; and,
 - the percentage of Yukoners with a mental disorder who have unmet mental health care needs.
- Additionally, provinces and territories will commit to adopting standards and policies related to personal health information, as well as streamlining foreign credentials for internationally educated health professionals.
 - The Government of Canada's funding offer did not contain any requirements for provinces or territories to adopt a Digital ID.
 - Sharing personal health information is not part of our discussions with the federal government.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Budget

Health and Social
Services

- Rules related to the sharing, use and collection of personal health information is set out in the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act*.

NGO Agreement Management:

- The Department of Health and Social Services' Social Supports branch provides over **\$16M** of funding to non-government organizations in the territory to deliver services to Yukoners.
 - In 2022-23, we provided **\$13.1M** (\$13,108,990) to non-government organizations to address homelessness.
- In November 2021, the Department of Health and Social Services engaged a contractor to conduct a review of the management of agreements within the Social Supports branch, which identified several key concerns.
- The Office of the Auditor General of Canada report on housing in the Yukon released in May 2022 also included a recommendation to improve the oversight of funding agreements.
- We have made significant efforts to address these issues and improve the management and accountability of non-government organizations, including:
 - establishing a working group to focus on system and process improvements;
 - advancing work to prepare a management methodology and guidebook;
 - shifting toward more outcome focused reporting and deliverables; and
 - creating an Agreement Manager position dedicated to tracking and managing agreements for Social Services.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Budget

Health and Social
Services

- We continue explore additional opportunities to improve reporting requirements for agreements to understand outcomes, including the requirement for logic models and performance measurement frameworks.

Substance Use Health Emergency Funding:

- In 2021-22, our government provided an initial **\$1M** to launch the Supervised Consumption Site in fall 2022.
- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, our government provided a temporary increase of **\$3.4M** to assist with our response to the Substance Use Health Emergency, which included:
 - \$1.798M for Mental Wellness and Social Supports in response to the Substance Use Health Emergency;
 - \$122K in Mental Wellness bilateral funding;
 - \$397K for new nursing positions within Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services and Community Nursing;
 - \$193K in additional funding for the Supervised Consumption Site;
 - \$856K for Safer Supply; and,
 - \$55K for new Substance Use and Addictions Programs.
- This additional funding for the Substance Use Health Emergency complimented our established and ongoing Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' funding, which was budgeted as **\$25.3M** during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- The second supplementary budget also included an increase of **\$590K** for mental wellness and substance use initiatives. This funding is being used to support initiatives, including:
 - The Mental Wellness Summit Phase Two in September 2022;
 - A three-day on the land gathering with the Nelson Project;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Budget**Health and Social
Services

- Hives for Watson Lake Project;
- To support Roots of Hope to work with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Wellness Department on suicide prevention training;
- The Support is Here for You Campaign.
- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, we have budgeted **\$25.7M** for Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services. We have also moved to permanently integrated some of the temporary supports introduced during the 2022-23 fiscal year into our routine programming.
- Through this permanent integration of **\$660K** for 6.0 FTEs in Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, we are ensuring that the Yukon remains prepared to respond to the Substance Use Health Emergency and meet the mental wellness needs of Yukoners moving forward.
- The overall budget for Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services is being used to deliver a variety of programs across our Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Community Hubs as well as our Whitehorse based programs.
 - This funding is also used to support land-based healing initiatives, support the new Car 867, support an opioid overdose prevention team, make Naloxone available across the Yukon, and to fund several NGO partners, including Blood Ties Four Directions.
- We also provide funding to psychiatrists and local physicians who service the Referred Care Clinic, and we also provide funding for medical travel coverage to access some pre-approved out-of-territory mental wellness and substance use services at approved facilities.
- In 2023-24, our government has budgeted **\$12.2M** to the Yukon Hospital Corporation's construction of a new Mental Wellness Unit (Short Stay Psychiatric Unit / Secure Medical Unit).

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Budget

Health and Social
Services

Yukon Hospital Corporation funding:

- We value our relationship with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and we continue to ensure that we work collaboratively and in partnership as we support and respond to the health needs of Yukoners.
- Year over year we have provided funding through core and additional TPAs commiserate with the total identified needs of the Yukon Hospital Corporation.
- Throughout the 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years, we have worked with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to meet and exceed all funding requests identified during the Main and supplementary budgetary exercises.
- We understand that we are in unprecedented times as we emerge from the acute COVID crisis, face inflationary pressure and address a worldwide HHR crisis, and to that end and in the spirit of partnership we maintain an ongoing cooperative relationship to anticipate new or emerging pressures.
- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, we budgeted **\$93.64M** (\$93,637,000) for Yukon Hospital Services O&M, as well as **\$12.2M** (\$12,200,000) in Capital expenditures for a combined total of **\$105.84M** (\$105,837,000).
 - This is an increase of **\$4.62M** (\$4,617,000) compared to the 2022-23 fiscal year and represents an increase of **5.19%**.
 - Since the 2017-18 fiscal year, we have increased the Yukon Hospital Services O&M funding from \$70.6M (\$70,592,000) to \$93.64M (\$93,637,000), which is an increase of **32.64%**.
- Between 2020-21 and 2022-23, our government provided a total of **\$16.4M** (\$16,369,868) in additional funding to the Yukon Hospital Corporation in direct response to COVID-19 related pressures.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Budget

Health and Social
Services

- In 2022-23, funding for the Mental Wellness Unit (Short Stay Psychiatric Unit) was deferred as the Yukon Hospital Corporation was required to delay construction, so that designs could be updated to address seismic concerns.
 - Our government has included **\$12.2M** in the 2023-24 Main Estimates for this build, which is expected to commence construction this spring.
- While the majority of funding for the Yukon Hospital Corporation is provided through the Yukon Hospital Services O&M and Capital budget, additional funding is also provided through other channels.
- As of March 14, 2023, we had provided **\$97M** (\$96,558,370) to the Yukon Hospital Corporation in 2022-23, including O&M funding, as well as funding through other Transfer Payment Agreements (**see tabled**). The additional funding provided through Transfer Payment Agreements has not yet been finalized for the 2022-23 fiscal year, and we anticipate this amount will bring total funding to over \$100M. We also provided \$5.7M in capital funding to the Hospital Corporation.

Session Briefing Note

Budget

TAB 2

Spring 2023

Health and Social
Services

Core Funding	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Core Agreement Funding	85,555,000	\$88,295,000	\$93,637,000
TPA and other revenue outside core	4,091,762	\$5,409,584	TBD
COVID	7,663,000		N/A
Patient Revenue that flows through HSS	3,477,223	\$2,853,786	TBD
Total Funding and Revenue via HSS	100,786,985	96,558,370	93,637,000
YHC Revenue	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Revenue Outside of HSS	9,011,015	\$9,229,630	TBD
Total YHC Revenue	109,798,000	105,788,000	93,637,000

*As of March 14, 2023

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health Human Resources**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon remains committed to building healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities using a person-centered approach to wellness to help Yukoners thrive.

Key messages:

- The health human resource crisis is one of the greatest challenges facing Canada and the Yukon's healthcare systems today.
- Domestically and globally, we are facing unprecedented challenges including a dwindling supply of healthcare workers.
- These challenges have been further exacerbated by COVID-19.
- The Government of Yukon recognizes the seriousness of these shortages and is working internally and with partners across the health system including federal, provincial, and territorial governments to respond to this crisis.

Key facts:

- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, we have committed to allocating **\$2M** during the 2023-24 fiscal year to enhance recruitment and retention of new healthcare professionals across the Yukon. This includes funding to support the following initiatives:
 - **\$649K** (\$649,000) for Nurse Retention and Recruitment Incentives;
 - **500K** (\$500,000) to develop a cross-sectoral Yukon Health Human Resources Strategy;
 - **\$464K** (\$464,000) for Community Nursing and Nurse Practitioner funding; and,
 - **\$387K** (\$387,000) for 3.8 FTEs for Human Resources.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health Human Resources**Health and Social
Services

- As of March 20, 2023, Community Nursing is experiencing a vacancy rate of 36.5% for Primary Health Care Nurses.
 - Pre-pandemic the vacancy rate for community nurses averaged around 5%.
- On December 1, 2022, we announced a new **\$6M** package of retention and signing bonuses for nurses employed by the Government of Yukon.
- We have provided \$50,000 to the Yukon Medical Association to financially support a physician locum recruiter.

Additional Federal Funding:

- New investments announced by the federal government in early February will support shared health-related priorities which includes addressing the health human resources crisis.
- We continue to emphasize the unique needs of Northern, rural, and remote areas and the challenges associated with health care service delivery in the territory during negotiations on bilateral funding agreements, and during ongoing national conversations on health human resource strategies, initiatives and plans.

Education and Bursaries:**Bursaries**

- Our commitments related to recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in the 2023 Confidence Supply and Agreement includes the delivery of programs aimed at supporting students pursuing studies in medical fields who commit to returning to work in the Yukon after graduation.
- Currently, our bursary programs do not include a Return of Service Agreement that requires graduates to return to the Yukon to deliver care.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Health Human Resources

Health and Social
Services

- Our government is committed and working to expand our programs to create greater incentives for students to return to work in the Yukon, and to fulfilling our commitments as part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement.
- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Department of Health and Social Services has budgeted **\$89K** (\$89,000) through the Medical Education Bursary, the Nursing Education Bursary, and the Health Profession Education Bursary programs to provide financial supports for up to 16 new recipients each year.
 - During the 2014-15 fiscal year, a total of **\$49K** (49,000) was budgeted for these bursaries to support up to 12 new recipients per year.
- In 2022-23, all 13 Yukoners who applied for a bursary received one for a total of **\$54K** (\$54,000) in bursaries being administered.
 - **\$16,500** went to 5 students pursuing nursing education;
 - **\$22,500** went to 4 medical students (including family medicine); and,
 - **\$15,500** went to 4 students in other health care professions including 2 students pursuing licensed practical nursing.
- Based on recent applicant numbers, the number of bursaries is meeting the current level of interest.
- We are also working to explore opportunities to spread awareness about available bursaries for Yukoners pursuing health educations, including by attending the Meet the Funders Event hosted by Economic Development on March 8, 2023.
- For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Department of Health and Social Services provided **\$150K** (\$150,000) to the Yukon Registered Nurses Association who administers the Continuing Nurse Education Fund.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health Human Resources**Health and Social
Services

- Yukon residents studying medicine or intending to study medicine can apply to other funding programs administered by the Canadian Medical Foundation, the First Nations Health Program at Whitehorse General Hospital, and the Yukon Foundation.
- Starting next year, the Government of Canada is also offering a student loan forgiveness program for doctors and nurses who reside in a community with a population of 50,000 or less to entice more doctors and nurses to rural communities.

Education:

- In partnership with the Departments of Education and Economic Development, we also continue to work with Yukon University to expand programming to support Yukoners in communities to pursue health-related careers.
- The Government of Yukon funds Yukon University to offer a Practical Nurse Diploma whose graduates are a valuable addition to the health care work force in the Yukon.
- We are also working with the Government of Canada to explore ways that internationally trained health providers can be integrated into our health system to help relieve some of the pressures resulting from the health human resources crisis.

Retention Bonuses:

- As of March 22, 2023, a total of 308 nurses employed by the Department of Health and Social Services have been paid the Immediate Retention Bonus and 6 have been paid a Signing Bonus.
- Over the next two years, retention and recruitment bonuses will be provided to Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Licensed

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Health Human Resources

Health and Social
Services

Practical Nurses, who are in a position requiring a nursing designation and performing nursing duties for the Government of Yukon as of December 1, 2022.

- This new bonus package serves to address the wage gap we face with other Canadian jurisdictions, and helps us with the ongoing recruitment and retention challenges we are facing by creating tools to effectively attract and retain staff to serve our communities.
- This is not a reflection of the appreciation for the hundreds of other frontline care workers who work tirelessly to contribute to the health, safety, wellbeing, and care of Yukoners.
 - These staff can never be replaced, and we thank each and every one of them.
- We understand that some of our nursing staff have raised questions about the administration of these allowances. This has been brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Social Services, who is working closely with the Public Service Commission to respond to these concerns as quickly as possible.
- The administration of these allowances is consistent with our delivery of other allowances and in accordance with other nursing retention letters of understanding within the Yukon Employees Union Collective Agreement.
- The Public Service Commission has received four grievances associated with these bonuses and they will be managed through normal grievance processes.
- **Immediate retention bonuses:**
 - Registered Nurses (including Primary Health Care Nurses / Primary Health Care Nurses-in-Charge) or Nurse Practitioners performing nursing duties in a position requiring a nurse

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health Human Resources**Health and Social
Services

designation as of December 1, 2022 are receiving a one-time lump sum Immediate Retention bonus of up-to \$15,000.

- Licensed Practical Nurses performing nursing duties in a position requiring a nurse designation as of December 1, 2022, are receiving a one-time lump sum Immediate Retention bonus of up-to \$8,000.
- **Expanded scope bonuses:**
 - Primary Health Care Nurses performing work outside of Whitehorse will receive up to an additional \$10,000 under the Expanded Scope Bonus, in addition to the immediate one-time Retention bonus and Annual Retention bonus.
 - In addition to this Expanded Scope Bonus, Primary Health Care Nurses-in-Charge are eligible for an additional \$10,000 Bonus.
 - This is also in addition to the immediate one-time Retention bonus and Annual Retention bonus.
- **Signing bonuses:**
 - New Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners who accept a Permanent or Term position with a 12-month return of service agreement will receive a \$7,500 signing bonus.
 - New Licensed Practical Nurses who accept a Permanent or Term position with a 12-month return of service agreement will receive a \$4,500 signing bonus.
- **Exam Fees:**
 - Reimbursement of exam fees, within the past 24 months of date of offer, for new nursing graduates hired after December 1, 2022, by the Government of Yukon.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health Human Resources**Health and Social
Services

Working Groups:

- An effective health human resources strategy requires collaboration from multiple government departments and stakeholders.
- The Government of Yukon is establishing a new Yukon Health Human Resources Steering Committee consisting of representatives from across numerous departments, as well as the Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon University, doctors, nurses and First Nations representatives.
- This Committee will develop a Yukon Health Human Resource strategy to address all aspects of the health human resources crisis.
- Committee members will be expected to help coordinate, support and influence Health Human Resource work underway in their respective organizations so that it aligns with the Committee's recommendations and priorities.
- The Committee will be looking at all aspects of Health Human Resources including recruitment, retention, planning and innovation.
- The work of this committee aligns with the ongoing collaborative efforts of Federal, Provincial, and Territorial governments, which are supported by the recent the federal investments and identify the health human resources crisis as a shared priority.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health and Wellness Yukon (PPF)**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to creating a person-centered health care system and to creating a health authority to deliver coordinated and integrated health services.

Key messages:

- One of the key recommendations in the *Putting People First* report is to create an arm's length government agency for the delivery of some health and social services – Health and Wellness Yukon.
- Health and Wellness Yukon is a foundational element of health system transformation. Over time, we anticipate:
 - jointly improving the health care system hand-in-hand with Yukon First Nations such that it eliminates the systemic racism that exists today;
 - every Yukoner will have access to a regular care team and can receive quality services when needed;
 - services are connected to each other and are culturally safe;
 - care is provided closer to a person's home or their community;
 - communities and people with lived experience are involved; and
 - there is a focus on prevention, including investing in the upstream determinants of health.
- Our first priority is to complete the legislation necessary to establish Health and Wellness Yukon.
- Setting up Health and Wellness Yukon is a complex initiative, and we are going to take the time to do it right.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health and Wellness Yukon (PPF)**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- In November 2018, an Independent Expert Panel was appointed to complete a comprehensive review of health and social services in the Yukon.
- The comprehensive review resulted in the *Putting People First* report which was endorsed by the Government of Yukon in 2020.
- On November 24, 2022, the first *Putting People First Annual Report* was released and reported on the status of the 76 recommendations:
 - at that time 70% of the recommendations are operational or in progress;
 - 14 actions are operational;
 - 39 actions are in progress;
 - 23 actions are in the initial planning phases or have yet to be started; and
 - four recommendations are overarching principles or approaches for the delivery of health care.

Partnerships:

- We are committed to partnering with Yukon First Nations on key aspects of health system transformation, including the creation of Health and Wellness Yukon.
- The new health authority will respect and recognize Yukon First Nations' history, governance and cultural traditions.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health and Wellness Yukon (PPF)**Health and Social
Services

- The Health System Transformation Team met with some Yukon First Nations governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations in summer 2022 and has proposed the creation of a Transition Committee as one means to solidifying our partnership with Yukon First Nations.
- In March 2023, First Nations leaders met and committed to establishing a Chiefs Committee on Health to provide advice on the implementation of Putting People First recommendations and oversight of the Health and Wellness Yukon Transition Committee.
 - Membership of the Chiefs Committee on Health is being determined by First Nations, but all First Nations are welcome and encouraged to participate.
- The Transition Committee will have First Nations membership and will lay the foundation for health system transformation by:
 - providing recommendations related to the creation of Health and Wellness Yukon; and,
 - identifying opportunities for health system integration.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation is participating in the development of Health and Wellness Yukon and we will be working with other health system partners, such as the Yukon Medical Association, the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, allied professionals and others.
- We are also committed to engaging with staff, the health and social services workforce and other stakeholders. This engagement will occur directly with staff and through union engagement.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Health and Wellness Yukon (PPF)**Health and Social
Services**Staff:**

- We are focused on achieving a health and social system that is integrated, collaborative, culturally safe, anti-racist, and puts Yukoners at the center.
- A key step to achieving this is building Health and Wellness Yukon in a way that supports providers and Yukoners alike by breaking down barriers and silos across the system.
- Establishing Health and Wellness Yukon is a foundational step towards addressing the changes that Yukoners have asked for.
- This work is in its early stages, and we are committed to working with staff, the health and social services workforce, our health system partners, Yukon First Nations, and other stakeholders as this work progresses.
- We are aware that there is an ongoing health human resource crisis, and we are committed to supporting the workforce throughout this work – we need and value all the exceptional health and social service providers in the Yukon.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Joint Priorities**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to expanding the services of the Yukon's Sexualized Assault Response Team and to implementing the *LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan* and the *Yukon's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit+ People Strategy*.

Key messages:

- We have taken a number of steps to honour and implement the action items from the *LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan* and the *MMIWG2S+ Strategy*.
- While we have made important changes and introduced new programming, we recognize there is more work to be done.
- We are working with communities, local organizations, and Yukon First Nations to address the unique needs of communities.

Key facts:

- The Yukon-wide confidential sexualized assault support line is available 24/7 at 1-844-967-7275.
- Rapid Access Counselling is available to all Yukoners – call 867-456-3838 to make a counselling appointment within 72 hours.

LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan:

- The Yukon continues to lead the country in advancing access to gender-affirming surgical and non-surgical procedures and services, and our commitment to providing this coverage has never wavered.
- We are pleased that in December 2022, the Government of Yukon completed the necessary regulatory amendments to allow Yukoners to receive health insurance coverage for gender-affirming care services that are not insured by other provinces and territories.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Joint Priorities**Health and Social
Services

- Our government recognizes the importance of these services for the transgender and gender diverse community and we are pleased the recent regulatory amendments enable Yukoners to now access this care.
- We are improving access to supportive mental health and wellness services for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services provided World Professional Association for Transgender Health mental health training for all Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services and Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon counsellors, including counsellors providing services in Yukon high schools.
- We increased safety for LGBTQ2S+ Yukoners by passing the *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Protection Act* and amended the *Family Property and Support Act*.
- We are covering preventative medications such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and expanded coverage for the HPV vaccine.
- We also provided funding to Queer Yukon to hire a health care navigator position to support 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners by removing barriers and helping to identify pathways to care.
- We remain committed to working with our partners, including community organizations, to advance gender-inclusive health and social care.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Joint Priorities**Health and Social
Services

MMIWG2S+ – Yukon Strategy:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to taking action to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people.
- We strive to do this work in a decolonized way, in partnership with Yukon First Nations and Indigenous women's organizations.
- The Yukon Advisory Committee on MMIWG2S+ has created a technical working group to write the Implementation Framework for Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy, which will provide details regarding the 31 action items.
- Though more work is required, initiatives are underway as we work with communities and Yukon First Nations to expand community supports, respond to the Substance Use Health Emergency, and implement the *LGBTQ2S+ Action Plan* and amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act*.

SART:

- The Sexualized Assault Response Team (SART) provides coordinated services and supports to victims of sexualized assault.
- Currently the key components of SART include:
 - The 24-hour, confidential, toll-free support line for all victims of sexualized assault.
 - Victim support workers are available during weekday business hours and all hours during the weekend in Whitehorse.
 - On-call physicians specially trained to support victims of sexualized assault are available at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Joint Priorities**Health and Social
Services

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services offers rapid access counselling and priority access to the Child, Youth and Family Treatment team for children under the age of 13.
- The Department of Health and Social Services has a SART Clinical Coordinator who works in partnership with the Department of Justice SART Victim Support Coordinator to ensure there is continuity of care and wrap-around services for victims of sexualized violence.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services also has staff across various programs who provide a range of wrap-around supports and services to all Yukoners. The SART Clinical Coordinator works closely with Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services to connect victims of sexualized assault with the resources and supports they need.
- Victims of sexualized assault living in communities can access the 24/7 toll-free support line and rapid access counselling.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to respecting and supporting Yukoners in all stages of their lives including those who choose to pursue medical assistance in dying.

Key messages:

- On February 2, 2023, the federal government introduced legislation to extend the exclusion of mental illness as a sole medical condition for eligibility until March 17, 2024.
- The federal government will use the time to consider the Special Joint Committee on MAID's final report, which was released on February 16, 2023.
- The Government of Yukon supports this extension as we recognize it is an important and contentious issue.
- The Department of Health and Social Services continues to work regularly with providers, regulatory bodies, and people with lived experience to ensure that as MAID evolves we can continue to provide access to these services.
- As MAID continues to evolve, we remain committed to working with Health Canada and keeping all Yukoners, including Yukon First Nations governments, informed and up to date.

Key facts:

- MAID first became legal in June 2016.
- The Yukon has had an active Yukon MAID Advisory Committee since March 2020.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)**Health and Social
Services

-
- On March 17, 2021, changes to Canada's medical assistance in dying law eliminated the requirement of a reasonably foreseeable natural death.

Advisory Committee

- The Yukon MAID Advisory Committee serves to provide input on policies, practices, safeguards and any other system procedures or changes required in response to any federal changes for effective implementation and access within the Yukon.
- The MAID Advisory Committee includes Yukoners with lived experience, representatives from Health and Social Services, Justice, Community Services, the Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Medical Council, Yukon Registered Nurses' Association, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Palliative Care Physicians, Physicians who provide MAID, and a Psychiatrist.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is taking steps to recruit and retain nursing staff to ensure Yukoners have access to quality, essential health care services across the territory.

Key messages:

- Nursing staff continue to work tirelessly to provide Yukoners with health care services and play an integral role in our ongoing response to the public health needs of Yukoners and the Substance Use Health Emergency.
- We recognize that health care provider burnout is a real and pressing issue in Yukon communities, and we support Yukon nurses who have sacrificed much of their personal lives and time to their jobs over the past few years.
- We continue to mitigate the increased pressures resulting from the local, national, and global shortages of health care providers.
- The Department of Health and Social Services has undertaken several actions to attract and retain Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, in all Yukon communities.

Key facts:

- On December 1, 2022, we announced a new **\$6M** package of retention and signing bonuses for nurses employed by the Government of Yukon.
 - In the 2023-24 Main Estimates, we have budgeted **\$3.17M** (\$3,174,000) for this initiative.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

- As of March 20, 2023, Community Nursing is experiencing a vacancy rate of 36.5% for Primary Health Care Nurses. This represents a recent improvement of 4.5%.
- Between January and March 27, 2023, Community Nursing has hired four new nurses to support Yukon communities such as Carcross, Haines Junction, and Watson Lake.
- Within long-term care homes, we are experiencing a vacancy rate of 30% for nursing staff including, Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Nurses, and Nurse Practitioners.
- The Home Care Program is experiencing a 36% vacancy rate for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses.
- The Yukon's three hospitals are experiencing a nursing vacancy rate of 8.4%.

Agency Nurses:

- The department has agreements with four agency nursing organizations.
- These organizations have been unable to meet staffing needs due to the high demand for nursing staff across Canada.

Bursaries

- The Department of Health and Social Services has budgeted **\$89K** (\$89,000) for the Medical Education Bursary, the Nursing Education Bursary, and the Health Profession Education Bursary programs to provide financial supports for up to 16 new health-related education bursary recipients each year.
- In 2022, the department issued \$54K (\$54,000) in bursaries to 13 Yukoners, pursuing health studies.
 - \$16.5K (\$16,500) went to 5 students pursuing Nursing education;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

- \$22K (\$22,500) went to 4 Medical students (including family medicine); and,
 - \$15.5K (\$15,500) went to 4 students in other health care professions including 2 students pursuing licensed practical nursing.
- For the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Department of Health and Social Services provided **\$150K** (\$150,000) to the Yukon Registered Nurses Association who administers the Continuing Nurse Education Fund.

Education:

- In partnership with the departments of Education and Economic Development, we continue to work with Yukon University to expand programming to support Yukoners in communities in pursuing health-related careers.
- The Government of Yukon funds Yukon University to offer a Practical Nurse Diploma whose graduates are a valuable addition to the health care work force in the Yukon.

Inter Professional Practices and Chief Nursing Officer:

- The Department of Health and Social Services has successfully filled the new Inter Professional Practices and Chief Nursing Officer position.
- This position will contribute to and oversee quality assurance and clinical safety activities, standardize professional standards, collaborate with partners to determine system needs and develop an attraction and retention strategy, and evaluate models of care to meet client needs.
- Engagement with Yukon First Nations and health system partners including nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, the Yukon

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

Hospital Corporation, and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association will occur as we further define this role and transition to Health and Wellness Yukon.

Nurse Practitioners:

- Currently, there are a total of 13 Nurse Practitioners working in the following settings:
 - 1 permanent, full-time Nurse Practitioner residing in Mayo and 1 AOC Nurse Practitioner providing clinics in Old Crow and Pelly Crossing.
 - 1 Nurse Practitioner FTEs supporting Continuing Care.
 - 1 Nurse Practitioner working with Withdrawal Management Services and 3 Nurse Practitioners at the Referred Care Clinic under the Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services branch.
 - 3 Nurse Practitioners at the Constellation Health Centre. Recruitment for 2 additional Nurse Practitioners for the Constellation Health Centre is underway.
 - 3 contracted Nurse Practitioners working in the Women's Midlife Clinic, the Sexual Health Clinic, and supporting the Yukon's COVID-19 response.
- Recruitment is currently underway to hire 3 Nurse Practitioners to service several Yukon communities.
- Recently, we expanded the Find a Primary Care Provider Program to include Nurse Practitioners.
- Nurse Practitioners are trained and equipped to offer primary care to most patients. If a patient has medical needs that fall outside the scope of a Nurse Practitioner's services, they will remain on the wait list for a primary care physician.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

- Recommendation 6.5 of the Putting People First Report is to “hire additional Nurse Practitioners where needed to increase access to primary health care providers in the communities and in specialized clinics”.
- We have increased funding for primary health care services in communities to continue to introduce Nurse Practitioners and dedicated public health nurses in several communities.

Recruitment:

- The Department of Health and Social Services has undertaken several actions to recruit nurses to the Community Nursing Branch, including:
 - Widespread job advertisements across websites and social media platforms and targeted outreach to organizations and individuals.
 - Attendance at in-person recruitment events and conferences as these resume.
 - Shifting scheduling structures to allow many nursing positions to operate on a part-time rotational basis.

Shortages:

- As a result of the local, national, and global shortage of health care providers, some Community Health Centres temporarily reduced services.
 - In February 2022, the Carcross Community Health Centre and Teslin Health Centre were required to reduce services.
 - In June 2022, the Carcross Community Health Centre and the Ross River Community Health Centres were required to reduce their services, or close entirely.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Nursing**Health and Social
Services

- In July 2022, Carcross, Carmacks, Mayo, and Pelly Crossing Health Centres reduced services for varying periods of time.
- Between January 3 and January 11, 2023, the Ross River Health Centre was required to reduce services.
- During these service disruptions, the department worked closely with allied public safety agencies including EMS, physicians, health care partners and programs to mitigate the impacts on communities and ensure continuity of emergency care through these disruptions.
- Service disruptions are anticipated to continue throughout 2023.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to increasing access to primary health care services, and to working with our physician partners.

Key messages:

- Access to primary health care services is a challenge many jurisdictions are facing due to global health human resource shortages.
- We are working with our health system partners to respond to these challenges and explore creative solutions to connect Yukoners with primary health care providers.
- A strong and healthy community of primary health care providers is critical to ensuring Yukoners have access to excellent primary health care services.
- We have negotiated a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Yukon Medical Association that will help increase Yukoners' timely, same-day and unscheduled access to primary health care services and foster a strong and healthy community of physicians through innovative initiatives that support existing physicians, attracts new providers, and reduces operating costs for physicians.
- The agreement's new Attachment and Attraction program reflects a shift to a model that supports physicians and will make the Yukon one of the most desirable places to practice medicine in Canada.
- Based on 2021 data released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, the Yukon ranks first – highest number of physicians per capita – in Canada for number of family medicine physicians according to Scott's Medical Database and the National Physician Database.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

- According to the National Physician Database, the Yukon also ranks first for overall number of physicians per capita, including family medicine physicians and specialists.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$2.2M** (\$2,256,550.00) to support physician benefit programs, the majority of which are administrated by the Yukon Medical Association.
- According to Scott's Medical Database, during the 2021 calendar year:
 - The Yukon ranked first in Canada with 165 family medicine physicians per 100,000 people compared to the national average of 124 per 100,000 people.
 - This does not count visiting or locum physicians or reflect how some family medicine physicians also provide general practitioner and specialist services.
- According to the National Physician Database, during the 2020-21 fiscal year:
 - The Yukon ranked first in Canada with 265 family medicine physicians per 100,000 people compared to the national average of 100 per 100,000 people.
- In 2021, the Yukon was supported by 71 resident family medicine physicians, 14 specialists, 69 visiting family medicine physicians, and 69 visiting specialists.
- Based on 2019 to 2020 data, the Canadian Institute for Health Information found that approximately 17% of Yukoners did not have access to a primary health care provider, this compares to a national average of 14.4%

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

- Based on 2017 to 2018 data from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, approximately 21% of Yukoners did not have access to a family physician during this period.
- This does not reflect access to primary health care services provided in Northern jurisdictions by Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners with expanded scopes of practice.
- While Yukon is first on a per capita basis of family medicine physicians to residents – the gap in attachment is a priority for Yukon Government and we are actively working with the physician community through new benefit programs, like Attachment and Attraction to incentivize and increase the number of attachments with physicians
- On October 24, 2022, a new resident physician joined the **Haines Junction** community. The physician is based at the Haines Junction Health Centre and provides services to communities along the North Highway.

Contracts:

- Our government is committed to working with our physician community to ensure physicians are supported and that Yukoners have access to the safe delivery of care.
- We are currently working to finalize agreements with some contract-based physicians and specialists as part of our regular contract negotiation cycle for 2023-24 fiscal year.
- We are working closely with physicians to address outstanding questions, concerns and discuss next steps related to these agreements.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

Claims and Billing:

- Ensuring that physicians are paid within an appropriate timeframe is a priority for our government and our physician community.
- In January 2022, a backlog of physician claims was identified. We took immediate action to address these concerns and worked quickly to resolve these outstanding claims.
- In some cases, physician claims may require manual assessment or additional information may be required from the provider.
- We acknowledge there are improvements needed in the system to address the processing time for claims.
- The department is committed to focused attention on the outstanding claims, as we also work directly with providers to address these payments, including by meeting one-on-one with physicians.
- During the most recent payment period, approximately **\$1.3M** was paid for fee-for-service physician claims.
 - During the 2022-23 fiscal year, we paid a total of **\$29.96M** (\$29,960,293) in fee-for-service physician claims.
- We have now paid the majority of all 90+ day claims, with exception of claims where individuals did not have valid healthcare coverage, or their name and their personal health care numbers did not match.
- The backlog of retroactive payments is now 90% complete.
 - This was related to negotiated fee increases in the new agreement with the Yukon Medical Association.
 - The 2023 negotiated fee increases are now updated within the billing system.
- There are significant improvements needed in the electronic billing system which is part of the long-term solution we are working towards
- The department is progressing a digital health strategy for the territory.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

- Moving forward, we are working with the Yukon Medical Association to focus on short and long-term options to enhance the physician claims and payment system. We are also working to improve the provider experience.

Fee-for-Service:

- The *Putting People First* report recommends “working with the Yukon Medical Association through the next contract negotiation cycle to develop alternative payment models to transition away from primarily fee-for-service payment for medical services.”
- As part of the new Memorandum of Understanding with the Yukon Medical Association, we have negotiated fee increases.
 - We continue to work with the Yukon Medical Association, and our health system partners, to ensure physicians are supported and to explore alternative payment models.
- Across the country many provinces are considering alternative models that meet the unique health system needs of each jurisdiction, including physicians working in payment models that are a blend of fee-for-service and an alternative payment plan.
- The department uses alternative payment models with many physicians and specialists who are contracted to deliver services such as at specialist clinics, community health and wellness centres, and the Centre de Santé Constellation Health Centre.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Physicians

Health and Social
Services

Find a Primary Care Provider Program (Find a Family Doctor):

- We have expanded the Find a Primary Care Provider Program to include Nurse Practitioners.
- Nurse Practitioners are trained and equipped to offer primary care to most patients. If a patient has medical needs that fall outside the scope of a Nurse Practitioner's services, they will remain on the wait list for a primary care physician.
- As of April 2023, a total of **1,485 Yukoners have been matched with a physician** through the Find a Family Doctor program. There are 3,650 people awaiting a match, which represents approximately 10.5% of the Whitehorse area's population.
 - Primary health care needs of rural residents are met through Community Health Centres.
 - All communities have access to itinerant visiting physician services through a Community Health Centre. Residents of Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Haines Junction are supported by resident physicians.
 - While the program is intended for Yukoners without a primary care provider, individuals who are already connected to a physician are able to apply for a match.
- Since March 20, 2023, a total of 69 patients have been matched with a health-care provider.
- There are currently six providers enrolled in the Find a Primary Care Provider Program.
- The service is available to Yukon residents living in Whitehorse and surrounding areas who:
 - have a valid Yukon Health Care Insurance plan (YHCIP)
 - are 16 years old or older.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

- An adult can enroll their partner and a parent or guardian can enroll their dependents (under the age of 19) into the program if they live at the same address. Registering together ensures families are matched with the same family doctor.
- The program will not allow duplicate applications under the program. The application is linked to the applicant's unique health care number and sends an error back to the applicant.
 - The Find a Primary Care Provider Program and Constellation Health Centre use different application processes and individuals can apply for both programs.

Licensing and International Medical Graduates:

- The independent Yukon Medical Council is responsible for regulating physicians.
- The Yukon Medical Council is aware of concerns with access to primary care and is licensing all physicians who meet our licensing requirements. They are closely monitoring the situation and providing recommendations, as necessary.
- Internationally educated health professionals have historically played an important role in the delivery of health care in Canada, and we recognize that best leveraging their expertise is a challenge being addressed by all governments across Canada.
- As part of our response to the Health Human Resource Crisis, we are exploring ways to best support internationally educated health professionals to enter health professions in the Yukon.
- We are working with regulators and our federal, provincial and territorial partners to discuss physician licensing and pathways to licensing physicians, including internally educated physicians.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Physicians

Health and Social
Services

- The topic of foreign credentials is on the federal agenda and we are having ongoing conversations about this important issue and next steps, including during discussions with other Ministers of Health.

Medical Walk-in Clinic (CASA):

- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, we have committed to opening a walk-in clinic in Whitehorse by January 2024.
- We have been working with our health system partners to explore options to increase access to primary health care providers and to think creatively about next steps.
- We look forward to providing an update to Yukoners as further information becomes available.

Memorandum of Understanding:

- The new three-year agreement with the Yukon Medical Association covers the period from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2025.
- The **Attachment and Attraction program** will provide incentives for Yukon physicians to expand their patient rosters, which we anticipate will reduce the number of Yukoners without access to a primary care provider.
- The program will offer funding for overhead costs to physicians who meet a minimum care delivery standard of patients and appointments. Family doctors who spend more days in clinic will have access to more overhead funding for each additional half day they see patients.
- For patients of participating family doctors, this means increased access to care and the availability of same-day, unscheduled appointments.
- We also anticipate this new program will help to attract new physicians to the territory.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Physicians**Health and Social
Services

-
- The program is presently up and running with participating physicians while the department and the Yukon Medical Association continue to respond to enquiries as with any new program.
 - We are committed to continuing to work with the Yukon Medical Association to implement the agreement and to continue to build a health care system that provides Yukoners with access to the right provider, at the right location, and at the right time.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Safer Supply and Prescribing
(Opioids)**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with our partners to respond to the Substance Use Health Emergency, which includes increasing access to safer supply.

Key messages:

- Offering Yukoners an alternative to the illegal and unregulated drug supply, known as safer supply, is one action we are taking to respond to the Substance Use Health Emergency.
- We are working with experts to ensure we can expand access to safer supply in the Yukon as safely and efficiently as possible.
- We are committed to working with our partners and all levels of government to increase outreach services, nursing and social supports for all people who use illicit substances.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$1.91M** (\$1,912,730) for the Referred Care Clinic.
- The increase of **\$279K** (\$279,000) in the 2023-24 budget includes the addition of 2 FTEs to support Safe Supply, as we continue to honor our commitments made under the 2021 Confidence and Supply Agreement.
- This increase also reflects carry-forward amounts for 7 FTEs introduced in 2022-23, which include:
 - 2 Outreach Licensed Practical Nurse
 - 1 Peer Outreach Worker
 - 2 Registered Nurse

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Safer Supply and Prescribing
(Opioids)**Health and Social
Services

- 1 Registered Nurse Supervisor
 - 1 Social Worker
- In 2022, there were 267 clients who used Opioid Treatment Services.
- In 2022, there were 747 monthly visits to the Referred Care Clinic and 616 patients.
- Opioid Treatment Services can be reached at (867) 668-2552, Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Expanding Safer Supply:

- To further expand the scope of safer supply, the department is working with an addictions medicine specialist in British Columbia to develop and provide clinical training and prescribing guidelines for physicians in the Yukon.
- We are improving access to safer supply as more personnel are hired to provide wraparound services to help ensure that clients accessing safer supply through Opioid Treatment Services have the supports required.
- Expanding safer supply to communities outside of Whitehorse will be an element of the upcoming Substance Use Strategy.
- Expansion of safer supply is not limited to the safe supply of opioids.
 - The department is also exploring options to provide safer supply for other illicit substances such as stimulants.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Safer Supply and Prescribing
(Opioids)**Health and Social
Services

Prescribing Authorities:

- In Canada, possession of controlled substances is prohibited under federal law.
- However, to support continuity of care to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 19, 2020, Health Canada issued a national class exemption under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and its regulations for prescriptions of controlled substances.
- Physicians may prescribe opioid agonist therapy and safe supply medications in the Yukon.
- The department continues to support physicians to expand their scope of practice to include safe supply prescribing, including providing increased access to training opportunities.
- Our government continues to work with the Yukon Registered Nurses Association, so that Nurse Practitioners may independently prescribe opioid agonist therapy medications, such as methadone and suboxone, and safe supply medications.
 - Nurse Practitioners currently provide both opioid agonist therapy and safe supply medications under the authority of Referred Care Clinic Lead.

Opioid Treatment Services:

- Clients of Opioid Treatment Services can access safer supply on a case-by-case basis.
- We support Opioid Treatment Services' physicians and Nurse Practitioners to engage in continued medical education and

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Safer Supply and Prescribing
(Opioids)**Health and Social
Services

mentorship to expand their knowledge and comfort with prescribing safer supply.

- An opioid focused community needs assessment by an outside consultant was completed in fall 2022.
 - This assessment provides a better understanding of drug use patterns in the territory and highlights gaps in the provision of services to inform the expansion of services, including safer supply.
- Opioid Treatment Services supports people to manage or reduce their opioid drug use.
- Physicians may prescribe evidence-based opioid agonist therapies such as methadone, suboxone, sublocade and kadian to prevent withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioid drugs.
- An Overdose Outreach Team, through Opioid Treatment Services, launched on July 25, 2022.
 - This team provides outreach to individuals at high-risk of opioid overdose or those who have recently overdosed.
 - The team also provides harm reduction education, system navigation and connection to services related to substance use.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with our partners to respond to the Substance Use Health Emergency.

Key messages:

- In January 2022, our government declared a Substance Use Health Emergency in response to an increase in substance use related harms in the territory, including a significant increase in opioid-related deaths.
- This is a territory-wide challenge that cannot be solved alone, which is why we continue to work with partners to coordinate our response.
- Over the past year, we have developed partnerships and taken many steps to address the Substance Use Health Emergency; however we recognize that toxic, illicit drugs still circulate in our communities.
- We appreciate the work of all of our partners including: Blood Ties Four Directions, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, the RCMP, Yukon First Nations, and all levels of government towards addressing this public health emergency.

Key facts:

- A Substance Use Health Emergency was declared January 20, 2022.
- As of April 1, 2023, there have been over 2,500 visits to the Supervised Consumption Site since it opened in September 2021. The site was visited 2,228 times for consumption services as of March 31, 2023 since opening.
- As of March 2023, we had distributed more than 1,867 take home naloxone kits since the beginning of this year.
 - In 2022, we distributed 7,264 kits.
 - In 2021, we distributed 3,571 kits.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- Since we declared the Substance Use Health Emergency, we formed a Ministerial Advisory Group, which meets quarterly. This Group includes community and First Nations leaders. To date, this Group has met twice.
- A Substance Use Health Emergency Project Executive Committee has also been formed. This committee met twice per month between March 2022 and August 2022. As of September 2022, the committee continues to meet monthly.
 - This committee is made up of representatives from the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Community Services, the Executive Council Office, Council of Yukon First Nations, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Carcross Tagish First Nation, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Whitehorse General Hospital, Blood Ties Four Directions and the RCMP. As well as, Referred Care Clinic physicians, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and the Chief Coroner.
- As of March 2023, there have been two confirmed substance-related deaths in the Yukon this year.
 - In 2022, there were 25 confirmed substance-related deaths in the Yukon.
 - In 2022, there were 140 drug poisoning and 677 alcohol-related visits to the Whitehorse General Hospital Emergency Department.
 - In 2021, there were 200 drug poisoning and 677 alcohol-related visits to the Whitehorse General Hospital Emergency Department.
- As of March 2023, Emergency Medical Services has responded to 64 calls related to suspected drug poisoning and 116 calls related to alcohol poisoning since the beginning of this year.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- In 2022, Emergency Medical Services responded to 341 calls related to suspected drug poisoning and 1,076 calls related to alcohol poisoning.
- In 2021, Emergency Medical Services responded to 360 calls related to suspected drug poisoning and 1,225 calls related to alcohol poisoning.
- Never use alone - call the National Opioid Response Service at 1-888-688-6677. This anonymous service will have someone stay on the phone with you so you can use safer.
- If you are thinking of changing or managing your opioid use, Opioid Treatment Services can help, call 867-668-2552.
- Rapid Access Counselling is available to all Yukoners – call 867-456-3838 to make a counselling appointment within 72 hours.

Actions to date:

- On September 30, 2021, we opened the Supervised Consumption Site and in May 2022 we completed renovations to support inhalation as a consumption method.
- As of January 25, 2022, we have increased access to Opioid Treatment Services at 405 Alexander by expanding physician coverage to two days weekly.
- We have strengthened Opioid Treatment Services by hiring seven new employees, including nurses and people with lived and living experience as community engagement workers.
- As of January 28, 2022 we expanded opioid medication coverage to include Sublocade.
- On November 1, 2022, we launched Car 867, a mobile crisis unit that includes an RCMP officer and a trained mental health nurse.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- We have organized two territory-wide public awareness and education campaigns.
- On November 16 and 17, 2022 we held Youth Roots: A Substance Use Prevention Gathering, where we explored innovative and emerging approaches with Yukoners, partners and subject matter experts.
- We continue to gather information from the ongoing Ministerial Advisory Committee, Communications Working Group, and Project Executive Committee.
- We hosted two Mental Wellness Summits on February 14 and 15, 2022 and September 21 to 23, 2022 to hear from leaders, partners, subject matter experts and people with lived and living experience.
- We continue to increase on-the-land healing and treatment options in the territory which includes:
 - working with the Teslin Tlingit Council to develop a co-facilitated, land-based healing option in Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services;
 - supported a week-long family camp from July 24 to July 30, 2022 at Jackson Lake in partnership with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon;
 - working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to support a land-based camp for youth involved with the Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' Roots of Hope initiative from March 6 to 10, 2023;
 - partnering with the Nelson Project, which supports at-risk Indigenous and non-Indigenous men across the Yukon, for a three-day cultural learning camp from December 13 to December 15, 2023; and
 - supporting the Hives for Watson Lake partnership with Liard First Nation.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- The Rapid Access Bike paramedic team launched in summer 2022 to improve EMS service and provide faster response in downtown Whitehorse during the summer months. This Yukon EMS program is a partnership with the RCMP and City of Whitehorse.
 - All members of the Rapid Access Bike team are trained to the Primary Care Paramedic level or higher.
 - While there will always be an ambulance deployed at the same time as the Rapid Access Bike, the team can provide initial patient care before an ambulance arrives.
 - The Rapid Access Bike team also hands out Naloxone kits, delivers education about safe injections, and provides general information on safety to the public.

Alcohol Strategy:

- On March 29, 2023, the Northwest Territories released an alcohol strategy aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm in their territory.
- We recognize the health risks associated with alcohol-use and continue to deploy a variety of public awareness strategies to promote responsible alcohol use to keep Yukoners safe and healthy.
- In January 2023, the Canadian Centre of Substance Use and Addiction released updated low-risk drinking guidelines, which are supported by the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health.
 - These updated guidelines recommend a weekly alcohol use of a maximum of 2 standard drinks or less to avoid alcohol-related consequences and higher health risks.
- Our government is currently developing a Substance Use Strategy, which includes recommendations to address alcohol-use in the territory.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Substance Use Health Emergency

Health and Social
Services

- Leaders at the Yukon Forum discussed what actions can be taken together to address the Substance Use Health Emergency and we look forward to their feedback to help finalize the strategy.

Awareness Campaign:

- We have deployed two territory-wide public campaigns to raise awareness about resources that are available across the territory, and to reduce the stigma around substance use.
- We worked closely with our partners at the Council of Yukon First Nations, **Blood Ties Four Directions** and with many others on this campaign.

Mobile Crisis Unit (Car 867):

- On November 1, 2022, our government and the RCMP announced the launch of Car 867, the new Mobile Crisis Unit.
- The Mobile Crisis Unit is a program in partnership with the RCMP to provide RCMP and mental health nursing responses for mental health and wellness related 911 calls.
- Staffed with a police officer and a Registered Psychiatric Nurse from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, its duty is to respond to calls for service related to mental health issues and suicide risks.
- They provide a specialized joint response including on-site mental health assessments and referrals to other appropriate care providers (such as Rapid Access Counselling, the Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team, the Psychiatric Outreach Program and Adult Protection Services), as well as safety planning and working with the client on issues in real-time.
- Currently, this program is being implemented exclusively in Whitehorse. In communities, there is a network of mental wellness support workers,

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Substance Use Health Emergency

Health and Social
Services

counsellors and mental health nurses providing services and care for Yukoners.

- Services delivered to communities include rapid access counselling, on-going one-on-one counselling, group counselling and workshops tailored to communities' specific needs, as well as support work, outreach and harm-reduction services.

Community Outreach:

- We appreciate the work of Yukon First Nations governments to address the unique needs of their communities in response to this health emergency.
- We will continue to support Yukon First Nations governments to improve health and social services in Yukon communities.
- We have supported **Blood Ties Four Direction's** initiative to increase distribution of take home fentanyl testing kits in rural Yukon communities.
 - **Blood Ties Four Directions** continues to provide harm reduction services in Whitehorse through the Outreach Van, and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services staff working in Whitehorse and communities also provide harm reduction supplies and training.
- Expanding Opioid Treatment Services, including a safe supply, to communities outside of Whitehorse will be an element of the upcoming Substances Use Strategy.

Coroner's Report:

- On August 5, 2022, the Chief Coroner called for an inquest into the deaths of Myranda Tizya-Charlie and Cassandra Warville which

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Substance Use Health Emergency

Health and Social
Services

occurred at 405 Alexander on January 19, 2022 as a result of toxic illicit drugs.

- We support the important work of Yukon Coroner's Service and are collaborating fully in their investigation into these tragic deaths. We welcome any feedback the Coroner may provide in preventing further deaths.
- We implemented a number of changes at **405 Alexander** after the deaths due to toxic illicit drugs in January 2022.
- A physician from the Referred Care Clinic provides Opioid Treatment Services at 405 Alexander two days per week, an approach which has been very successful in increasing engagement in Opioid Treatment Services.
- BRAVE Sensors were installed in bathrooms to alert staff if someone ceases to move for reasons such as an overdose or health emergency.
- We are working with Blood Ties Four Directions to increase awareness of the Supervised Consumption Site among guests of 405 Alexander and have expanded the services and hours of operation of the outreach van.
- EMS is working to increase on-site service hours beyond 10.66 hours per day at 405 Alexander and is preparing to complete drug-testing to support individuals to make informed decisions about substance use.
- Additionally, to mitigate risks associated with substance use such as overdose, shelter guests and residents continue to have access to harm reduction education and supplies, including Naloxone kits, and connection to appropriate supports and services.
- Staff receive training in recognizing and responding to the signs and symptoms of overdose.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

Decriminalization of Substances:

- The criminal law around controlled drugs and substances is under the purview of the Government of Canada.
- Our government has been working with partners to address the Substance Use Health Emergency, including support for a range of harm reduction initiatives aimed at reducing overdose deaths and curbing stigma around drug use.
- The Substance Use Ministerial Advisory Committee was briefed on decriminalization by Blood Ties Four Directions, RCMP and others.
- The Government of Yukon is gathering information and carefully considering available options for further action.

Managed Alcohol Program:

- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, our government has committed to establishing a Managed Alcohol Program within the next year.
- The Managed Alcohol Program will attempt to reduce harms related to alcohol use amongst alcohol-dependent individuals and reduce the use of non-beverage alcohol.
- This initiative will help protect one of the Yukon's most vulnerable populations and will support public health and resource allocation.
- We are taking steps in the development of this initiative and will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders throughout this process to ensure the Managed Alcohol Program meets our goals of increasing access to harm reduction services to improve health outcomes.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

Mental Wellness Summit:

- On February 14 and 15, 2022, our government hosted a Mental Wellness Summit that brought together leaders, partners and those with lived experience from across the territory to identify collaborative solutions to support communities. Over 550 people took part in the summit.
- The second phase of the Mental Wellness Summit was held between September 21 and 23, 2022. There were 320 people who attended the second phase of the Summit either in-person or virtually.
- Presentations from both parts of the Mental Wellness Summit are available for streaming on Yukon.ca.
- Information and feedback from the Mental Wellness Summit is informing the development of the forthcoming Substance Use Strategy, which will guide us in our response to the Substance Use Health Emergency. This plan will be released this year.

Naloxone:

- Naloxone kits, including nasal naloxone, are available, free of charge, at many locations across our territory, including pharmacies, Kwanlin Dün First Nation Health Centre, **Blood Ties Four Directions**, 405 Alexander, and from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services locations throughout the territory.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services staff in communities also distribute Naloxone Kits and have worked with First Nations governments to ensure that kits are widely available.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- Upon request, staff provide Naloxone training to First Nations governments and community partners.
- If you want to get a Naloxone kit or learn ways to reduce harm when you or your loved one uses substances, you can contact the opioid overdose prevention coordinator.
- For more information or to book an appointment, phone (867) 332-0722.

Out-of-Territory Treatment:

- Insured Health Services and Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services continue to work with Yukoners to ensure they receive the medically necessary mental wellness and substance use care they need, including if that care is out-of-territory.
- In February 2022, Insured Health Services implemented a directive that expanded coverage for out-of-territory residential treatment centers to support Yukoners to access pre-approved out-of-territory medically necessary mental wellness and substance use care at approved facilities.
- Yukoners who wish to seek treatment out-of-territory should work with their primary care provider who will submit an application to Insured Health Services.
- Treatment is being supported through Homewood Ravensview, Edgewood Treatment Centre, Last Door Recovery Centre, and Last Door Addiction Recovery Services.
- In order to ensure the privacy of individuals who need to travel out-of-territory for medical treatment, we are unable to provide the specific number of clients who have travelled through the Medical Travel Program for residential treatment.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

- The Council of Yukon First Nations with temporary funding from the federal government provides support to send individuals out-of-territory to access residential treatment.

Overdose Outreach Team:

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services has established an Overdose Outreach Team through Opioid Treatment Services.
- The Overdose Outreach Team provides harm reduction education, supports clients with system navigation and provides connections to other services related to substance use.
 - The Team also provides supports to individuals who have recently experienced drug overdose.
- The Overdose Outreach Team includes support workers, social workers and community engagement workers.
- The Team currently operates Monday to Friday from 8 am to 8 pm.
- Yukoners can call (867) 333-9717 to be referred to the Overdose Outreach Team.

SUAP:

- On April 4, 2023, the Government of Canada announced funding through the Substance Use and Addictions Program for two projects in the Yukon.
- Funding will be provided to Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services to fund a new Social Worker position that will service Withdrawal Management Services and the Referred Care Clinic by providing supports to clients most at risk for substance use harms and who require social supports.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Substance Use Health Emergency

Health and Social
Services

Supervised Consumption Site:

- On September 30, 2021, our government opened the Supervised Consumption Site in Whitehorse in partnership with **Blood Ties Four Directions**.
- The Supervised Consumption Site operates five days per week.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services continues to work closely with Blood Ties Four Directions to support people who use substances, as well as to discuss hours of operation and resources to support the site.
- As of April 1, 2023, there have been over 2,500 visits to the Supervised Consumption Site since it opened in September 2021.
 - The site was visited 2,228 times for consumption services as of March 31, 2023 since opening.
 - Other visits to the site were for such things as harm reduction supplies, safe use consultation and other Blood Ties Four Directions services.
- Methods of drug consumption at the Supervised Consumption Site include injection, inhalation, oral and intranasal.
 - Upgrades to the Supervised Consumption Site to accommodate inhalation (smoking) as a method of drug consumption were completed in May 2022.
 - Inhalation is one of the most common methods of drug consumption in the territory. Since the inhalation room opened, use of the Supervised Consumption Site has increased significantly.
 - At the site, clients can access a range of harm reduction and social services including drug testing, counselling, access to Naloxone, drug use equipment exchange, medical care, and training in safer use practices. Clients can also receive referrals to social, medical and mental wellness and substance use supports.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Substance Use Health Emergency**Health and Social
Services

Youth Roots:

- On November 16 and 17, 2022 the Health Promotion Unit hosted Youth Roots: A Substance Use Prevention Gathering.
- Subject matter experts, health promotion practitioners, educators, researchers and community members from across the territory working in substance use prevention attended the gathering.
- We discussed innovative and emerging approaches with over 100 attendees, which will inform our ongoing work to address the Substance Use Health Emergency.

Youth Roots: Photovoice

- On April 14, 2023, our government, along with Yukon students and families celebrated the opening of the Youth Roots: Photovoice Project at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.
- The Photovoice project is an exhibit of photos from youth across the territory sharing how they promote their mental wellness.
- 39 Yukon youth in 5 communities including Carcross, Watson Lake, Mayo, Haines Junction, and Whitehorse, participated in the project.
- Mark Kelly, who is a photographer and social worker with a master's degree in counselling, travelled to each community to work with the youth, help them identify what brings them joy and inspiration, and teach them how to capture it in an image.
- Youth Roots: A Substance Use Prevention Gathering was also held in November 2022 to discuss and promote approaches to prevent youth substance use by emphasizing long-term, upstream solutions.
- These projects align with our commitments to supporting the health and wellbeing of youth in response to the Substance Use Health Emergency.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Substance Use Health Emergency

Health and Social
Services

- The Youth Roots project was implemented to support the wellbeing of Yukon youth, following the release of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study.
- The Photovoice project will be displayed at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre until May 30, 2023.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre will support the recommendations of the *Putting People First* report by providing a setting for residents to access holistic, person-centered care with an integrated, interdisciplinary team.

Key messages:

- Our government is working to connect Yukoners to integrated and coordinated health and wellness services in their home communities.
- To support this work, we are building a new Health and Wellness Centre in Old Crow.
- Once completed, the new Health and Wellness Centre will allow us to better support the community's health and wellness needs in a collaborative care environment.
- We are working closely with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation to meet community health and wellness needs.

Key facts:

- The existing Old Crow Health Centre was built in the 1970s.
- Ketza TSL Construction has been awarded as the contractor for the Old Crow Health and Wellness Centre.
- Construction on the new Centre began in early-spring 2022 and construction is expected to be completed in late 2023.
- Work will continue once construction is complete to outfit and prepare the facility for service delivery.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Old Crow Health and Wellness
Centre**Health and Social
Services

Health and Wellness Centre:

- The Health and Wellness Centre will include Health Services programs, allied Health and Social Services programs, administration and support spaces, and a Wellness Room.
- We are working with Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation on the design of a healing room in the health and wellness centre, as well as gathering other cultural and First Nations input into the overall design.

10-plex housing unit:

- Along with the Health and Wellness Centre, a 10-plex housing unit is being built in Old Crow.
- The 10-plex will include four one-bedroom units, one of which will be a barrier-free suite; and six two-bedroom units, two of which will be barrier-free suites
- This project will replace Health and Social Services staff housing, increase the number of affordable housing units, and create jobs in the community.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring seniors and Elders in the Yukon receive the support they need.

Key messages:

- The Yukon's long-term care homes offer various levels of support to residents as part of our territory's continuum of care.
- We are working collaboratively with our partners, including municipal, federal and First Nations governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to implement the *Aging in Place: Action Plan* and ensure seniors and Elders receive the support they need.
- Our government is committed to culturally safe and responsive programming that recognizes culture and traditional practices and supports spiritual wellbeing for First Nations residents living in long-term care homes and their families.
- Continuing Care also has a robust Safety and Clinical Excellence team that conducts ongoing assessments of all continuing care programs, including Home Care to ensure client needs are being met.
- Community Liaison Coordinators are assigned to work in all communities not supported by a Home Care Nurse. They do annual community assessments related to need for home care supports in each community and endeavor to hire and orientate Home Support Workers for each community based on community need.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$70.3M** (\$70,274,232) towards the ongoing operations of long-term care residences in the territory.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

- There are four long-term care homes in the Yukon: Copper Ridge Place, Thomson Centre, and Whistle Bend Place in Whitehorse, and Alexander McDonald Lodge in Dawson City.
- Continuing Care and the Yukon Hospital Corporation are collaborating to open two long-term care beds within the Watson Lake Hospital.
- There are **509.05 FTEs** working within the Yukon's four long-term care homes.
- There are 263 permanent long-term care rooms and 25 respite rooms.
- On average, there are a total of 5.5 admissions to long-term care each month and no wait list.
- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$14.1M** (14,077,441) towards the ongoing operations of home care in the territory.
- There are **116.45 funded FTEs** within the Yukon Home Care Program.
- The Home Care Program supported an average of 717 clients across the territory during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- After an intake assessment the Home Care Program aims to provide access to services within:
 - One to two days for high risk clients,
 - One week for medium risk client's; and,
 - Two weeks for low risk clients.
- We provided **\$76K** during the 2023-24 fiscal year to the Yukon Council on Aging for the **Seniors' Information Centre** to provide up-to-date information to Yukon seniors on all relevant federal, territorial and municipal government programs and services.
- Based on demographic trends, it is anticipated that more Yukoners will seek access to long-term care services in the coming years.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

Bridges to Home:

- The department and the Yukon Hospital Corporation have recently started a quality improvement initiative with BC Patient Safety and Quality Council focused on improving care transitions between hospital, home and community.
- In the 2023-24 Main Estimates, we have budgeted **\$40K** (\$40,000) to support this Bridge to Home initiative.
 - We have since received an amendment that approves up to \$60K (\$60,000) in funding for this initiative.
- Often the discharge process from the hospital involves a care coordinator who works with patients and their families to ensure the necessary resources and support to manage their health at home.
- This may involve coordinating with primary care physicians, arranging for home care, or connecting patients with community resources such as transportation or meal delivery services.
- Bridge to Home is a recommendation in *Putting People First* (3.4) and is promoted by the Healthcare Excellence Canada and builds upon similar successful initiatives in other jurisdictions.
- The Bridge to Home initiative helps patients transition from the hospital to their homes, while also improving outcomes and reducing the risk of readmission.
 - Support looks different for every person and ensuring a smooth discharge process requires a holistic approach.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

Communities:

- The Yukon Home Care Program provides a range of supports, including services such as care coordination, home support services, community-based nursing, and regional therapy services to communities across the Yukon.
- Home Care services including acute, chronic, palliative, and respite care and rehabilitation services, are available to Yukoners living in all communities.
- Additionally, Home Care nursing services are available:
 - in Watson Lake, the satellite office is located in the Watson Lake Community Hospital;
 - Home Care nursing and support services are also available from McDonald Lodge in Dawson; and,
 - in Haines Junction a home care nurse operates out of the Health Centre.
- McDonald Lodge in Dawson City has 15 residential beds, including 2 for respite.

Watson Lake

- Continuing Care and the Yukon Hospital Corporation are working together to open two long-term care rooms within the Watson Lake Hospital.
- The Department of Health and Social Services will be providing the funding to support the long-term care rooms, staff and other requirements.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

- The Yukon Hospital Corporation has hired 2 of the 4.5 FTE Licensed Practical Nurses required to open the rooms with 24 hour a day service, 7 days per week.
- The rooms will open in Watson Lake following staff recruitment, and information-gathering sessions with the local community, including with Elders and seniors.
 - Staff have met with the Daylu Dena Council, the Liard First Nation, and Signpost Seniors.
 - An online survey will also be available for Watson Lake area residents to share feedback.
- The choice of décor and set-up will be based on the community feedback to ensure rooms are welcoming and culturally safe places for residents and their families.
 - We are providing \$30,000 for the furnishings and set-up of the rooms.
- As of September 30, 2022, there were 517 Yukoners age 55+ living in Watson Lake, representing 35% of the community's population.
- Currently, there are less than five people from the Watson Lake area waiting for placement in a long-term care home.
- The Yukon Housing Corporation offers a seniors 12-plex in Watson Lake where eligible seniors can receive home care services based on assessed need.
- There is also one permanent Registered Nurse providing home care for the Watson Lake community, and we are recruiting to fill a vacant permanent part-time home support worker.
- There is also one on-call Registered Nurse and one on-call home support worker, and a Whitehorse based Home Care Occupational and Physical Therapist visit the community twice per year.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

Dementia Care:

- The Shine a Light on Dementia online training program for caregivers was made available in 2022 in both French and English.
- The Yukon plays an active role on the federal/provincial/territorial committee on dementia, which developed the National Dementia Strategy that was released in spring 2019.
- We continue to work with partners such as the Alzheimer Society of Canada to support the Yukon's goals for dementia awareness, stigma reduction, and prevention.
- Our work to support Yukoners living with dementia, caregivers, and service providers also includes:
 - forming the Behavioural Care Resource Team in 2021 as a resource for staff who provide care to long-term care residents living with dementia and other mental health diagnoses;
 - providing dementia-focused care at Copper Ridge Place (2 houses) and Whistle Bend Place (1 house) for mobile adults who have dementia and require a therapeutic and secure environment as well as 24-hour monitoring and support;
 - supporting residents with dementia and mild to moderate cognitive impairment in Intermediate and Extended Care levels in all the long-term care homes in Whitehorse and Dawson City; and
 - supporting all clients with dementia and their caregivers in Yukon communities through our Yukon Home Care program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

National Care Standards:

- Updated national standards for long-term care are undergoing a 60 day public review after being released by the Health Standards Organization on January 31, 2023.
 - Standards focus on governance, resident-centered care, quality of life, a healthy and competent workforce, and promoting a culture of quality improvement and learning.
 - Continuing Care is actively working on aligning practices to meet all of the suggested long-term care standards.
- Continuing Care holds accreditation through Accreditation Canada.
 - Past Health Standards Organization national standards have been reflected in some of Accreditation Canada's assessment criteria, and it is anticipated that the new standards will also be incorporated by Accreditation Canada.

Long-term Care Staffing:

- The Yukon's long-term care homes have among the highest hours of direct nursing care/resident/day in the country, with on average 4.58 hours of care provided a day, per resident.
- This high standard of care is made possible through an enhanced staffing levels model, which allows our long-term care homes to maintain capacity and operate at core staffing levels while delivering the full spectrum of services to residents, even in the face of vacancies.
- When unfilled nursing shifts bring the staffing levels to what we consider essential staffing levels, there are processes in place to share staff across houses and neighbourhoods within each long-term care home.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Continuing Care**Health and Social
Services

- Across all houses in Whitehorse long-term care homes, unfilled scheduled nursing shifts resulted in essential staffing levels for a portion of 20 days from October to December 2022 and for a portion of 4 days from January to March 21, 2023.
- This shows an improving trend even over the winter holiday season.
- Leading up to the summer, recruitment and retention efforts remain ongoing with retention and signing bonuses available to long-term care nurses.
- We are committed to supporting Yukon nurses who have sacrificed much of their personal lives and time to their jobs over the past few years by ensuring they receive the hard-earned time-off they deserve.

Thomson Centre:

- In January 2022, several residents were relocated after rooms at Thomson Centre were affected by a leaking roof.
- We worked with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, which operates Thomson Centre, to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for residents, clients and staff.
- The rooms were ready for reoccupation in October 2022 and there have been no further issues to date.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to providing Yukoners with an additional option for safe, accessible, and high-quality maternity care without having to pay out of pocket.

Key messages:

- The Yukon Midwifery Program is experiencing the impacts of the local, global, and national shortages of healthcare workers and is currently facing significant staffing challenges.
- As a result of these staffing shortages, the Yukon Midwifery program has temporarily transferred clients to Solstice Maternity while recruitment for additional midwives and other mitigation strategies are underway.
- Despite these staffing challenges, the Yukon Midwifery Program was carefully and strategically developed to address gaps in the previous system and to provide an accessible, safe, and positive experience for all clients.
- The Yukon Midwifery Program, along with the entire maternity care community, is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of clients.
- The Yukon's approach to midwifery care is aligned with national standards and best practices, including for patient safety.
- We continue to work with local and national partners to address the challenges currently impacting the Yukon Midwifery Program and to ensure the program is fully integrated into our health system to offer high quality and safe care for all Yukoners.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$1.35M** (\$1,354,723) for the Yukon Midwifery Program.
- The Yukon Midwifery clinic in Whitehorse officially opened its doors on July 7, 2022.
- The first midwifery-led birth occurred on November 6, 2022.
- Between November 6, 2022, and January 20, 2023, a total of 12 Whitehorse-based clients were supported by Registered Midwives, including one home birth.

Communities:

- On September 15, 2022, the Yukon Midwifery Program expanded its eligibility criteria to include Yukoners from anywhere in the territory.
- Currently, all clients with due dates after January 26, 2023, including those living in Yukon communities, have been transferred to Solstice Maternity.
- We anticipate being able to once again provide Yukoners from across the territory access to midwifery services once staffing capacity allows.
- As the Yukon Midwifery Program grows and develops, we will work with local and community partners to determine the best options for expanding services to Yukon communities.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

Compensation:

- We recognize the competitiveness of the compensation rates for Registered Midwives across the country and their impacts on our ability to successfully recruit and retain midwives.
- The Department of Health and Social Services and the Public Service Commission are working together to explore options to bring the remuneration rates for Registered Midwives working in the Yukon in line with other parts of the country.

Implementation Plan and Model of Care:

- As with any new program, the Yukon Midwifery Program relies on a robust quality improvement process to conduct ongoing assessments and implement adaptations in response to these assessments as needed.
- We are committed to ensuring that the Yukon Midwifery Program reflects the best standards of care and reflects the unique realities of the Yukon context.
- The implementation plan, model of care, and launch of the Yukon Midwifery Program was based on the recommendations of local and national experts, significant research, and extensive public and stakeholder feedback gathered throughout the engagement process.
- This engagement was essential to ensuring the successful integration of the Yukon Midwifery Program into the Yukon's healthcare system.
- The Yukon Midwifery Program policies, practice protocols and quality improvement processes were developed and continue to be reviewed with the input of local and national experts including registered

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

midwives, nurses, physicians, and Yukon First Nations. This is accomplished through the following work:

- Expert midwifery consultants who provide advice and feedback on system improvements to the program as needed.
- The Whitehorse General Hospital Midwifery Working Group - supports the systems and operational integration of Registered Midwives into Whitehorse General Hospital
 - Since the Yukon Midwifery Program launched, this group has completed two separate full quality assurance case reviews of all midwifery-led births.
- MOREOB – patient safety and performance improvement program for interprofessional obstetrical teams funded by the Government of Yukon for Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - Official sign-off for the development of the Nursing-Midwifery guidelines for Whitehorse General Hospital was received.
- We also continue to participate on committees, teams, and attend regular meetings with providers, partners, and stakeholders from across the health system to ensure the Yukon Midwifery Program is effectively being integrated into our healthcare system.

Midwives Regulation:

- The *Midwives Regulation*, which came into effect in April 2021, is intended to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Yukoners accessing midwifery services. This allows for the highest standard of care.
- Local and national midwifery experts provided advice that the Government of Yukon's *Midwives Regulation* needed to be enacted

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

immediately to transition away from unregulated services, to ensure patient safety.

- Prior to the Regulation, only Yukoners who could afford to pay out-of-pocket could access midwifery-type services and only outside of hospital settings.
- Because there were no regulations in place, there were no minimum education, training, or liability insurance requirements for people offering these services.
- Under the previous system, there were gaps in care.
- The *Midwives Regulation* requires individuals wanting to practice midwifery in the territory to complete formal training as a midwife, to have held a license in another Canadian jurisdiction for a minimum of one year, and to hold insurance to practice midwifery in the Yukon.
- The requirement for Yukon midwives to obtain one year of experience outside the territory was put in place due to lower birth numbers in the Yukon to ensure our midwives have sufficient experience to support Yukon families.
- Midwives wishing to operate as private practice providers must meet the criteria for practicing in the territory, as set out under the Regulation, including being licensed, insured, and having a second attendant appropriately licensed, insured, and available for any home births.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Midwifery**Health and Social
Services

Solstice Maternity:

- Solstice Maternity is temporarily accepting clients from the Yukon Midwifery Program with due dates after January 26, 2023.
- Solstice Maternity will be responsible for all pre-natal care and births for all transferred clients.
- Registered Midwives from the Yukon Midwifery Program will continue to provide post-natal care and some pre-natal emotional support and information to clients.
- Registered Midwives will also be working to develop new services and education available to all Yukoners to offer during this period.

Staffing:

- Ensuring the health and safety of our clients relies on a team of Registered Midwives that are able to provide the full scope of midwifery care.
- To provide the 24/7 coverage the Yukon Midwifery Program offers while complying with the Yukon Standards of Practice for Registered Midwives on second attendants at non-hospital births, there needs to always be two Registered Midwives on call. To achieve this level of coverage, the program needs to fill all four positions (one Clinical Manager and three Registered Midwives).
- We currently do not have the full staffing resources available to achieve this level of coverage, which contributed to the decision to temporarily pause midwifery-led births.
- This is a challenge faced by many midwifery clinics across this country regardless of the model of service delivery.
- At the centre of this decision, is the health, safety, and wellness of Yukoners.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Midwifery

Health and Social
Services

- As of February 2023, only two of the Registered Midwife positions are filled, with only one Registered Midwife oriented, privileged, and able to provide the full scope of midwifery care.
- Recruitment to fill vacant positions is currently underway.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Pediatrician Services**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to providing Yukoners with a healthcare system that provides wraparound supports at all ages and for all needs.

Key messages:

- By continuing to enhance pediatric services and by implementing the person-centered approach in the *Putting People First* report, we are supporting the health and wellbeing of children.
- Yukon pediatricians provide a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to child health that addresses social determinants and child equity.
- This has resulted in parents reporting that they are able to build a more trusting relationship with the pediatrician and receive care that is more consistent
- This approach to pediatric care has helped reduce the number of children who need to travel for pediatric services by 93% since its implementation in 2017.
- Where necessary, nurses in rural communities will make referrals for pediatric services in Whitehorse.

Key facts:

- Between April 1, 2022 and January 18, 2023, the Yukon's pediatricians have seen 267 unique children.
- There are pediatrician services available in Whitehorse and rural communities.
- Locums provide coverage for pediatricians, as needed.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Pediatrician Services**Health and Social
Services

- The pediatric group provides:
 - 365 days of on call coverage to the Whitehorse General Hospital;
 - availability Monday to Friday at the pediatric office for consults and follow up;
 - community outreach to rural communities (Beaver Creek and Burwash Landing residents attend Haines Junction);
 - support for neonatal and pediatric medevac;
 - Autism diagnostic services;
 - school based clinics including the Independent Learning Centre; and,
 - clinics at Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre with the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Pharmacists**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with our health system partners, including Yukon pharmacists to expand access to care and ensure Yukoners are connected to integrated and person-centered health-care services.

Key messages:

- Since 2016, our government has worked with pharmacists to integrate the profession into our health system by expanding their scope of practice.
- We continue to work with Yukon pharmacists to address our shared goals, enhance the supports available to Yukoners, and identify additional opportunities for pharmacists to participate in our health system.
- Pharmacists have played an important role in our coordinated response to COVID-19 and the Substance Use Health Emergency.

Key facts:

- There are 55 licensed pharmacists in the Yukon.
- In 2022, Yukon pharmacists administered a total of 3,265 vaccines.
- In 2021, Yukon pharmacists administered a total of 3,112 vaccines.
- COVID-19 at-home rapid tests are available at participating pharmacies.
- Free naloxone kits are available through participating pharmacies.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Pharmacists

Health and Social
Services

Expanded scope:

- We worked closely with the Department of Community Services to support their work with pharmacists to develop the *Pharmacists Regulation* in 2019, which expanded their scope of practice and created new pathways for Yukoners to access services.
- On June 30, 2022, the scope of practice for pharmacists in the regulation was expanded further to reflect the changes introduced on a temporary basis under the COVID-19 State of Emergency.
- These changes take better advantage of pharmacists' clinical expertise and training, align with the services pharmacists provide in other Canadian jurisdictions, and are consistent with our work to implement the *Putting People First* report.
- Participating pharmacists licensed in the Yukon can now choose to:
 - extend existing prescriptions on all prescription drugs, including controlled substances, up to a maximum of two times;
 - extend or modify prescriptions for controlled substances such as methadone, when needed in emergency situations;
 - transfer controlled substance prescriptions within and outside of the Yukon;
 - accept a prescriber's verbal order to extend or refill a prescription for controlled substances; and
 - deliver, along with their delegates, controlled substances in accordance with the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.
- These changes support our territory's response to the Substance Use Health Emergency by providing better access to a safer supply of opioids.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Pharmacists**Health and Social
Services

Initial prescribing program:

- Starting December 28, 2022, a new initial prescribing program came into effect allowing for pharmacists to assess and prescribe medications for some minor ailments, smoking-cessation, and some vaccinations.
- We have worked with the Yukon Pharmacists Association to introduce new professional fees to support this important expansion of the services that can be offered by pharmacists.
- The Yukon's professional fee rates for these expanded services are amongst the most competitive rates in the country.
- Pharmacists can now choose to offer services such as COVID-19 vaccinations, publicly funded non-COVID vaccines and some travel vaccines.
 - Pharmacists were already supporting Yukoners over the age of five to access publicly funded vaccinations, including Shingrix, the HPV vaccine and seasonal influenza vaccinations.
- Individual pharmacies can determine which services under the expanded scope that they wish to offer.
- Pharmacists are now authorized to prescribe and administer travel and publicly funded vaccines for Yukoners over the age of 5.
- Participating pharmacists must complete mandatory training before offering these services through their expanded scope. Four local pharmacists have completed the mandatory training.
- While travel vaccines have never been publicly funded, certain vaccines used for travel are used to address other public health needs such as for immunosuppressed groups or used as routine immunizations, and are publicly funded in specific scenarios.
- Pharmacists may administer travel vaccines for children with consent and defer physical health checks to a Community Health Centre.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Pharmacists**Health and Social
Services

Pharmaceutical markup:

- In November 2020, we negotiated a new pharmaceutical markup and cap with local pharmacists, which came into effect in July 2021.
- We discovered the new changes were not being correctly applied to the billing system shortly afterward. In August 2021, interim solutions were implemented to support pharmacists.
- These measures remain in place while we work to more permanently address the underlying issues with the billing software.
- We are currently working with the software vendor to address the issues.
- We are taking this opportunity to reevaluate our reimbursement framework and supplement it with strong documentation to prevent such issue in the future.
- All outstanding payments to pharmacists have been provided.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Psychiatry**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to increasing access to services and wraparound supports for Yukoners.

Key messages:

- We are working with key stakeholders to expand access to psychiatric services in the Yukon.
- We have increased the number of resident psychiatrists in the territory to provide more care to Yukoners.
- We continue to work with psychiatrists and the Yukon Hospital Corporation to help clients get the most appropriate and timely care.

Key facts:

- There are 3 full-time psychiatrists and 1 resident psychiatrist in the Yukon, along with 1 child psychiatrist.
- There is approximately a two to four week wait time for a client to see a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services psychiatrist following a referral from the Referred Care Clinic.
- As of August 1, 2022, there are less than five consults waiting to be scheduled or in the triage process to see a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services psychiatrist.
- As of August 4, 2022, the average wait time to access private psychiatry in the Yukon is 13 weeks for non-urgent consults. More urgent consults are triaged to be seen earlier.
- As of August 4, 2022, there are 40 people on the Summit Health waitlist to see a psychiatrist, and seven people waiting to be triaged.
- Full-time and on-call services are provided at the Whitehorse General Hospital 365 days per year, 24 hours a day.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Psychiatry**Health and Social
Services

Accessing Psychiatry:

- Referrals for psychiatric services can be made through an individual's general practitioner or Nurse Practitioner, or by a physician through the Emergency Department.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services triages psychiatric care for its clients based on a clinical assessment and provides access to a psychiatrist for individuals with serious and persistent illness that are part of the Psychiatric Outreach Program or Referred Care Clinic.
- High priority clients that are referred through Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services who require wraparound supports are prioritized and every effort will be made to see clients with acute psychiatric concerns within a two-week period.
 - During the two-week wait time, intensive outreach and mental health nursing supports are provided.
- Private psychiatrists set their own schedules and determine how many clients to take on at a time.
- Our government continues to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other community partners to develop a new Mental Wellness Unit at Whitehorse General Hospital.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Psychiatry**Health and Social
Services

ECT and Ketamine:

- Our government understands the importance of providing psychiatric treatment options.
- Health Canada has become aware of an increased interest in the off-label use of ketamine for the treatment of different conditions, such as mental illnesses, utilizing various formulations, including compounded products. The risks and benefits of ketamine used for off-label conditions have not been assessed by Health Canada.
- There are clinical trials underway to further characterize the safety and efficacy of ketamine for various therapeutic uses.
- While ketamine is not eligible for coverage in the Yukon, we will continue to work with Health Canada to review new and emerging research on its use for the treatment of certain conditions.
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a treatment for severe mental illness which involves brief electrical stimulation of the brain.
- Our government will continue to work closely with our partners, including psychiatrists, to continue to offer Yukoners psychiatric treatment options and wraparound supports.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Bilingual Health Centre (Centre de santé
Constellation Health Centre)**Health and Social
Services**Government priority:**

- We are committed to improving care for the Yukon's francophone population and expanding access to primary health care services for all Yukoners through the Constellation Health Centre.

Key messages:

- The new bilingual health centre opened its doors to Yukoners on November 7, at 102 – 4149 4th Avenue in Whitehorse (Nuvo Building).
- Constellation Health Centre (Centre de santé Constellation) is the first primary health care clinic of its kind in the Yukon and serves as a model of care to build upon in the future.
- In addition to delivering high quality health and wellness services in both French and English, the Centre provides an additional access point for primary health care services.
- The new collaborative care clinic is a recommendation of the *Putting People First* report and will be fully integrated into the broader health care system.
- This is a new access point for primary health care services for Yukoners, including the growing Francophone population, which will reduce some of the current pressures on our health care system.
- We have been working with our partners, including the Francophone community and other health system partners, to ensure this clinic responds to the needs of the community.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Bilingual Health Centre (Centre de santé
Constellation Health Centre)**Health and Social
Services**Key facts:**

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$2.34M** (\$2,341,913) for the Constellation Health Centre.
- As of February 15, 2023, the Centre had received 1,358 applications.
 - 491 people have been accepted as clients and are able to accessing primary health care at Constellation.
 - 860 individuals are on the waitlist. Applications continue to be assessed and triaged with intake appointments available most days.
- Once fully staffed, the clinic's staff compliment will include 1 Clinic Manager, 5 Nurse Practitioners, 1 Registered Nurse, 1 Licensed Practical Nurse, 2 Medical Office Assistants, and 1 Social Worker, and 1 full time physician.
- The clinic is currently staffed by two Nurse Practitioners, with a third starting in the coming weeks, as well as a registered nurse, and a medical office assistant who continue to deliver exceptional primary health care services to Yukoners.
- A local bilingual physician is also providing consultative support to the clinic.
- Recruitment for a full-time physician, and other vacancies are still underway.

Client Applications:

- Yukoners can now apply to become a client at the Centre de Santé Constellation Health Centre.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Bilingual Health Centre (Centre de santé
Constellation Health Centre)****Health and Social
Services**

-
- We are aiming to connect as many Yukoners with primary health care services as possible through equitable and balanced client onboarding.
 - We are taking a thoughtful approach to the launch and onboarding to ensure that all clients accepted will receive high-quality care.
 - A new, separate application process was set up for Constellation Health Centre to ensure that all Yukoners wanting the opportunity to obtain primary health care services have the chance to provide relevant information and give their informed consent.
 - There continues to be an ongoing rolling intake as we work to recruit additional primary care providers and eventually move into the permanent space at 9010 Quartz Road.
 - Applications are being reviewed and prioritized by a team of professionals at the clinic.
 - Acceptance or waitlist status are informed by the capacity of the clinic's primary care providers, as well as pre-established determinants.
 - The population health determinants include a number of considerations such as current attachment to a primary care provider, complexity of care needs, and French as their primary language, amongst others.
 - If someone is not initially accepted, they will be added to the waitlist and notified when space becomes available.
 - Any openings created as a result of patient movement can be filled through the Find a Primary Care Provider Program or other normal avenues.
 - Yukoners can complete the online application form or access a printable version of the form on Yukon.ca.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Bilingual Health Centre (Centre de santé
Constellation Health Centre)****Health and Social
Services**

-
- For additional assistance, Yukoners can phone the Centre de Santé Constellation Health Centre at (867) 393-7119

Model of Care:

- The Constellation Health Centre is supported by an interdisciplinary team-based model of collaborative care, allowing clients to access a range of different care providers depending on their needs.
- This means Yukoners will be able to receive the right care by the right provider at the right time.
- Registered clients can access primary health care services by booking an appointment in advance, or by accessing same-day appointments that will be set aside for urgent or emerging primary health care needs.
- Constellation Health Centre will not provide walk-in services for un-registered clients.

Program Launch and Space:

- Health and Social Services continues to work with Highways and Public Works to renovate the clinic space at 9010 Quartz Road.
- In the meantime, Constellation is open in an interim space at 102 – 4149 4th Avenue in Whitehorse.

Staffing and Recruitment:

- Recruitment is underway for positions including additional nurse practitioners, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, a medical office assistant, a social worker, and a contracted physician.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Bilingual Health Centre (Centre de santé
Constellation Health Centre)****Health and Social
Services**

- We continue to explore ways to strategically resource care providers to ensure as many Yukoners as possible can access the services available through the clinic.
- All vacant positions are currently being advertised via an extensive recruitment campaign both locally and nationally and the department has retained a recruitment firm that specializes in hiring hard-to-fill positions.
- Most permanent positions for the Centre require bilingual proficiency in both French and English, however not all staff will be bilingual given the challenge to recruit health care providers in midst of a health human resource crisis.
- Contracted physicians will also be expected to have proficiency in both French and English.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Chronic Conditions**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to enhancing supports for Yukoners living with chronic conditions to improve health outcomes.

Key messages:

- We continue to work with our partners to develop a Type 1 Diabetes Strategy for the Yukon.
- Our ongoing work with Yukoners with type 1 diabetes, their families, local advocacy groups and service providers aligns with recommendations in the *Putting People First* report.

Key facts:

- The Chronic Conditions Support Program has budgeted **\$903K** (\$903,457) for the 2023-24 fiscal year.
- As of January 23, 2023, there are 5 permanent FTEs that support the Chronic Conditions Support Program including 2 nurse educators and 1 exercise specialist, plus 2 Auxiliary on Call employees, and contracted dietitians and pharmacists.
- The services provided by the Chronic Conditions Support Program supports all people with or at risk of a chronic condition with condition-specific programming available for respiratory conditions, diabetes, heart failure, and cardiovascular disease.
- As of 2020, data submitted to the Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System estimates there are approximately 3,182 Yukoners living with diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2, excluding gestational diabetes).

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Chronic Conditions**Health and Social
Services

- There are 58 people under the Chronic Disease and Disability Benefit Program and 8 people under the Pharmacare Program enrolled for a glucose monitoring device.

Chronic Conditions Support Program:

- The Chronic Conditions Support Program (CCSP) is a patient-centered, collaborative care team that offers individual and group support with nurse educators, exercise specialists, certified respiratory educators, dietitians, and pharmacists.
- Yukoners are able to access the Chronic Conditions Support Program by self-referral or through their primary care provider.
- Anyone who has or is at-risk for a chronic health condition can access services.
- The Chronic Conditions Support Program continues to offer individual, and group supports to Yukoners managing chronic conditions.
- The Balance and Motion Exercise Program is one of the many programs offered through the Chronic Conditions Support Program. This program continues to operate and intake for new clients is ongoing.
- The main goal of the Chronic Conditions Support Program is to provide high quality self-management support, where programs are aimed at building client competency to move forward and manage their chronic conditions independently.
 - Each client is provided a pre-determined programming end date of typically 8 to 10 weeks for an exercise program, which includes an assessment prior to graduation.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Chronic Conditions**Health and Social
Services

- The Chronic Conditions Support Program continues to work closely with clients to ensure all care needs are met, and that they have access to accurate information regarding ongoing programming options.

Diabetes:

- On May 19, 2021, the Yukon Legislative Assembly unanimously passed Motion No. 30 committing to develop a Type 1 Diabetes Strategy by September 2022.
- The Department of Health and Social Services continues to work with the T1D Support Network toward implementing a territory-wide Type 1 Diabetes Strategy.
- The Type 1 Diabetes Strategy is currently being drafted.
- Interviews and focus groups were completed by the T1D Support Network in late Fall 2022 and formed the basis of the Needs Assessment for the Strategy.
- The strategy is expected to address areas such as management, treatment and care, data collection, learning and knowledge sharing, access to devices, medicines and other supports.
- Health and Social Services, alongside the T1D Support Network, and a variety of partners such as the Department of Education, Diabetes Educators and primary care clinicians.
- The T1D Support Network held a funding agreement with our government for a pilot project to provide Continuous Glucose Monitors for Yukoners with type 1 diabetes.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Chronic Conditions**Health and Social
Services

- Building on the success of the pilot project, our government became the first in Canada to provide Continuous Glucose Monitors for all individuals with type 1 diabetes and to offer funding to those with type 1 diabetes over the age of 18 to cover their choice of glucose monitoring device.

Type Two Diabetes:

- The current evidence related to Continuous Glucose Monitoring and the health outcomes for people with type 2 diabetes is limited. We will continue to actively monitor the emerging evidence in this area.
- In the meantime, a number of supports are available to individuals living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes through the Chronic Conditions Support Program.
 - We offer the Diabetes Wellness Series and various other diabetes group education sessions in collaboration with the Diabetes Education Centre.
 - Chronic Disease Nurse Educator Supports are also available through this program to offer one-on-one education, case management, system navigation and annual foot checks.
 - Exercise Specialist led exercise programming is also available to clients to build healthy habits and better manage blood sugars.
 - The Chronic Conditions Support Program also offers a Chronic Disease Management Toolkit to care providers to assist them with monitoring patients and provide chronic care according to clinical guidelines.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Chronic Conditions

Health and Social
Services

- Additionally, all supplies required to manage blood glucose monitoring of diabetes such as insulin, insulin syringes, insulin pumps, lancets, test strips and glucometers are covered through Insured Health Services.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to ensuring dental care is accessible to all Yukoners and to closing gaps for Yukoners as we continue to implement the recommendations in the *Putting People First* report.

Key Messages

- On January 4, 2023, we launched the new Yukon Dental Program to provide dental benefits to eligible Yukoners.
- The Yukon Dental Program is a recommendation in the *Putting People First* report and a commitment in the 2021 Confidence and Supply Agreement with the Yukon NDP.
- The program is intended to fill gaps in our current programs and provide more Yukoners with access to essential dental care.
- Yukoners registered in the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits program and Non-Insured Health Benefit clients currently have access to dental care.
 - Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits clients can receive \$600 through the Yukon Dental Program in addition to the \$1,400 available every two years through the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits program.
- Children ages 0-5, in Kindergarten to Grade Eight living in Whitehorse, and in Kindergarten to Grade Twelve living in communities are also able to access dental services through the Yukon Children's Dental Program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

- The dental care needs of adults living in rural Yukon communities are met by an itinerant dentist or a Whitehorse-based dental clinic and through Non-Insured Health Benefits for those eligible.
- We are pleased to continue to work with dental care providers in the territory to support Yukoners' oral health.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$5.43M** (\$5,425,852) in the Yukon Dental Program. This includes an increase of **\$3.62M** (\$3,623,498) over the 2022-23 Main Estimates.
- The new Yukon Dental Program officially launched on January 4, 2022.
 - Up to 8,000 Yukoners may benefit from the program.
- As of April 25, 2023, over 1,000 individuals have been found eligible and enrolled in Yukon Dental Program.
- Applications for the Yukon Dental Program are being processed within four to five days, with emergent care applications processed same-day.
- The Government of Yukon is providing **\$526,680** over three years to Pacific Blue Cross to administer the delivery of the Yukon Dental Program.
- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, the itinerant dentist made two visits to Dawson City, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Old Crow and Mayo, and one visit to Faro.
- During the 2021-22 school year, the Yukon Children's Dental Program provided service to approximately 2,500 school-aged children.
- The Preschool Dental Program services approximately 300 to 500 children per year.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

Itinerant Dentist:

- On March 31, 2023, the Department of Health and Social Services' contract with an itinerant dentist to service Yukon communities ended.
- As of April 26, 2023, there is no itinerant dental contract in effect, as no dentists have submitted a proposal to enter into an agreement with the department.
- The Yukon Children's Dental Program put out an Expression of Interest for an itinerant dentist for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2025, with the possibility of a one-year extension.
- This expression of interest has been advertised broadly through the Yukon Dental Association, as well as through national channels, including the Canadian Dental Association Journal, the Dental Connection Website, and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Dental Directors Working Group, amongst others.
- Yukoners can still access dental services in Whitehorse until a new itinerant dentist can be put in place.
- The Yukon Children's Dental Program also continues to provide services to Yukoners living in rural communities under the age of 18.
- This previous itinerant dentist provided service to Dawson City, Old Crow, Mayo, Carmacks, Watson Lake, and Faro. Residents of Ross River have access to the itinerant dentist through the Faro clinic.
- Based on current uptake within communities, the number of visits by the itinerant dentist is meeting the level of need.
- As we work to identify a new itinerant dentist, we will work together to assess whether additional community visits and clinic locations are required.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

- The itinerant dentist was able to support all clients who sought care and the dentist provided follow-up appointments during subsequent visits, if necessary.

Yukon Children's Dental Program:

- Children and students have access to publicly funded dental care through the Preschool Dental Program and the Yukon Children's Dental Program.
- Due to the local, national and global shortage of health care providers, the Yukon Children's Dental Program is experiencing staffing shortages.
- The Preschool Dental Program was temporarily suspended during the 2021-22 school year to focus on school-based clinics. Currently, the program is operating on a part-time basis and is offering its full scope of services.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Yukon Children's Dental Program temporarily suspended services.
 - While the program was suspended, the program office remained staffed to answer questions and screen clients.
- The Yukon Children's Dental Program resumed service delivery by fall 2020 with some modifications, and the program had fully resumed its full scope of services by January 2021.
- Throughout the duration of the temporary pause, children who required care were provided with referrals to a private dentist in Whitehorse, with costs covered by the program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

Yukon Dental Program (CASA):

- The Yukon Dental Program officially launched on January 4, 2023, providing \$1,300 per year in dental benefits to eligible Yukoners.
- The program covers dental treatments necessary to relieve pain and infection, prevent disease and restore chewing and social function, and offers full coverage for preventive care, such as routine dental cleaning.
- To be eligible for the program, the applicant's gross income must be \$60,000 or less for individuals and \$90,000 or less for individuals with two children (family of three).
 - The threshold progressively increases with family size.
 - Yukoners must also be enrolled in the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan and not be eligible for dental coverage under any other insurance program, plan or group.
 - The Canada Dental Benefit recently announced for children 12 and under will not impact eligibility for the Yukon Dental Plan.
- Yukoners eligible for the Pharmacare and Extended Health Care Benefits programs, and who apply and meet the income threshold, could receive \$600 through the Yukon Dental Program in addition to the \$1,400 available every two years through the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits program.
- Youth are also eligible for the program if their caregivers meet the income threshold and they are not eligible for the Yukon Children's Dental Program.
- The department is unable to reimburse the costs of dental work received before an individual has been approved for enrollment in the program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

- Yukoners with private dental insurance are not eligible to receive a top-up through the Yukon Dental Program.
- The eligibility model used for this program considered factors such as administration capacity, cost, and timelines, to ensure the program could begin providing dental benefits to Yukoners as soon as possible.
- As we consider the future evolution of the program, we are committed to conducting further analysis on areas for improvement.
- This work will be done in concert with monitoring and evaluating how the current and future federal programs impact the Yukon Dental Program.
- As part of our evaluation plan, we will be reaching out to Yukoners to receive their feedback on what is working and what could be improved with the program. This is intended to be done after enough time has passed, so that people have had enough time to utilize the program.

Federal program:

- In March 2022, the Liberal Party of Canada and Canada's New Democratic Party reached an agreement, which includes the promise to launch a new dental care program for low-income Canadians.
- The federal plan has launched for children under 12 years of age; and is set to launch in 2023 for children under 18, seniors, and people with disabilities; and in 2025 for all eligible Canadians.
- In September 2022, the federal government announced they will provide payments up to \$650 per year for each child under 12 years in families without private or employer supported insurance and an adjusted net annual income under \$90,000.
- This coverage is available as of December 1, 2022, and will cover expenses retroactive to October 1, 2022 until June 30, 2023.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Dental**Health and Social
Services

- These payments serve as a stop-gap measure meant to cover low-income families while the government works out a permanent plan and will not impact eligibility to Government of Yukon programs.
- While the Government of Yukon has implemented our territory-wide dental program, the department will work to make adjustments as further details become available on federal intentions.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to creating an integrated and person-centered healthcare system that operates in a seamless, coordinated way.

Key messages:

- Yukon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff work tirelessly to provide Yukoners with timely and high-quality health care services across the territory.
- Increased pressures resulting from the local, national, and global shortage of health care providers continue to be mitigated through a variety of approaches to reduce patient and staff impacts and to prioritize critical care.
- As part of our work to implement the *Putting People First* report, we are taking steps to align health services across the territory, like transitioning Yukon EMS from Community Services to Health and Social Services.
- This transfer is an organizational improvement intended to align the health services across the territory in a way that enables care to be more person-centered and more effectively integrated to promote seamless care transitions.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$12.3M** (\$12,301,000) for EMS. This is a net zero transfer between the department of Community Services and the Department of Health and Social Services
- There are 87.3 FTEs and 98 Community Responders providing EMS across the territory.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

- Currently, operations including Medevac Services, the Paramedic Specialist Clinic at WES and the Paramedics Response Unit are fully staffed in Whitehorse.
- EMS is currently experiencing a shortage of responders in Pelly Crossing and Tagish.
- EMS continues to recruit and increase the number of staff responders in Whitehorse and in all Communities.
- In 2022, EMS in Yukon communities had full coverage 68% of the time, while EMS in Dawson City and Watson Lake had full coverage approximately 95% of the time or higher.
- EMS coverage is supported by the following number of responders in each community:
 - Beaver Creek – 7 community responders
 - Carcross – 7 community responders
 - Carmacks – 8 community responders
 - Destruction Bay – 10 community responders
 - Dawson City – 9 community responders, 2.0 full-time and 3.0 AOC employees
 - Eagle Plains – 1 community responder
 - Faro – 8 community responders
 - Haines Junction – 11 community responders
 - Marsh Lake – 6 community responders
 - Mayo – 8 community responders
 - Pelly Crossing – 1 community responder
 - Tagish – 4 community responders
 - Ross River – 5 community responders
 - Teslin – 7 community responders

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

- Watson Lake – 7 community responders, 4.0 full-time, and 4.0 AOC employees
- Whitehorse – 22.0 full-time, 3.0 Part time FTEs, 14.0 AOC, and 6 casual employees.
- There are 3.0 FTEs supporting the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter at 405 Alexander and 2.0 FTEs are part of the paramedic response unit.
- There are 14.0 full time, 2.0 part time, 3.0 AOC, and 1.0 casual employee also supporting our air ambulance services.

Ambulances:

- In the 2023-24 budget, we have provided **\$628K** (\$628,000) to support ambulance replacements for Emergency Medical Services.
- These new ambulances will be introduced into the EMS fleet and deployed to communities based on an assessment of clinical and operational requirements.
- The EMS fleet (Ambulances) are deployed throughout Emergency Medical Services and moved routinely throughout the territory, based on capacity and need.
- During the 2022 calendar year, there was one occurrence of an air ambulance response due no local coverage.
- As of March 31, 2023, there have been zero occurrences of an air ambulance response due to no local coverage in 2023.

Communities:

- EMS provides both ground and air transports for patients in communities requiring care at Whitehorse General Hospital.
- In communities like Dawson City, EMS use a combination of Government of Yukon Paramedics and local Emergency Medical Responders.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

Watson Lake:

- In Watson Lake, there are 4 full time Primary Care Paramedics working 7 days a week (day time), as well as 4 auxiliary-on-call positions and 6 active community responders in Watson Lake.
- Due to increased call volumes in Watson Lake, Yukon Emergency Medical Services shifted to a new staffing model at the Watson Lake ambulance station, through a hybrid of both employees and community responders.
- The new staffing model provides funding equivalent to 3.2 full-time positions of additional employee-based coverage, and funding to cover standby costs when community responders are unavailable.
 - These positions, which can be broken out into full-time, part-time, or auxiliary-on-call positions, provide coverage in Watson Lake for more than 10 hours per day, seven days per week.
- Watson Lake had 98% coverage in 2021 and 97% coverage in 2022. In the month of January 2023, we had 100% coverage. Coverage means a local ambulance is staffed at that time.
- Watson Lake EMS call volume has stayed relatively stable over the past 3 years with an average of approximately 420 calls per year.

Dawson City:

- In Dawson City, there are 2 full-time Primary Care Paramedics working 5 days-per-week, as well as 4 Auxiliary-On-Call positions, and 9 active community responders in the community.
- Dawson City had 98% coverage in 2021 and 86% coverage in 2022. In the month of January 2023, this increased to 89% coverage.
- In 2022, Yukon EMS in Dawson City responded to 295 calls.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

Drug Testing:

- Yukon EMS is working to advance a range of harm reduction initiatives in response to the Substance Use Health Emergency.
- All Yukon EMS units carry Naloxone Kits and Emergency Communications Response Officers are trained to deliver Naloxone administration instructions over the phone.
- Yukon EMS is actively distributing home drug testing kits, which are currently available at **405 Alexander**, the Paramedic Response Unit in Whitehorse and several communities.

Shortages:

- At times, incident volume exceeds available resources. This is not unique to the Yukon and can happen with all Emergency Services locally, nationally and internationally.
- We have a variety of ways to manage these situations and reduce the impact to patients and prioritize critical care. To ensure coverage, EMS may reposition people and ambulances, call on the nearest units, use medevac, or work with the client to figure out alternative transport.
- Our dispatchers are highly trained to triage calls and deliver medical instructions over the phone before the arrival of an ambulance.
- Their goal is getting the right resource to the right place at the right time.
- EMS maintains recruitment and new staff orientation programs and is always looking for community responders and professionals. EMS recruitment strategies have allowed the services to bolster capacity.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

Code Red/Yellow:

- Code Reds occur when EMS services have been requested and there are no ambulances immediately available to respond.
- Code Yellows occur when EMS transport resources are not available for call assignment and no patient transport requests are pending. Although Code Yellows may occur in the Yukon, there is no formal data on their occurrence.
- Code Reds are tracked in Whitehorse, but not in other communities where ambulance dispatch is done through Community Nursing.
- Between January 2022 and October 2023, there were approximately 235 Code Reds. The impacts of these instances varies and EMS continually monitors code reds to insure mitigation strategies are in place.
- A Code Red is more likely to occur in Whitehorse due to higher call volume and inter-facility transfers.

Training:

- Yukon Emergency Medical Services offers a variety of training methods and programs aimed to increase recruitment and retention of community responders, and to ensure support for community responders throughout the territory.
 - This includes a training centre, mobile training unit, high fidelity training mannequins, on-line learning platform, local training nights, certificate courses, and two dedicated clinical educators; in addition to peer support groups and mental wellness and supports with a focus on psychological health and safety of our first responders.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

- Yukon Emergency Medical Services also provides accredited core training and certification for Emergency Medical Services Community Responders through the Emergency Care and Safety Institute Emergency Medical Responder Program.
- Yukon Emergency Medical Services has two clinical educator positions dedicated to education and training. These positions provide in person and virtual training in Whitehorse and communities.
- EMS hosts bi-weekly training nights for community responders
- EMS recently increased monetary compensation to four hours of non-operational pay per month to encourage community responder attendance and support biweekly training nights.
- Community Responders are reimbursed \$20/hour to attend training and have access to additional funding to attend training programs outside of their home area. This includes an additional offset for meals, incidentals, tuition, books and accommodations.
- In addition to this funding, community responders receive a retention bonus of \$1,000.00 upon completion of 250 hours of on-call duties.
- EMS provides \$110,000 to the Volunteer Ambulance Society to provide funding for additional educational opportunities, awards and recognition and community engagement.

Transfer to HSS:

- On April 1, 2023, EMS was officially integrated into the Department of Health and Social Services' Community and Primary Care.
- Community and Primary Care and EMS both play a vital role in caring for Yukoners and this integration will improve service delivery to Yukoners.
- The integration of EMS into Community and Primary Care will leverage the exceptional performance and care provided by EMS staff while

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**Health and Social
Services

fostering closer collaboration amongst staff, community responders and health care providers at Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, Community Nursing, as well as other units.

- A key aspect of the integration will be ensuring that the frontline workers are involved in the changes that will affect them and are understood on individual and program-wide levels.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Gender and Reproductive Care

Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting Yukoners in creating reproductive care plans and expanding access to sexual and reproductive health, and gender-affirming care.

Key messages:

- We are working to support Yukoners to access health and reproductive care and services by increasing access and supports to gender-affirming care, birth control, and period products.
- We released the *LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan* in July 2021, and are implementing the recommendations of the *Putting People First* report.
- We continue to work with stakeholders and partners including the federal government, health care providers, the Yukon Medical Association, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, and Yukon First Nations to implement these initiatives.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we are partnering with Queer Yukon to provide funding equivalent to one FTE with funding offset by funds previously allocated to All Genders Yukon who are no longer operational.
- The Yukon Sexual Health Clinic and the Yukon Women's MidLife Health Clinic are supported by three Nurse Practitioners.
- The Yukon government and Council for Yukon First Nations signed a **\$100K** (\$100,000) Transfer Payment Agreement in March 2022 to deliver period products to Yukon schools and other venues, in conjunction with federal funds administered by the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

- During the 2022 calendar year, 53 Yukoners were diagnosed with syphilis, representing 121 infections per 100,000 people.
- Over 90% of those diagnosed had treatment either prescribed or administered within 30 days of diagnosis.
- The 2022 rate is seven times higher than the 2021 rate, 17 times higher than 2020 rate, and is the Yukon's highest rate of syphilis infections since at least 1979.

Abortion Access (U.S. Residents):

- In June 2022, the United States Supreme Court overruled the Roe v. Wade decision which protected the right to abortion under the Constitution of the United States.
- It is expected that many states will introduce new restrictions or bans, impacting pregnancy termination options in the coming months.
- Abortion rights currently remain protected under the Constitution of the State of Alaska.
- Therapeutic (surgical) and medical (medication) pregnancy termination options are available in the Yukon to Yukoners at no additional cost.
 - Mifepristone is available in Dawson City, Watson Lake and in Whitehorse via the Opal Clinic.
 - Surgical abortions are performed only at the Whitehorse General Hospital.
- In the Yukon, pregnancy termination options are available up to 15 weeks plus 3 days of pregnancy. For pregnancies over this threshold and up to 24 weeks, services are available through the British Columbia Women's Hospital, which are covered by the Yukon Health Insurance Plan or by Non-Insured Health Benefits.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

- In October 2018, the Government of Yukon publicly funded Mifegymiso for medical abortions.
- Mifegymiso is a Health Canada approved combination product containing two drugs (mifepristone and misoprostol) that are taken in sequence for the medical termination of a pregnancy.

Birth Control:

- British Columbia has announced it will become the first jurisdiction to provide free prescription coverage for contraception.
- Coverage for birth control is currently available to youth enrolled in the Children's Drug and Optical Program, which is available to lower-income families with children 18 years of age and younger.
- Birth control is covered for social assistance recipients by Income Support Services.
- The Yukon Sexual Health Clinic also provides a variety of conception control productions to clients of clinic.
- Our government is committed to supporting Yukoners in accessing sexual and reproductive health, and gender-affirming care, and will continue to explore options to expand access to birth control.
- The development of a new program will first require careful planning, research, and engagement with Yukoners and partners from across the health system.

Endometriosis:

- Endometriosis is a disease of the female reproductive system that occurs when tissues similar to the lining of the uterus implants abnormally outside of the uterus to form lesion, cysts, and other growths. This can

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

cause pain, internal scarring and adhesions, infertility, and other medical complications.

- According to Endometriosis Canada, endometriosis affects 1 in 10 women, trans and non-binary menstruators of reproductive age in Canada.
- In the Yukon, delivery of care for the treatment of endometriosis ranges from medication and hormone therapy options to surgery, which are delivered by primary care providers and OBGYNs at the Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - The Yukon Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program also provides coverage for certain medications used to treat endometriosis.
- There are ongoing discussions occurring at the federal, provincial and territorial level around reducing the impacts of the disease at both individual and population levels.
- The Government of Yukon will continue to contribute to these ongoing discussions and review emerging research to explore ways to better support Yukoners dealing with the impacts of endometriosis.

Fertility Treatments:

- In 2021, our government committed to expanding the support available to Yukoners undergoing fertility treatments such as subsidies to offset the cost of treatments.
- We are excited to be building on these commitments in the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement by including fertility treatment in medical travel and to creating a refundable tax rebate for fertility treatments by 2025.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

- Implementing initiatives of this magnitude will require significant work and take time to develop as we conduct necessary regulatory and legislative assessments and amendments.
- We are currently in the planning stages and are not yet in a position to provide specific information on what this program will look like, including details such as eligibility or coverage.
- As we are pursuing a refundable tax rebate approach, treatment for infertility has not been deemed an insured service.
- Currently, when a consult has been approved for initial fertility testing, medical travel will be approved to support an individual to access a consult with a fertility specialist at a publicly funded health facility.
- Physicians who perform intra-uterine insemination can also bill the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan for this procedure with all other costs covered by the patient.

Gender-Affirming Care:

- The Yukon continues to lead country in advancing access to gender-affirming surgical and non-surgical procedures and services, and our commitment to providing this coverage has never wavered.
- On March 12, 2021, the Government of Yukon announced changes to significantly improve access to these services.
- Following this announcement, it was determined that additional work was required to ensure delivery and access to the additional services announced in March 2021 could be appropriately provided.
- We are pleased that in December 2022, the Government of Yukon completed the necessary regulatory amendments to allow Yukoners to receive health insurance coverage for gender-affirming care services that are not insured by other provinces and territories.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Gender and Reproductive Care

Health and Social
Services

- These changes do not impact services, such as fertility treatments, that are not insured services under the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan.
- This addresses the gap Yukoners faced when accessing gender-affirming care offered in private facilities.
- Yukoners can now access services including tracheal shave, facial feminization, body contouring, vocal surgery and hair removal without having to pay out-of-pocket or in advance.
- We have been working with clients and providers to review requests for coverage and to provide updates on the status of applications. All files currently with Insured Health are moving through approvals, and some clients have already received services.
- The department recognizes the importance of these services for the transgender and gender diverse community, and we are pleased that this regulatory amendment enables Yukoners to now access this care.
- We continue to implement recommendations in the *LGBTQ2S+ Inclusion Action Plan* to enhance health equity in the territory.
- We remain committed to working with our partners, including community organizations, to advance gender-inclusive health and social care.
 - In June 2022, we supported Yukon counsellors from both government and non-government organizations to attend training from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.
 - We have committed to providing **\$471K** (\$471,027) over three years in funding starting in 2023-24 to Queer Yukon to hire a health care navigator position to support 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners by removing barriers and helping to identify pathways to care.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

Pap Tests:

- Pap tests can be completed by an individual's primary health care provider. Yukoners with questions about pap tests or cervical cancer screening should contact their primary health care provider.
- The Sexual Health Clinic and the Women's Midlife Clinic in Whitehorse offer a range of sexual and reproductive health services.
- Samples are sent to the Yukon Hospital Corporation and are then sent for processing by our lab partners in British Columbia.
- The Yukon recently transitioned to using liquid-based cytology, a new sample collection method that aligns with our lab partners in British Columbia.
- We expect results will now be returned to Yukon's primary care providers faster.
- Our government is committed to increasing access to preventative care and reducing the risk of developing cervical cancer.
- We expanded eligibility for the HPV vaccine, which is now publicly funded for all Yukoners between the ages of 9 and 26, HIV positive individuals, and other high-risk individuals between the ages of 9 and 25.
- The HPV vaccine can be administered at a local pharmacy without a prescription, through a Community Health Centre with an appointment, or for Grade 6 students during routine school-based clinics.

Period Products:

- All Yukon schools have been equipped with period products for the 2022-23 fiscal year through the \$100,000 transfer payment agreement to the Council of Yukon First Nations, federal funds and existing initiatives.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Gender and Reproductive Care**Health and Social
Services

- This is a joint initiative between the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education, and the Council of Yukon First Nations.
- Work is underway with the Department of Highways and Public Works to distribute period products in public washrooms in Government of Yukon buildings.
- The Council of Yukon First Nations has also provided period products to non-government organizations in Whitehorse.

Syphilis:

- The Yukon is seeing increasing rates of syphilis across the territory.
- Syphilis is spread through sexual contact and can cause serious, long-term health harms when left untreated.
- The Government of Yukon has launched a territory-wide campaign to raise awareness about the growing number of cases and to encourage Yukoners to get tested.
- We encourage all sexually active Yukoners to use protections and make testing a regular part of their sexual health routine.
- Yukoners can contact their health care provider or Community Health Centre to arrange testing and should call Yukon Communicable Disease Control at (867) 667-8323, if they have further questions.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Insured Health Coverage**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting the health care needs of Yukoners through insured health coverage and benefits that are easy to access, equitable and evidence based.

Key messages:

- We are continuously seeking ways to improve insured health coverage to best meet the needs of all Yukoners.
- The new Yukon Dental Program is an example of our commitment to expanding coverage and reducing inequities.
- *Putting People First* recommendations for insured health coverage include:
 - Creating an income tested, payer-of-last-resort public plan for extended benefits.
 - Determine how to coordinate delivery of non-insured health benefits to all Yukoners to ensure consistency in benefits and efficient delivery.
 - Create a separate, stand-alone disability benefit for those with permanent disabilities.
 - Harmonize and simplify Government of Yukon pharmaceutical programs and outsource the administration of these programs.

Key facts:

- Enrollment in the Children's Drug and Optical Plan:
 - There were 63 people enrolled during the 2021-22 fiscal year.
 - There were 55 people enrolled during the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Insured Health Coverage**Health and Social
Services

- Enrollment in the Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program:
 - There were 1,276 people receiving benefits during the 2021-22 fiscal year.
 - There were 1,204 people receiving benefits during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- Enrollment in the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits Program:
 - There were 6,191 people receiving benefits during the 2021-22 fiscal year.
 - There were 6,616 people receiving benefits during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- Enrollment in the Yukon Dental Program:
 - Between January 4 and April 17, 2023, a total of 925 Yukoners have been assessed and enrolled in the program. Eligible Yukoners are encouraged to apply.
- Extended benefits are provided to status First Nations and Inuit through the federal government's Non-Insured Health Benefits program.
 - This includes coverage for pharmaceuticals, dental care, medical supplies and medical travel.

Baby Formula / EpiPens Coverage:

- The Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits program provides supports to eligible Yukoners under the age of 65 to help cover some costs associated with managing their chronic disease or disabilities.
- A chronic disease is defined as a health condition that is marked by long duration or frequent recurrence and is specified in the Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Regulation.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Insured Health Coverage**Health and Social
Services

- The program provides coverage for approximately 80 chronic conditions, which are determined by regulation, including certain conditions in the following categories:
 - Congenital Metabolic Diseases
 - Congenital Chromosomal Diseases
 - Congenital Development Defect Sequellae
 - Neurological Disease
 - Cardiac Diseases
 - Respiratory Diseases
 - Gastrointestinal Diseases
 - Renal Diseases
 - Dermatological Diseases
 - Endocrine Diseases
 - Chronic Infective Diseases
 - Cancer
 - Psychoses
 - Diseases of the Blood
 - Chronic Collagen and Vascular Diseases
 - Osteoporosis.
- Allergic Disease is not listed as a chronic condition under the program and therefore does not qualify as a benefit under Chronic Disease and Disability Benefit program.
 - As a result, nutritional supplements for reason of allergy and EpiPens are not eligible for coverage under this benefit.
- EpiPens are covered for eligible Yukoners through the Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits program with exception status, and the Children's Drug and Optical Program, which is available to lower-income families with children 18 years of age and younger.
- Through the Children's Drug and Optical Program, eligible Yukoners may be covered for prescription drugs and eye care for children. The program does make allowances for food supplements if prescribed by a primary care provider and approved, as consistent with legislation.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Insured Health Coverage**Health and Social
Services

- Both EpiPens and nutritional supplements including hypoallergenic baby formula are also covered for social assistance recipients by Income Support Services, when required.

Biosimilars:

- The Government of Yukon has made enhancements to our public drug plan with biosimilars.
- Yukoners enrolled in the Pharmacare or Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits programs taking originator biologic drugs may need to switch to a biosimilar.
- Biosimilars are highly similar but less expensive version of the original biologic drug with no clinically meaningful differences in safety and efficacy.
- Switching to biosimilars will result in significant cost savings that will improve the sustainability of the Yukon's public drug plan.
- Eligible Yukoners enrolled in Pharmacare and the Chronic Disease and Disability Program will have six months to work with a health-care provider to switch a biosimilar included in the initiative to maintain coverage.

The Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan:

- The Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan provides evidence-based coverage for required hospital and medical services and some dental-surgical procedures.
- Insured health coverage also includes travel for medical treatment, air or ground ambulance services, and the costs of related services such as hospital transfer, escorts and return transportation charges.
- Coverage is for eligible Yukon residents. A resident is defined as anyone lawfully entitled to be or remain in Canada, who lives in the Yukon and is

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Insured Health Coverage**Health and Social
Services

not absent for more than six months. This does not include tourists or other visitors to the Yukon.

Children's Drug and Optical Program:

- The Children's Drug and Optical Program helps cover the costs of prescription drugs and eye care for children aged 18 and under. This program is for lower-income families.
- The program is available to provide coverage for services such as prescriptions, eyewear and eye examinations, and physician recommended medical supplies, prenatal vitamins, and wart treatments.
- Benefits are administered in accordance with the *Children's Drug and Optical Program Regulation*.

Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Program:

- The program provides coverage for Yukon residents who have a chronic disease or disability and are under the age of 65. It is a payer of last resort program that covers a range of chronic diseases and disabilities.
- This program bases benefits for prescription drugs on the lowest priced interchangeable products available.
- The program is available to support with coverage such as prescription drugs, medical and surgical supplies, medical equipment, food supplements, and prostheses.
- Benefits are administered in accordance with the *Chronic Disease and Disability Benefits Regulation*.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Insured Health Coverage

Health and Social
Services

Pharmacare and Extended Health Benefits Program:

- This program assists individuals over the age of 65, as well as Yukoners between the ages of 60 and 64 who are married to a Yukon resident who is 65 or older.
- The program is available to support with coverage such as prescription drugs, dental care, eye care, and medical-surgical supplies and equipment.
- Benefits are administered in accordance with the *Pharmacare Plan Regulation* and the *Extended Health Benefits Regulation*.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Medical Travel**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting Yukoners to access services they need, including medical travel and care coordination.

Key messages:

- Our government continues to expand in-territory programs to ensure that more Yukoners can access care closer to home.
- We understand that some people still need to travel outside their home communities to receive medical services and we are committed to supporting these Yukoners to do so.
- Our program provides support for insured health services that are not available in someone's home community.
- We are investing in enhancements to our Care Coordination and Medical Travel unit by implementing recommendations from the Medical Travel Review and *Putting People First*, and by incorporating feedback from Yukoners.
- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, we have committed to including fertility treatments in medical travel.

Key facts:

- The medical travel subsidy is \$155 per day.
 - This amount is adjusted to inflation based on the Consumer Price Index and is calculated as of April 1 of each fiscal year.
 - Effective April 1, 2023, the medical travel subsidy will be increased to \$166 per day.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Medical Travel**Health and Social
Services

- In addition to the medical travel subsidy, eligible clients receiving social assistance may have their hotel costs covered for outpatient medical travel.
- In fiscal year 2022-23 and as of February, 21, 2023, Insured Health Medical Travel has had:
 - 3,613 in territory medical travel cases
 - 2,940 out of territory medical travel cases
 - 351 in territory medevac cases
 - 307 out of territory medevac cases
- During the 2021-22 fiscal year, Insured Health Medical Travel supported:
 - 3,547 in territory medical travel cases
 - 2,126 out of territory medical travel cases
 - 378 in territory medevac cases
 - 326 out of territory medevac cases

Care Coordination:

- We are implementing further elements of the Care Coordination Unit to improve the experience of Yukoners travelling for medical services.
- Supporting individuals during transitions in their care journey, including both during medical travel experiences and their discharge planning is an important aspect of improving the health care system.
- The department and the Yukon Hospital Corporation have recently started a quality improvement initiative called Bridges to Home with the British Columbia Patient Safety and Quality Council focused on improving care transitions between hospital, home and community.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Medical Travel**Health and Social
Services

Medical Travel Review and Putting People First:

- We are exploring the recommendation to deliver a safe and alternative driving service to support Yukoners to travel to Whitehorse to access care.
- *Putting People First* recommendations related to medical travel have been implemented.
 - Double the medical travel subsidy and index to inflation annually, as well as introducing this subsidy on day one of travel for patients and escorts.
 - End the restrictions on medical travel destinations.
- An evaluation of the medevac program has been completed and a report was shared with the department.
- Work is underway to increase the use of virtual care alternatives and conduct research into how to address travel-related barriers for lower-income Yukoners.

Residences:

- Recommendation 2.6 of the *Putting People First* report is to create residences for medical travelers who are low income, require an extended stay, are Elders and others who may not feel comfortable travelling outside of their home communities.
- While we conduct longer term work related to establishing medical travel residences in Whitehorse and Vancouver, we are also considering short-term solutions such as booking hotel rooms in these cities.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Medical Travel

Health and Social
Services

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialized Medical Treatments**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to helping Yukoners live happy, healthy lives by providing access to the services and medications they need.

Key messages:

- Our government continues to make evidence-informed decisions to support Yukoners to access medical treatments and services.
- As a small, northern jurisdiction, it is not always possible to offer all services in-territory, which is why we are working closely with our partners locally and nationally to review evidence and identify pathways to access care.

Drug Shortages:

- Canada is experiencing historic demand for pediatric ibuprofen and acetaminophen and constraints on product availability for adult cold and flu medicine.
- Amoxicillin, an antibiotic used to treat a wide variety of bacterial infections, is also experiencing national shortage pressures.
- Health Canada is addressing these concerns with partners to increase supply, including by working with manufacturers and by importing foreign supply.
- The Department of Health and Social Services is closely monitoring this situation and sits on several Drug Shortage Task forces developed as part of the national COVID-19 response.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialized Medical Treatments**Health and Social
Services

- At this time, the Yukon Hospital Corporation is managing any pressures and is working alongside our Community Nursing branch to ensure Yukoners are supported.
- Our hospitals and pharmacists are also mitigating these pressures by using and supporting the use of alternative products where possible.
- Yukoners with questions about cold and flu medications are encouraged to speak with their pharmacist, who can provide recommendations and next steps.

Hemodialysis:

- There are currently 50 people in the Yukon with chronic kidney disease being followed by BC Renal.
- Nine people undergo dialysis treatment at home through either peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis.
- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, the Government of Yukon has committed to creating a working group comprised of the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Leader of the Yukon NDP to consider the Northwest Territories model of hemodialysis services.
- BC Renal supports Yukoners who need dialysis or a kidney transplant.
- Their guidelines do not recommend developing a hemodialysis centre in the Yukon.
- These guidelines recommend establishing a hemodialysis centre for a population of 85,000 with six to eight beds that can service approximately 24 patients. At this time, there are fewer than five individuals requiring this level of support in the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialized Medical Treatments**Health and Social
Services

- Establishing services around insufficient patient numbers can result in sub-standard, unsafe, and unsustainable levels of care, and can lead to difficulty recruiting health care providers and ensuring they are able to maintain their professional competencies.
- The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health concluded that independent dialysis such as peritoneal dialysis and home hemodialysis are as effective as hemodialysis provided in a hospital settings.
- The Yukon does not have the advanced and highly specialized health infrastructure to accommodate all dialysis patients and some individuals requiring dialysis would still need to relocate even with a hemodialysis centre in the Yukon.
- This is the reality of rural and remote settings throughout Canada and not an issue unique to the Yukon. Nationally, we are aware that smaller scale dialysis centres can and do experience operational challenges from supporting smaller populations.
- Yukoners have access to some of the strongest home dialysis supports in the country, through BC Renal.
- The Northwest Territories previously operated three hemodialysis units. The Northwest Territories has different health infrastructure than the Yukon, and places a greater focus on in-center services as opposed to home modalities.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialized Medical Treatments**Health and Social
Services

Spirometry:

- The Department of Health and Social Services has a three-year contract with True North Respiratory to deliver spirometry services.
- As of January 19, 2023, True North Respiratory is completing an average of 50 spirometry tests per month.
 - True North Respiratory receives an average of 51 referrals a month.
- Wait times for spirometry appointments have improved.
- As of January 19, 2023, of the 151 active referrals, 42% have appointments scheduled.
- An oversight committee meets quarterly and has implemented improvements for triaging referrals based on priority.
- Turnaround times for interpreting the tests by a respirologist have improved allowing clients to get the treatment they need for their respiratory diseases faster.
- Patients requiring full pulmonary function tests for diagnosis and assessment of respiratory disease will be referred out of territory.
- True North strives to coordinate appointments with other trips into Whitehorse for clients from communities as testing in the community is no longer being conducted due to safety requirements.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Specialized Medical Treatments

Health and Social
Services

Trikafta:

- Trikafta improves the lives of people with Cystic Fibrosis by improving lung function, life expectancy and quality-of-life by reducing the need for hospitalizations and lung transplants.
- Trikafta was added to Yukon's Drug Formulary in December 2021 for people 12 years of age and older with one copy of the Delta F508 mutation.
- All drugs in Canada follow a standard review and approval process, with each step informing the next.
- The Yukon is a member jurisdiction and participant of both the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health and the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance.
- On April 20, 2022, Health Canada approved Trikafta for people six to eleven years of age who have at least one copy of the Delta F508 mutation
- On August 9, 2022, the Government of Yukon amended the product listing agreement to update the listing criteria of Trikafta.
- On August 9, 2022, Trikafta was modified on the Yukon's Drug Formulary for people six years of age and older with confirmed diagnosis of cystic fibrosis with at least one F508del mutation.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****NGO Funding**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting non-governmental organizations and other partners to provide Yukoners with the best possible care.

Key messages:

- We recognize the essential work done for our communities by non-governmental organizations.
- Our government provides funding through Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services to various non-governmental organizations to support the work that they do.
- We continue to work collaboratively with organizations such as Blood Ties Four Directions and the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon to provide Yukoners with health and social care.
- These organizations are essential to the Yukon's response to the Substance Use Health Emergency.

Key facts:

- We provide funding specific to mental wellness and substance use services to non-government organizations.
- In 2023-24, we budgeted:
 - **\$1.62M** (\$1,615,000) for the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon
 - **\$1.04M** (\$1,036,000) for Blood Ties Four Directions
 - **\$830K** (\$828,000) for Opportunities Yukon

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****NGO Funding**Health and Social
Services

All Genders Yukon:

- In the fall of 2022, All Genders Yukon announced that the organization has folded, so funding will not continue in 2023-24.
- Up until the 2022-23 fiscal year, our government provided All Genders Yukon with funding through a transfer payment agreement with Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, including:
 - **\$161K** (\$161,000) during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
 - **\$272K** (\$272,150) during the 2021-22 fiscal year for counselling services. Of this total, **\$111K** (\$111,150) was related to one-time COVID funding.
 - Prior to the 2022-23 fiscal year, budgeting for All Genders Yukon was **\$108K** (\$108,000) in baseline funding.
- We are committed to ensuring Yukoners can access timely counselling services from World Professional Association for Transgender Health trained providers.
- In June 2022, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services brought trainers from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health to the Yukon.
 - Over 90 mental health clinicians, from our government and non-government organizations attended.
 - Having counsellors from many organization trained by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health ensures clients have a choice in care providers.
- All Mental Wellness and Substance Use Service community hubs have staff trained by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****NGO Funding**Health and Social
Services

- Canadian Mental Health Association of Yukon counsellors are trained by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, as well.

Blood Ties Four Directions Centre Society:

- This fiscal year, we have committed to providing Blood Ties Four Directions with **\$312K** (\$312,000) in core funding.
- Additionally, we are providing **\$87K** (\$87,000) for after-hours support and **\$15K** (\$15,000) for a peer support group.
- We are also providing Blood Ties Four Directions with an additional **\$622K** (\$622,000) for the Supervised Consumption Site.
- This is aligned with our commitments outlined in the *2021 Confidence and Supply Agreement*.

Canada Mental Health Association – Yukon (CASA):

- In 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$1.62M** (\$1,615,000) for the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon.
- We have provided funding to the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon to increase access to mental health services by extending their hours of operation.
- Services are now available in Whitehorse seven-days per week, including walk-in / drop-in services.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association offers a variety of programs, services, and counselling supports, and resources, including the Bounceback program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****NGO Funding**Health and Social
Services

- Yukoners interested in Bounceback are encouraged to contact the Canadian Mental Health Association-Yukon to learn more about this free self-help program that is available to individuals over the age of 15 to support with managing low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress, or worry.
- Yukoners can contact the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon to access drop-in counselling services by calling (867) 668-6429.
- This is aligned with our commitments outlined in the *2021 Confidence and Supply Agreement*.

Opportunities Yukon:

- In addition to multiple projects funded through the Social Supports branch, **\$761K** is provided to Opportunities Yukon to run the Mental Health Transition Unit.

Queer Yukon:

- Our government is providing **\$471,027** over three years to Queer Yukon Society for the 2023-24 fiscal year to hire a health care navigator position to support 2SLGBTQIA+ Yukoners by removing barriers and helping to identify pathways to care.

Second Opinion Society:

- We recognize the essential contributions of non-governmental organizations to Yukoners and are committed to supporting these partners and the work they do.
- Our government provides funding through Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services to several non-governmental organization who provide a variety of important mental health services to Yukoners.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****NGO Funding**Health and Social
Services

- The Second Opinion Society's current Transfer Payment Agreement will expire on March 31, 2023.
- The Department of Health and Social Services has been meeting with the Second Opinion Society to explore opportunities to work together with a revised programming model moving forward.
- We remain committed to working with the Second Opinion Society and to supporting them through the process of developing an updated proposal that ensures appropriate services and programming are made available to residents of the Yukon.
- We continue to work collaboratively with organizations such as Blood Ties Four Directions, Opportunities Yukon, Connective, and the Canadian Mental Health Association – Yukon to provide Yukoners with health and social care.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Land-Based Healing**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting culturally appropriate and safe options for mental wellness and substance use care in the Yukon.

Key messages:

- Land-based healing is an important part of mental wellness in the Yukon.
- Land-based infrastructure and programming has been identified as one of the 12 most pressing priorities in the Yukon Advisory Committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-spirit+ People's released *Priority Action Items for Changing the Story to Upholding Dignity and Justice: Yukon's MMIWG2S+ Strategy*.
- We are proud to support healing initiatives and continue to work with Yukon First Nations governments to explore future land-based healing initiatives.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services staff in communities routinely support land-based programming in coordination with local First Nations governments upon invitation.
- The department also routinely incorporates land-based healing components into its youth programming and Intensive Treatment programs through Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.
- Much of this work aligns with our commitments in the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement to directly support Yukon First Nations to design and implement additional government-funded land-based healing programs.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Land-Based Healing**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$400K** (\$400,000) for the Jackson Lake land-based healing program run by Kwanlin Dün First Nation.
- We have supported five existing land-based healing initiatives in the territory and will continue to work with First Nations governments and partners to support any new land-based healing initiatives.

Initiatives:

- Our government has a long history of funding the Jackson Lake land-based healing program run by Kwanlin Dün First Nation.
 - When requested, we provide clinical supports to Jackson Lake land-based healing program, including counsellors and nursing staff from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.
- In partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's Jackson Lake Healing Camp, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services and the Yukon Liquor Corporation supported the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Society Yukon to hold a week long on-the-land camp for families living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- We are currently working with Liard River First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council to collaborate on land-based healing initiatives.
- We are supporting the Hives for Watson Lake partnership with Liard First Nation, which uses therapeutic and mentorship beekeeping to engage community members in activities focused on harm reduction, mental health, life promotion, suicide prevention and increased community-nature connection.
- Our government is working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to provide a land-based camp for youth involved with the Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' Roots of Hope initiative.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Land-Based Healing**Health and Social
Services

- The Government of Yukon is open to any other proposals brought forward by First Nations.
- The Trilateral Table on Health, which includes representatives from the Government of Canada, Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon, through the Yukon Treatment Centre Working Group, is exploring a trilateral partnership for the development of a Yukon First Nations-led Healing Centre that could provide for a sustainable, robust and comprehensive service model to meet the unique needs of Yukon First Nation citizens.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note

Services (Communities)

Spring 2023Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon recognizes the importance of community-based mental health services.

Key messages:

- We appreciate the ongoing work done by Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' staff to ensure all Yukoners have access to services when and where they need them most.
- There is a network of mental wellness support workers, counsellors and mental health nurses providing services and care for Yukoners in every community.
- The staffing of each hub is continuously re-assessed based on several factors.
- We continue to work with communities and Yukon First Nations governments to meet the unique needs of each community.
- Services delivered to communities include rapid access counselling, on-going one-on-one counselling, group counselling and workshops tailored to communities' specific needs, as well as support work, outreach and harm-reduction services.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$3.47M** (\$3,468,262) for Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Hubs.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services community hubs were created in 2018.
- As of January 17, 2023, there were 1,012 active clients accessing services through a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Hubs.

Session Briefing Note

Services (Communities)

Spring 2023Health and Social
Services

Hub Wait Times:

- At this time, there is a two to four week waitlist for services in Pelly Crossing, Faro and Ross River through the Carmacks Hub.
- There is a two-week waitlist for services in Carmacks.
- There is a one week waitlist for services in Dawson City.
- There is no waitlist for services in Mayo or Old Crow. In-person contacts will depend on the counsellor travel schedule for Old Crow.
- There is no waitlist for services through the Haines Junction/Carcross Hub for adult, child or youth referrals.
- There is no waitlist for services through the Watson Lake Hub for adult referrals. There is a 12 week wait for child and youth clients in Watson Lake.
- Regardless of any wait-times, urgent referrals in any community can be responded to within one to three days.

Carmacks Hub:

- The Carmacks Hub provides services to Carmacks, Pelly Crossing, Faro, and Ross River.
- The Carmacks Hub currently has 2 community counsellor positions, 1 mental health support worker positions, and 1 mental health nurse position.
 - The mental health nurse is currently on leave. The caseload has been covered by a nurse from Whitehorse who travels to the communities regularly, and connects with clients virtually, as well as provides support for specialist appointments in Whitehorse. A two-year backfill of the position is currently underway.
- The community counsellors provide support to children and youth, as well as adults.

Session Briefing Note

Services (Communities)

Spring 2023Health and Social
Services

- A counsellor from the Carmacks Hub visits Pelly Crossing weekly, and a counsellor visits Faro and Ross River on a biweekly basis.

Dawson City Hub:

- The Dawson City Hub provides services to Dawson City, Mayo and Old Crow.
- The Dawson City Hub has 4 community counsellor positions, 2 clinical counsellor positions, 1 child youth and family clinical counsellor position, 2 mental health support worker positions, and 1 mental health nurse position.
 - The mental health nurse in the Dawson City Hub lives and works in the community and can travel to other communities, as needed.
 - 1 community counsellor is currently on leave until July.
 - All other positions in the Dawson City Hub are currently filled.
- An additional clinical counsellor position is dedicated to Mayo. The counsellor in this position lives and works in the community of Mayo full-time.
- A mental health support worker and a clinical counsellor travel to Old Crow on a monthly basis to connect with child and youth as well as adult clients.
- A child youth and family counsellor visits Mayo monthly. Child and youth clients in Mayo are also supported by a full time school counsellor, and the local clinical counsellor is able to support with complex clients.
- The department is working directly with Vuntut Gwitchin Government to coordinate trauma training for Vuntut Gwitchin staff as well as coordinate mental wellness services from various agencies that provide supports to the community.

Session Briefing Note
Services (Communities)**Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

Haines Junction/Carcross Hub:

- The Haines Junction Hub provides services to Haines Junction, Burwash Landing, Beaver Creek, and Carcross.
- In Haines Junction, there is 1 community counsellor position, 1 clinical counsellor position, 1 mental health support worker position, and 1 child youth and family counsellor position.
 - All of these positions are currently filled.
- The community counsellor based in Haines Junction visits Burwash Landing and Beaver Creek biweekly.
- The clinical counsellor based in Haines Junction provides support to Carcross biweekly.
- In Carcross, there is 1 community counsellor position, 1 child, youth and family position, and 2 support worker positions. All of these positions are filled. Three of the staff live in Carcross/Tagish and 1 support worker travels from Whitehorse.
- Recruitment will be starting soon for a counsellor that will be connected to Carcross clients as well as the Referred Care Clinic in Whitehorse. This position will support clients in Carcross who need access to medical care and Opioid Treatment Services through the Referred Care Clinic.
- A mental health nurse position is also allocated to the Haines Junction Hub and provides services to Haines Junction, Burwash Landing, Beaver Creek and Carcross.
 - The nurse can provide support with specialist appointments in Whitehorse and connects with clients virtually as well as through regular travel to these communities to provide services in-person.

Session Briefing Note

Services (Communities)

Spring 2023Health and Social
Services

Watson Lake Hub:

- The Watson Lake Hub currently has 2 community counsellor positions, 1 child youth and family counsellor position, 1 mental health support worker positions, and 1 mental health nurse position.
 - The mental health nurse position for the Watson Lake Hub is based out of Whitehorse. The nurse is able to provide support with specialist appointments in Whitehorse and connect with clients virtually as well as through regular travel to Watson Lake and Teslin to provide services in-person.
 - Recruitment is underway for an additional mental health support worker and 1 youth-focused support worker.
- An additional community counsellor is dedicated to Teslin. This counsellor lives and works in the community of Teslin.
- A child and youth clinical counsellor has been recently hired to provide weekly services to Teslin. The department has worked, and continues to work, closely with Teslin Tlingit Council to integrate this position into the school and community.
 - Previously, the Watson Lake Child and Youth Counsellor traveled to Teslin on a biweekly basis. This additional position will allow the Watson Lake Child and Youth Clinical Counsellor to focus on the child and youth caseload in Watson Lake.

Community Aftercare:

- There is a network of mental wellness support workers, counsellors and mental health nurses providing services and care for Yukoners in every community.
- Services delivered to communities include rapid access counselling, ongoing one-on-one counselling, group counselling and workshops

Session Briefing Note
Services (Communities)**Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

tailored to communities' specific needs, as well as support work, outreach and harm-reduction services.

- This network of supports is able to appropriately support Yukoners returning to their home community after accessing mental health and substance use treatment in Whitehorse or outside of the territory.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services also works with each community to partner with local and First Nations health departments to support aftercare for Yukoners returning home.

Roots of Hope:

- The Roots of Hope initiative by the Mental Health Commission of Canada is an evidence-informed community suicide prevention and life promotion model that aims to build capacity to prevent suicide.
- Our government has hired a Roots of Hope Community Coordinator who remains connected to the Mental Health Commission of Canada and is developing partnerships with First Nations governments and community partners to move the project forward.
- The coordinator is currently working in partnership with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Wellness Department to develop and implement a series of events and initiatives in Dawson City and across the territory.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services supported Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and community partners with a Suicide Prevention Week (Nihè dinch'è jì' wètàzul; It is better when you are with us), which took place from September 12 to September 16, 2022.
 - Activities included suicide prevention training, harm reduction workshops, film screenings and community conversations about how to work to promote life in the community.

**Session Briefing Note
Services (Communities)****Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

- A week of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training followed this event in October 2022.
- The Roots of Hope Coordinator is currently working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Wellness department and a number of youth from Dawson City to host a youth-led retreat from March 6 to March 10, 2023 that aims to elevate youth voices around the topics of youth mental health, substance use, and the Substance Use Health Emergency in the territory.
 - Invitations for this retreat have gone out to each Yukon First Nations government Health Director, and the Chief Administrative Officer of Faro, to nominate two youth/youth leaders from each community to attend.
- This youth-led retreat is projected to be a first step in extending the programs reach to other communities as well as facilitate a continued network of youth leaders in the territory that will focus on wellness initiatives.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note

Services (Whitehorse)

Spring 2023Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to increasing access to mental wellness and substance use services for Yukoners.

Key messages:

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services works in collaboration with other government branches, as well as non-government organizations and Yukon First Nations governments.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services are interconnected across the territory to ensure Yukoners receive the support they need.
- We ensure that services provide users with integrated case-management and person-centered care through a trauma-informed and harm-reduction lens.
- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services is committed to ongoing patient journey mapping to help provide a voice for Yukoners who access services, so that together we can identify opportunities for improvement and find solutions for issues.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$25.7M** (\$25,719,233) in Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.
- As of April 1, 2023, there have been over 2,500 visits to the Supervised Consumption Site since it opened in September 2021.
- Between January 1 and April 2023, there have been:
 - 270 clients enrolled in Opioid Treatment Services.
 - Approximately 750 monthly visits to the Referred Care Clinic and 675 patients.
 - 45 people admitted into Intensive Treatment Services.

Session Briefing Note
Services (Whitehorse)**Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

- 356 people admitted into Withdrawal Management, with 429 delayed admission.
- In 2022 there were;
 - 267 clients who used Opioid Treatment Services.
 - 747 monthly visits to the Referred Care Clinic and 616 patients.
 - 195 people admitted into Intensive Treatment Services.
 - 935 people admitted into Withdrawal Management.
- As of March 2023, we had distributed more than 1,867 take home naloxone kits since the beginning of this year.
 - In 2022, we distributed 7,264 kits.
 - In 2021, we distributed 3,571 kits.
- Four Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Hubs were opened in 2018, and all communities have access to services through a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services Hub located in Carmacks, Dawson City, Haines Junctions/Carcross, or Watson Lake.
- Rapid Access Counselling is available to all Yukoners – call 1-866-456-3838 or (867) 456-3838 to make a counselling appointment within 72 hours.

Child, Youth and Family Treatment Team:

- Whitehorse currently has 11 clinical counsellor positions and 2 clinical supervisors who carry caseloads.
- Counsellors are regularly scheduled in high schools and other agencies throughout Whitehorse such as the Teen Parent Centre, Aurora Virtual School and the Youth Achievement Centre, among others.
- In addition, other group programs are offered to support children, youth and families.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Services (Whitehorse)

Health and Social
Services

- Group programming covers topics such as: understanding ADHD, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for adolescents, parenting support, emotional and behavioural regulation, and anxiety and depression groups.

Counselling Services:

- Individual and group counselling services are offered through Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services at the Sarah Steele building.
- A variety of drop-in group counselling sessions are offered at the Sarah Steele building as well, including;
 - **Foundations and Elements:** provides education, awareness and strategies on topics such as change, emotions, self-care, understanding trauma, substance use and more.
 - **Recovery group:** a support and education drop-in group for individuals at any stage of change with their substance use.
 - **Alumni Group:** a co-lead group by Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services staff and a participant of the program to support individuals who have recently completed a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services' treatment program to continue to maintain their goals.
- The clinicians at Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services also provide many groups on an outreach basis, including two perinatal mental health groups for new mothers. These groups are piloting in fall 2022 and spring 2023 with Partners for Children.
- Yukoners can book a Rapid Access Counselling appointment to learn more or register.

Session Briefing Note

Services (Whitehorse)

Spring 2023

Health and Social
Services

Forensic Complex Care team:

- In 2019, the Forensic Complex Care team was established, in partnership with the Department of Justice.
- The unit provides individual and group counselling, forensic risk assessments and case management supports for clients involved in the justice system
- The team also provides therapeutic services at Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Community Corrections, and in the communities.

Intensive Treatment Services:

- Intensive Treatment Programs are also available at Sarah Steele, which includes therapeutic group activities, community-based programming, culturally focused programs, and individual counselling.
- There are three treatment programs located at the Sarah Steele:
 - **The Spruce Program:** a continuous intake group-based treatment program focusing on harm reduction, substance use support and healthy living skills. Clients are admitted to the program through the Withdrawal Management Program.
 - **The Balsam Program:** a live-in treatment program with group-based treatment. The program runs for five weeks, and admission is on a five-week rotation.
 - **The Pine Program:** a day program that runs five days a week for five weeks. This program was developed to provide flexibility for parents and other individuals who are unable to attend live-in programming. It follows the program schedule of the Balsam program, but participants return to their homes in the evening.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Services (Whitehorse)

Health and Social
Services

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services has piloted two intensive treatment programs at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre in fall 2022, and are continuing in spring 2023.

Psychiatric Outreach Program:

- The Psychiatric Outreach Program is a community-based, voluntary program.
- It provides mental health care through nursing, social work, psychiatry and community support services to people with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Services include: support navigating the health and social service system; psychoeducation groups; social and wellness groups; medication support, medication reviews and monitoring; education about mental illness and treatment options; working with clients' families and social supports; working with other agencies and health care providers; and outreach and life skills support.
- **Early Psychosis Intervention Program** is for people under the age of 30 who have received a new diagnosis of bipolar, schizophrenia or psychosis, which is a part of the Psychiatric Outreach Program.
- Both programs accept self-referrals or referrals from professional supports, friends and family.
- **Mobile Crisis Response Unit – Car 867** is a program in partnership with the RCMP to provide RCMP and mental health nursing responses for mental health and wellness related 911 calls.
 - So far, the unit has responded to 177 calls.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Services (Whitehorse)

Health and Social
Services

- One position is hired and work is underway to recruit for a second position to run seven days weekly. Currently, the program runs five days per week.

Referred Cared Clinic:

- The Referred Care Clinic is a primary care clinic accessible by referral for vulnerable adults with unstable mental health and/or a substance use issues that do not have a primary care provider and rely upon outreach services to successfully receive care.
- Yukoners may access the Referred Care Clinic with a referral from a psychiatrist or a Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services nurse.
- The Referred Care Clinic is co-located with Opioid Treatment Services.
 - **Opioid Treatment Services** is a low barrier program that does not require a referral. These services support people to manage or reduce their opioid drug use. Physicians may prescribe evidence-based opioid agonist therapies such as methadone, suboxone, sublocade and kadian to prevent withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioid drugs.
 - Safer supply may also be prescribed through Opioid Treatment Services.
 - The Referred Care Clinic with Opioid Treatment Services is staffed by three general practitioner physicians per day.
 - There are also 16 funded positions, including a Team Lead (registered nurse), 3 nurse practitioners, 3 registered nurses, 4 licensed practical nurses, 2 social workers, 1 outreach worker, and 1 community engagement position. Vacant positions include 1

Session Briefing Note
Services (Whitehorse)**Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

nurse practitioner, 2 licensed practical nurses and 1 community engagement worker.

Overdose Outreach Team:

- Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services has established an Overdose Outreach Team through Opioid Treatment Services.
- The Overdose Outreach Team provides harm reduction education, supports clients with system navigation and provides connections to other services related to substance use.
 - The team also provides supports to individuals who have recently experienced drug overdose.
- The Overdose Outreach Team includes support workers, social workers and community engagement workers.
- The Team currently operates Monday to Friday from 8 am to 8 pm.
- Yukoners can call (867) 333-9717 to be referred to the Overdose Outreach Team.

Supervised Consumption Site:

- The Supervised Consumption Site opened on September 30, 2021.
- As of April 1, 2023, there have been over 2,500 visits to the Supervised Consumption Site since it opened in September 2021.
 - The site was visited 2,228 times for consumption services as of March 31, 2023 since opening. Other visits to the site were for such things as harm reduction supplies, safe use consultation and other Blood Ties Four Directions services.
- Blood Ties Four Directions operates the Supervised Consumption Site with support from Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services.

Session Briefing Note
Services (Whitehorse)**Spring 2023**Health and Social
Services

- Inhalation, oral, intranasal and injection are all approved methods of consumption at the site.
- Harm reduction services offered at the site include drug testing, providing safer use supplies and connecting people with health and social services supports.

Withdrawal Management:

- Withdrawal Management Services is a 24/7 medically supported program that provides a safe place for people in withdrawal from substance use.
- Services include medical assistance with withdrawal from substances, psychoeducational programming and referral to ongoing treatment, counselling and social work supports, therapeutic groups, and other support services.
- There are 14 beds available for adults and 4 beds available for youth.
- As part of the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement, more Licensed Practical Nurses will be hired to increase detox bed nights.
- Bed availability is variable, as they are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Between January 1, 2022 and October 27, 2022, there were 1,640 bed requests postponed at Withdrawal Management.
 - Clients who were delayed a bed are typically provided a bed within 72 hours if they continue to want the service.
- Between January 1, 2022 and October 27, 2022, there were 735 bed requests supported at Withdrawal Management.
- When a request is delayed, staff work with the individual to build a safety plan and connect them to other supports and resources such as the emergency shelter and the hospital.

Session Briefing Note
Services (Whitehorse)

Spring 2023

Health and Social
Services

- Withdrawal Management staff can also refer individuals to the Referred Care Clinic and Opioid Treatment Services.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Yukon is shifting away from the acute stage of the COVID-19 pandemic and *Charting the Course* outlines our sustainable approach to managing and living with COVID-19.

Key messages:

- On November 10, 2022, the Government of Yukon released *Charting the Course: Living with and managing COVID-19*, which includes next steps that will guide the Yukon's ongoing response to the pandemic.
- *Charting the Course* outlines a sustainable approach to managing COVID-19, while protecting vulnerable populations and supporting Yukoners' wellbeing.
- This updated approach reflects the latest developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including new variants that on average lead to less severe outcomes, the availability of safe and effective vaccines, high vaccination rates and the availability of treatments that lessen the severity of COVID-19.
- Key updates brought on by *Charting the Course* include changes and new guidance on testing, self-isolation, vaccination, treatment, public reporting on surveillance and communications.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health is also exploring new ways to support First Nations governments, municipalities and stakeholders with discussions, clinical guidance and advice related to COVID-19 and other public health matters.
- We will continue to monitor variants of concern and will work with the Chief Medical Officer of Health to implement recommendations to manage their spread, as necessary.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- In the 2023-24 Main Estimates, we are budgeting **\$3.16M** (\$3,157,000) for the Health Systems Rationalization to support the department to build long-term resiliency to remain response to COVID-19 and other public health needs.
 - This increase includes the addition of 31.0 FTEs that will be integrated across all divisions of Health and Social Services with a focus on front-line service delivery and key supports.
- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, the Government of Canada provided **\$1.9M** (\$1,900,000) through the COVID-19 Safe Restart Agreement for Wastewater Surveillance initiatives.
- On January 16, 2023, the Government of Yukon lifted the public health emergency under the *Public Health and Safety Act*, following a recommendation from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

COVID-19 Boosters:

- Following new recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and the Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Yukoners at high-risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to get a booster this spring. This includes:
 - Yukoners aged five to 64 with a chronic or immunocompromising condition;
 - adults living in long-term care homes; and
 - everyone aged 65 or older.
- For people who have recently had COVID-19, a second booster is not recommended until:
 - at least six months have passed since symptoms started or they have had a positive test; and

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

- it's been at least six months since their last booster.
- At this time, the following Yukoners are not recommended to get a spring booster, but can receive one if they choose:
 - healthy children aged five to 11 who didn't get a booster in the fall; or
 - healthy Yukoners aged 12 to 64.
- Children between six months and five years old are not eligible. Additionally, healthy children between five to 11 years old who received a booster in the fall are not eligible at this time.
- Whitehorse residents can book their appointment on Yukon.ca/appointments. Vaccines continue to be available through the online booking portal at the Whitehorse Convention Centre.
- People living in rural Yukon may inquire about vaccine appointment availability at their Community Health Centre; however, there is limited availability at some locations.
- Some pharmacies can administer the COVID-19 vaccine. Yukoners may contact their local pharmacy to confirm its availability and make an appointment.
- Yukoners can choose to receive their COVID-19 and flu vaccines during the same appointment.
- Planning is underway to administer the vaccine to long-term care residents who meet the eligibility requirements this spring. We anticipate all residents who are interested in the booster dose and have not had a previous dose or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection within the past six months will be able to receive the vaccination before the end of May 2023.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

COVID-19

Health and Social
Services

CEMA/PHSA Review

- The Government of Yukon has committed to undertaking a pandemic-focused review of the *Civil Emergencies Measures Act* and the *Public Health and Safety Act* in relation to our COVID-19 pandemic response.
- We will be looking at the challenges in existing legislation, proposed policy direction, and options for further action.
- This review will ensure that government has the tools necessary to respond to future pandemics.
- Modernizing legislation is highly resource intensive and requires coordination between multiple departments, including Community Services and Health and Social Services, as well as Justice, Finance, and Aboriginal Relations, amongst others.
- Though this review is complex and will take time and resources, this work is in progress.

Communication:

- COVID-19 press conferences will only be held if the COVID-19 situation in the Yukon changes significantly.
- COVID-19 specific and Government of Yukon led working groups will be discontinued, and we will focus on new ways to support First Nations governments, municipalities, and stakeholders with advice related to public health.
- We understand that some Yukoners continue to experience symptoms following their recovery from COVID-19, which is referred to as long COVID or **post COVID-19 condition**.
- A working group was created in May 2022 that focused on emerging research and developed a resource for people with and/or caring for people with post COVID-19 condition.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

- Members of the working group include Yukoners living with post COVID-19 condition, health professionals, as well as those with experience in First Nations health care, an epidemiologist, and representatives from the Department of Health and Social Services' Chronic Conditions Support Program, Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, and policy and planning.
- This resource is now available to Yukoners on Yukon.ca.
- Our government will continue to follow emerging data and treatment recommendations.

Public Reporting:

- A new respiratory surveillance report will be available soon to provide Yukoners and healthcare providers with important data related to respiratory several illnesses and viruses in the territory.
- The report will be updated biweekly and available on Yukon.ca.
- The new tool replaces the COVID-19 data dashboard and will have information on COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.
- **Wastewater Testing:**
 - Using the funding provided through the Government of Canada COVID-19 Safe Restart Agreement, the Council of Yukon First Nations continues to make progress on the ongoing expansion of a wastewater testing system project.
 - Champagne and Aishihik First Nations has successfully developed a wastewater testing program in Haines Junction that is testing for COVID-19, Influenza, RSV, and MPox. Results of this project are available online on the Public Health Agency of Canada website.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

- The wastewater testing project in Whitehorse is also fully operational and testing for COVID-19, Influenza, RSV, and MPox, as well.
- We continue to support efforts by our partners including Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, First Nations and municipal governments to expand wastewater testing in the Yukon and will assess its value for surveillance.

Self-Isolation and Facilities:

- We continue to recommend that all individuals stay home when they are sick.
- The requirement to isolate for a specified number of days has been removed, so the self-isolation facilities in Whitehorse are now closed.
- Some settings including long-term care homes, health centres, and Yukon hospitals may continue requiring specific public health measures and isolation periods to protect vulnerable Yukoners.

Testing:

- The COVID-19 Testing and Assessment Centre (CTAC) closed on November 18, 2022.
- Testing is no longer routinely recommended for Yukoners with COVID-19 symptoms unless indicated by a healthcare provider in a clinical assessment.
- We are exploring options to integrate testing services into existing clinical settings.
- At-home rapid tests remain readily available for Yukoners throughout the territory in pharmacies, local businesses, and Community Health Centres free of charge.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

Treatment:

- We will continue to provide Paxlovid to eligible patients.
- Paxlovid is deployed when clinically indicated to Yukoners most at risk of severe illness when diagnosed with COVID-19, and who receive an assessment and a resulting prescription from qualified health care provider.
- Between April 2022 and December 2022, approximately 177 treatment courses have been administered in the Yukon.
- Starting December 28, 2022, a new initial prescribing program came into effect allowing for pharmacists to assess and prescribe medications.
- We are working closely with Yukon pharmacists to consider opportunities to prescribe Paxlovid to Yukoners.

Vaccination:

- Vaccination continues to be the best protection against COVID-19.
- We continue to offer COVID-19 vaccines to all Yukoners ages 6 months and older and boosters to anyone 5 years and older.
- Community Nursing staff have worked tirelessly at vaccine clinics throughout the territory to provide first, second, and booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Bivalent COVID-19 boosters are available to Yukoners ages 18 years and older and can be co-administered with the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- The Whitehorse vaccine clinic offers some support for COVID-19 and seasonal influenza vaccination rollouts while we explore future options to integrate them into existing immunization programs.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****COVID-19**Health and Social
Services

- Vaccine opportunities will continue to be available through rural health centres.
- The government will continue to integrate the latest COVID-19 vaccinations into existing immunization programs throughout the Yukon.
- The lease for the Yukon Convention Centre has been extended to October 31, 2023.
- A new space for the vaccination clinic has been identified and we are working with Highways and Public Works to conduct necessary renovations.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting Yukoners to access services and to expanding preventative treatments through the implementation of *Putting People First* and *Aging in Place*.

Key messages:

- There are significant pressures on our Community Nursing staff, as they work to support several complex vaccination campaigns and deliver routine public health programming.
- Immunizers continue to deliver an unprecedented number of vaccines across the Yukon.
- Through ongoing investments in preventative treatments and vaccines, we are reducing the overall costs to the Yukon's health care system and supporting the health and wellbeing of Yukoners.

Key facts:

- In 2022, Yukon health providers administered an estimated 53,075 vaccines.
- In 2021, Yukon health providers administered an estimated 106,466 vaccines.
- Approximately 109,247 COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered since January 2021.
- CanAge ranked the Yukon as the most improved Canadian jurisdiction in the 2022 Adult Vaccination Report.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

Access to vaccines:

- As capacity permits, staff are offering routine immunizations through the Whitehorse Health Centre.
- Vaccine prioritization is informed by the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, staffing capacity, and the evolving demand for COVID-19 vaccines.
- If a vaccine such as tetanus is required on an emergent basis, Yukoners should continue to access treatment through the Emergency Department.
- We have worked with pharmacies to implement the delivery of publicly funded vaccines, including Shingrix, the HPV vaccine, and the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- Starting December 28, 2022, a new initial prescribing program came into effect allowing for pharmacists to assess and prescribe medications for some minor ailments, smoking-cessation, and some vaccinations.
- Pharmacists can now choose to offer services such as COVID-19 vaccinations, publicly funded non-COVID vaccines, and some travel vaccines.

Flu vaccines:

- Seasonal influenza vaccinations remain available through the Whitehorse Vaccine Clinic, Community Health Centres, pharmacies, and delivered directly to residents of long-term care homes.
- During the 2022-23 seasonal influenza vaccination campaign, the Yukon is offering three publicly funded products, including the Fluzone Quadrivalent, Flumist, and the Fluzone High Dose Quadrivalent vaccine for long-term care residents and individuals over the age of 65.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

- As of December 31, 2022, a total of 12,217 flu vaccines have been administered during the 2022-23 influenza season.
- COVID-19 vaccines and boosters can be administered at the same time as a flu shot and only one appointment is required.
- Appointments in rural communities can be made by contacting a local health centre.

HPV vaccine:

- In April 2017, our government expanded eligibility for the HPV vaccine.
- The HPV vaccine is publicly funded for all Yukoners between the ages of 9 and 26, HIV positive individuals, and other high-risk individuals.
- The HPV vaccine can be administered at a participating pharmacy without a prescription, through a Community Health Centre with an appointment, or for Grade 6 students during routine school-based clinics.
- The delivery of publicly funded vaccines in the Yukon is informed by the advice and recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations.

MPOX (Imvamune):

- Consistent with other jurisdictions and scientific publications, the Department of Health and Social Services refers to monkeypox as MPOX.
- To date, the Yukon has received 396 vials (198 doses.) of Imvamune.
- We are working with the federal government to discuss the Yukon's allocation of future doses.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

- We also continue to work closely with Yukon Status of Women Council and Queer Yukon to share information, develop resources, answer questions and organize vaccinations for people who might be at greater risk of exposure.
- Imvamune has been used as a pre-exposure and post-exposure vaccine to reduce transmission and prevent serious illness from MPOX.
- Imvamune is available for eligible high-risk populations for pre-exposure prophylaxis at the Dawson City, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse Health Centres. Yukoners who meet the eligibility criteria may call ahead to book an adult immunization appointment.
- The use of Imvamune as a post-exposure prophylaxis is being assessed on a case-by-case basis by Yukon Communicable Disease Control in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- In 2022, a total of 36 doses were administered.

RSV:

- RSV is a reportable communicable disease and closely monitored by Yukon Communicable Disease Control.
- Our lab partners at the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control are screening lab-based PCR tests for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.
- Between August 28, 2022 and January 12, 2023, Yukon Communicable Disease Control has lab confirmed 11 positive cases of RSV.
- RSV and other respiratory illness case rates were lower during the initial response to COVID-19. Public health measures and uptake of the seasonal influenza vaccination led to lower rates of other non-COVID respiratory illnesses circulating in the Yukon.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

Shingrix:

- Between January 2021 and January 2023, a total of 3,361 doses of Shingrix have been administered in the Yukon.
- In January 2021, Shingrix became a publicly funded vaccine for individuals aged 65 to 70.
- In December 2021, the eligibility for Shingrix was expanded based on evidence to include all Yukoners aged 65 to 79.
- Between December 2021 and December 31, 2022, a “catch-up” program was available, so that all individuals over the age of 65 had an opportunity to access Shingrix.
- Publicly funded Shingrix vaccines are available for eligible Yukoners through local pharmacies and Community Health Centres.
- Shingrix is also available for private purchase through pharmacies for individuals that do not fall within the age of eligibility.

Travel vaccines:

- On December 28, 2022, we introduced a new initial prescribing program, which allows pharmacists to prescribe some travel vaccines.
 - Pharmacists can choose which services under their expanded scope to offer. In some cases, pharmacists may be required to complete additional training prior to offering services.
- Pharmacists are now authorized to prescribe and administer travel and publicly funded vaccines for Yukoners over the age of 5.
- Some travel vaccines can be administered by a pharmacist with a prescription for a fee.
- While travel vaccines have never been publicly funded, certain vaccines used for travel are used to address other public health needs such as for

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Vaccinations**Health and Social
Services

immunosuppressed groups or used as routine immunizations, and are publicly funded in specific scenarios.

- Pharmacists may administer travel vaccines for children with consent and defer physical health checks to a Community Health Centre.
- Children under the age of 5 are able to access travel vaccines through either their primary care provider, the Whitehorse Health Centre, or their nearest Community Health Centre.
- Yukoners of any age can receive travel vaccines through a private clinic in Whitehorse.

Youth and childhood vaccines:

- Community Nursing has continued to deliver routine publicly funded vaccines for children under the age of 5 and maintained access to core infant series primary vaccinations.
- While some primary vaccinations may be delayed, these vaccines are being administered as close to the recommended period as possible.
- There are no delays or catch-up needs for infant series primary vaccinations or routine vaccinations for children and school-aged youth.
- These vaccinations are provided on specific days and times for these age groups, and include vaccinations such as polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Haemophilus influenza B, rotavirus, Tdap, varicella, pneumococcal conjugate, meningococcal c conjugate, and measles, mumps, and rubella.
- In spring 2022, Community Nursing offered school-based vaccine clinics to catch-up on delayed tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and HPV vaccines for students. School-based clinics will be offered during the 2022-23 school year.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Vaccinations

Health and Social
Services

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Environmental Health Services**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- Environmental Health Services is committed to responding to the public health and safety needs of Yukoners by ensuring that consistent standards are applied to all areas where the health of Yukoners may be affected.

Key messages:

- Environmental Health Services follows Regulations under the *Public Health and Safety Act*.
- Environmental Health Officers review applications, provide education and conduct inspections to ensure food safety, drinking water quality, and appropriate methods of sewage disposal.
- Permits and applications are issued and approved based on evidence-based review and investigations.

Key facts:

- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, Environmental Health Services completed approximately 750 Environmental Health Inspections.
- Environmental Health Services can be contacted at 867-667-8391 or toll-free at 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8391.

Carmacks Boil Water Advisory:

- In December 2022, Environmental Health Services issued a boil water advisory for residents of the Village of Carmacks and Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation who use private wells.
- The boil water advisory has now been lifted and is no longer in effect.
- This was a precautionary measure to protect public health, related to concerns that some private wells may have been impacted by a raw

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Environmental Health Services

Health and Social
Services

sewage release entering the Yukon River from the Carmacks lift station due to a malfunction caused by weather.

- Environmental Health Services will continue work with the Village of Carmacks to monitor this situation, but at this time there is no threat to the public safety of residents.

Lodgepole Lane Property:

- The Department is aware that the building located at Lot 194 in Porter Creek, also referred to as #2 Lodgepole Lane, has been associated with several complaints to Environmental Health Services, the City of Whitehorse Bylaw Services, RCMP, and the Whitehorse Fire Department for at least ten years.
 - In August 2020, following a joint inspection, the building was declared unfit for human habitation.
- We understand that, despite the various orders from different levels of government to close and/or remediate the building continues to present a health and safety risk.
- Environmental Health Services is not actively working on this file but will continue to work with the City of Whitehorse and the RCMP to address the environmental health concerns regarding the building to eliminate health and safety concerns as the need arises.

Sewage Disposal Systems (Dawson):

- Environmental Health Services is guided by the *Public Health and Safety Act* and its regulations, including the *Sewage Disposal Systems Regulation*, which was last updated in 1999.
- Environmental Health Services does not make decisions related to land use, planning or subdivisions, and is available to provide support

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Environmental Health Services**Health and Social
Services

to municipal planners and other Government of Yukon departments to ensure sustainable development when subdividing land.

- In some cases, subdivided smaller lots are not able to safely accommodate wells or sewage disposal systems, and it may be necessary for homeowners to purchase a water delivery or sewage pump system. These costs are the responsibility of the homeowner.
- Environmental Health Services is not responsible for sewage disposal taxes.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Aging in Place Action Plan**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon remains committed to implementing the 56 recommendations of the *Aging in Place Action Plan*, and to improving the lives of Elders and seniors in the territory.

Key messages:

- The vision of our *Aging in Place Action Plan* is to ensure that Yukoners can access the supports they need to live safe, independent, and comfortable lives in their own home or community for as long as possible, regardless of age, income, or ability level.
- This includes working with individuals and their loved ones to offer person-centered care and find appropriate solutions to remain in their own homes and communities.
- There is considerable alignment between the recommendations in *Aging in Place* and the *Putting People First* report.
- Together, they represent a path forward to promote, protect and enhance the well-being of Yukoners.
- We continue to work collaboratively with partners, including First Nations governments, municipal and federal governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community groups to implement *Aging in Place* and achieve our common goals.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Aging in Place Action Plan**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- Released in September 2020, the *Aging in Place Action Plan* is based on extensive public engagement with more than 1,200 people from across the territory.
- The first *Aging in Place Annual Report* was publicly released on March 28, 2022.
- The 2022 *Aging in Place Annual Report* is under development and will be released in early 2023.
- The responsibility to implement the actions is shared across seven Government of Yukon departments and agencies.
- Status of the fifty-six recommended actions:
 - Thirty-three actions are in progress (59%) and twenty-two actions are operational (39%).

Progress:

- Twenty-two actions are operational as of January 2023, including:
 - integrated intergenerational programming with pre-school and school-age children in long-term care homes;
 - connected seniors with technology literacy training in partnership with Yukon Learn;
 - finalized a new agreement to recruit seniors for the tutoring program offered by Learning Disabilities Association of Yukon; and,
 - implemented a virtual exercise program, available to seniors enrolled in the Chronic Conditions Support Program.
 - establishing an Aging in Place Seniors Advisory Committee;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Aging in Place Action Plan**Health and Social
Services

- maintaining high-quality infection control practices in long-term care homes;
- opening Wind River Hospice at Whistle Bend Place;
- implementing the Shine a Light on Dementia program to provide education and training to support caregivers (available in both French and English);
- developing a new Rural End-of-Life Care program which offers direct funding to Yukoners in rural communities who have a progressive, life-limiting illness and are at end-of-life;
- engaging Yukoners in a review of the Travel for Medical Treatment Program;
- expanding the Handy Bus service in Whitehorse to offer seven days per week of service and funding provided for the operational costs of a second bus anticipated to be operational in July of 2023;
- implementing best practices for ongoing vaccination schedules for seniors and Elders, such as publicly funding Shingrix for all Yukoners 65 – 79 years old, offering the Fluzone High Dose vaccine to eligible long-term care residents, and ensuring long-term care residents were among the first Yukoners eligible for COVID-19 boosters;
- In addition to all of these accomplishments, we continue to:
 - increase virtual care options for Yukoners;
 - work with private industry and community partners to develop independent and supportive housing for seniors;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Aging in Place Action Plan**Health and Social
Services

- uphold a home-based and culturally safe philosophy in partnership with long-term care home residents and their families;
- expand on our Home First philosophy and reablement throughout Continuing Care and the hospital system;
- expand the Embedding a Palliative Approach to Care model throughout long-term care homes; and,
- work collaboratively with Yukon Hospital Corporation to offer two long-term care beds in Watson Lake.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Seniors Housing**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting seniors and Elders to access a full continuum of housing options that are adequate, suitable and affordable.

.Key messages:

- Housing affects health and we want to ensure all seniors have access to safe and suitable places to call home.
- Yukon seniors and Elders deserve to age with dignity and comfort in their own home or home community for as long as possible.
- Seniors supportive housing options will enable more Yukoners to live independently, reduce pressures on long-term care, and close gaps in the seniors housing market.
- The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services are collaborating on the development of senior supportive housing as a way to meet a significant and growing gap in the housing continuum for seniors

Key facts:

- Over the next 20 years, the Yukon's population of seniors is expected to double.
- Normandy Living opened in December 2022 as the Yukon's first private seniors' supportive living community with 84 modern suites, including affordable housing units for low-income Yukoners and First Nations senior Elders.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Seniors Housing**Health and Social
Services

- In 2022-23, we provided funding for an additional **4.0 FTEs** for Home Care staff to support eligible residents of Normandy to access services and supports.
- The Government of Yukon has leased 10 affordable seniors' supportive housing units for 20-years, which are available to eligible Yukoners through the Yukon Housing Corporation's Rent-Geared-to-Income program which in this case includes a services-geared-to-income component.

Accreditation:

- Accreditation is an ongoing process of assessing health and social services organizations against national standards of excellence.
- It is used to identify what is being done well and what needs to be improved.
- Normandy Living is pursuing accreditation with the non-profit Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities Canada to ensure nationally recognized standards are developed.
- The department is developing an Accreditation Policy to be implemented in a phased approach to ensure that health and social services delivered through government-funded organizations and operators meet or exceed national standards.

Normandy Living:

- Normandy Living opened in December 2022.
- It is a privately owned modern five-story building in the Takhini subdivision and offers a range of inclusive seniors' supportive housing

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Seniors Housing**Health and Social
Services

rental options including studio, one bedroom and two-bedroom homes, all of which are offered for lease.

- Normandy Living offers support services such as meals, weekly housekeeping, laundry services, programming, and 24/7 security.
 - We are closely monitoring uptake of these units and will consider leasing additional units based on demand.
- Eligibility is based on income testing and results of a Clinical Frailty Scale assessment.
- The Yukon Home Care Program is available to all Yukoners who meet program eligibility criteria, including residents of Normandy Living.
- Yukon Housing Corporation clients will pay 25% of their income towards rent and 40% towards services including meals, housekeeping and laundry.
 - On average clients will pay \$1,420 a month for services and rent combined.
- Yukon Housing Corporation is paying \$4,126 total for a studio suite and \$4,472 for 1 bedroom units and then recovering rent and services geared to income from their tenants.
 - Cost for services per resident is \$2,990 with Yukon Housing Corporation covering an average of \$2,116, with clients paying an average of \$874.
 - The full rental costs for a studio suite is \$1,136 and \$1,482 for a 1 bedroom.
 - The cost associated with Normandy Living is roughly 20% lower than the cost of housing individuals in Long-term Care homes.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Seniors Housing**Health and Social
Services**Vimy Heritage Housing**

- Vimy Heritage Housing Society received a grant of seed money from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that allows the society to continue important design and planning work on its seniors housing project.
- Vimy Heritage Housing Society was formed in 2013 as a non-profit society with a vision to create a sustainable supportive independent living rental housing facility for Yukon seniors.
- The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is holding Lot 511 at the intersection of Leota Street and Casca Boulevard, in Whistle Bend Subdivision, to support Vimy to complete business and feasibility planning.
 - The Confidence and Supply Agreement includes providing funding to the Vimy Heritage Housing Society comparable to similar projects to build non-profit seniors' housing.
- The current proposal from the Vimy Heritage Housing Society is to develop a 75-suite building with parking and green space.
- Vimy is working to start construction in 2023.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****211 Helpline**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with our partners to connect Yukoners to timely and accurate information about available supports and services.

Key messages:

- In partnership with United Way Yukon, the 211 helpline connects Yukoners to government and community-based, non-emergency health and social services.
- The free and confidential helpline assists people to navigate the network of programs and services quickly and easily, 24 hours a day, in more than 150 languages.
- When someone contacts 211, they are connected with a real person who will ask questions about their situation and suggest programs or services that can help.
- 211 offers a single contact point to connect people with government and non-government programs such as housing and temporary shelter, income support, family services, transportation, counselling, legal, educational and crisis services.
- The service can also assist Yukoners when they need to leave their home community to access programs.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****211 Helpline**Health and Social
Services

Key facts:

- Between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2024, we have an agreement valued at **\$135K** (\$135,000) with United Way Yukon for the 211 helpline.
- Yukoners can dial 211 from anywhere in the territory or search the 211 website at yt.211.ca.
- Yukon 211 was launched on October 15, 2020, with temporary support from the Government of Canada, to enable enhanced services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The 211 phone and online services complement other phone services available in the Yukon:
 - 511 – provides information on road conditions.
 - 811 – provides health advice and information.
 - 911 – responds to emergencies.

Partnership:

- Yukon 211 is provided by bc211, a non-profit that has been providing community information and referrals for over 50 years.
- Navigators with 211 keep lists of services available throughout the Yukon, so they can direct callers to available supports.
- 211 Yukon currently employs 10 call operators based in Vancouver. All operators have a background in social services.
- The Yukon benefits from the extensive expertise and training provided by BC 211 Call Centre.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****211 Helpline**Health and Social
Services

- 211 staff are:
 - trained to the level of Victim Service workers (8 weeks of training for access to government public safety training);
 - certified in Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) response standards, abandonment protocols;
 - receive coaching for evaluation and real-time feedback (always moving towards excellence; and
 - are able to transfer Yukoners to 811 and 911 when required.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Disability Services – Caregiver Program**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to supporting the wellbeing and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Key messages:

- Our government recognizes the importance of inclusivity in our health and social service system.
- The department offers a variety of supports for children and adults living with disabilities, depending on need.
- We appreciate the important work done by all of our partners, including all levels of government, non-governmental organizations and community members to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- We are committed to expanding supports available to those impacted by a disability in alignment with the recommendations in the *Putting People First* report.

Key facts:

- As of December 2022, our Disability Services Unit had 228 children and 159 adults receiving services, with an additional 18 individuals with pending intake assessments.
- We currently fund eight non-government organizations to support individuals with disabilities, with a total value of **\$7.33M** (\$7,325,592).
 - These NGOs include: Autism Yukon, Connective, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society – Yukon, Inclusion Yukon, LDAY Centre for Learning, Opportunities Yukon (Challenge), Options for Independence, and Teegatha'Oh Zheh.
- We also support the FASD Action Plan, which includes annual funding of **\$500K** (\$500,000) to advance priority actions.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Disability Services – Caregiver Program**Health and Social
Services

- Some social assistance recipients are eligible for the Yukon Supplementary Allowance due to being unemployed because of a disability.
 - In the third quarter of 2022-23, an average of 53% of social assistance cases (465 households) were in receipt of the Yukon Supplementary Allowance.
 - In 2021-22, an average of 52.4% of social assistance cases (470 households) were in receipt of the Yukon Supplementary Allowance.

(Caregiver Benefit) Individualized Supervisory Care:

- The department offers financial supports for parents of children with disabilities, including financial supports to families to hire in-home childcare when the child's disability prevents them from attending daycare.
- In early 2022, we launched the Yukon COVID Caregiver Program to provide financial supports to parents who cannot work due to caring for a child with a severe disability who is unable to attend daycare due to an increased health risk should the child contract COVID-19.
 - This ended December 2022, with the launch of the Individualized Supervisory Care financial supports.
- In November 2022, we updated the In-Home Child Care financial supports and renamed it Individualized Supervisory Care (ISC) supports.
- Consistent with the In-Home Child Care financial supports, Individualized Supervisory Care funding offsets the costs of hiring a service provider in

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Disability Services – Caregiver Program

Health and Social Services

the event that out of home child care services are not an option due to the high care and supervisory needs of the child with a disability.

- Funding for Individualized Supervisory Care is specifically for children who cannot attend programs, such as daycare or afterschool care, due to the child's significant care and supervisory needs.
- For school aged children, this funding option is only approved for use outside of regular school hours as the *Education Act* mandates provision of Education to school-age children.
- Individualized Supervisory Care includes an option for a parent to provide individualized supervisory care to their own child.
 - For this to apply, funding recipients will need to demonstrate that the care provided is beyond what is expected of a typical parent-child relationship.

Disability Services Redesign and *Putting People First* Recommendations:

- We are collaborating across Health and Social Services to determine how best to implement the vision of *Putting People First* and to best meet the needs of Yukoners living with disabilities.
- The following *Putting People First* recommendations relate specifically to the design and delivery of Disability Services:
 - 5.12 – Combine Adult Disability Services and Child Disability Services into one needs-based program and develop a new eligibility and assessment framework for services.
 - 5.13 – Expand the mandate of adult programming to cover a broader range of disabilities and create new services, as appropriate, to meet the needs of this expanded adult service population.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Disability Services – Caregiver Program**Health and Social
Services

- We are also working on other *Putting People First* recommendations to better meet the needs of those with disabilities.
 - 5.11 – ‘Increase the disability top-up amount to \$325, to reflect inflation since 2005, and index disability income to inflation going forward’ is being pursued as part of the rate review of Social Assistance and modernization of Income Support Services.
 - 5.10 – ‘Create a separate, stand-alone disability benefit for those with permanent disabilities’, we are working closely with the federal government as they develop the new Canada Disability Benefit, including consideration for how this proposed benefit may impact the Government of Yukon’s response.

Employment and Training Services:

- Since 2017, the Social Supports branch has collaborated with the Labour Market branch to deliver employment and training supports to Yukoners who experience barriers to the labour market due to factors such as disabilities.
- This collaboration has benefited many Yukoners who were supported by Employment and Training Services through the Social Supports branch to overcome employment barriers to participate in the labour market.
 - This has been a transitional arrangement while capacity amongst non-government partners developed to further meet the needs of this vulnerable population.
- Effective April 1, 2023, the program which has previously been delivered through Employment and Training Services through the Social Supports branch will transition to specialized, non-government organizations.
- We are committed to support clients, staff and partners through this transitional period and are working to connect clients with appropriate

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Disability Services – Caregiver Program**Health and Social
Services

options for accessing programming from the variety of providers offering employment services, including:

- Employment Central;
 - Inclusion Yukon;
 - Opportunities Yukon;
 - Learning Disabilities Association Yukon (Centre for Learning);
 - Skookum Jim Friendship Centre (Youth Employment Centre);
 - Yukon Learn;
 - Association Franco Yukonaise; and,
 - Yukon First Nations.
- The Labour Market branch will also continue to assess the needs of clients and identify further options for support moving forward.
 - Employment and Training Services staff will be offered comparable opportunities with the government.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to collaborating with the federal government, Yukon First Nations governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

Key messages:

- We appreciate the ongoing work done by the dedicated Family and Children's Services staff to support the Yukon's children and families.
- Our government heard that child welfare reform is a top priority for all children across the territory.
- We have listened and learned together, which has resulted in legislative amendments that will be able to support the best way forward together.
- We continue to work closely with all levels of government, Yukon First Nations governments, and non-government organizations to improve child welfare services for families and children in the territory.

Key facts:

- As of January 31, 2023, there were 78 children in the care of the Director of Family and Children's Services.
 - 72% of these children self-identified as Yukon First Nation.
 - In December 2021, there were 84 children in the care of the Director of Family and Children's Services. 70% of these children self-identified as Yukon First Nation.
- As of January 31, 2023, there were 123 children residing with extended family members, as opposed to being in the care of the Director of Family and Children's Services.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

- In December 2021, there were 146 children residing with extended family members.

Annual Report:

- Keeping families together is a priority for this government. Within the Family and Children's Services branch, we have made significant progress in our efforts to do this.
 - Over the course of five years, the percentage of children requiring out-of-home care staying with extended family doubled. In 2022, approximately 61% of children in out-of-home care were placed with extended family, compared to 28% in 2017.
 - This change is part of the larger organizational shift towards placing children and youth with extended family, corresponding to a 40% drop in the number of children and youth in the care of the Director. Similarly, there has been a 24% decrease in the number of children and youth placed in foster homes, dropping to 53 in 2022 from 70 children and youth in 2017.
 - Furthermore, we have doubled the number of families served by the Family Resource Unit, growing to 269 in 2021 from 135 in 2017 by changing the eligibility criteria to provide more services to children, youth and families. This unit delivers low-barrier universal services on a voluntary basis to all families in the Yukon with children from 0 to 19 years of age to support them enhance parenting capacities.
- We are also working to support more youth as they transition to independent living as they reach adulthood. Since 2017, the number of youth and young adults using Agreements for Transitional Support Services for Youth has almost tripled. This means that more youth are

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

connected to services and financial supports that will help them work towards self-reliance.

Federal Compensation and Welfare Reform:

- On January 4, 2022, Agreements-in-Principle were reached between the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and counsel for the Moushoom and Trout class actions with the Canadian government.
- The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has not been satisfied that any final settlement agreement has addressed their orders.
- The parties continue to negotiate and work towards child welfare reform across the country.
 - The Agreements-in-Principle commits **\$40B** to remedy discrimination against First Nations children across the country.
 - The Agreements propose that **\$20B** be provided to First Nations children and families on-reserve and in the Yukon as compensation for the harm they suffered due to Canada's discriminatory provision of child and family services and failure to properly apply Jordan's Principle.
- The Federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children Youth and Families, came into force on January 1, 2020.
- This Act affirms the rights and jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples in relation to child and family services.
 - The Act binds provinces, territories and any Indigenous group that enacts its own legislation in the area of child and family services.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

Implementation of *Child and Family Services Act*:

- After Bill no. 11 was passed by this Legislative Assembly, the CFSA Implementation working group was created to develop the key policies required to implement the CFSA amendments.
- All 14 Yukon First Nations were invited to join the working group, as well as the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate and the Privacy Commissioner who had “observer” status to ensure that we respected children’s rights and ATIPP/HIPMA concerns, respectively, during our policy discussions.
- **The department’s key program policies required to fully implement the legislative changes to the CFSA came into force on November 30, 2022.**
 - Although the working group has completed these key program policies, we continue to work with the Council of Yukon First Nations to complete additional work and updates.
- We continue to work collaboratively with Yukon First Nations governments, the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the federal government at the Trilateral Table to discuss long-term child welfare reform to promote the wellbeing of Yukon First Nations children and families.
- There has been great collaborative work between the federal government, Yukon First Nations governments and the Council of Yukon First Nations on reforming the child welfare system in Yukon.
- It is clear how important this work is by the level of dedication by individuals, organizations and governments.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

Prenatal Nutrition Funding:

- In 2021-22, we matched federal funding of **\$677K** (\$677,000) to support the existing Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program in the Yukon. Funding is matched on an ongoing basis and supports the eight programs currently operating in the territory.
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs operate in the following communities:
 - Carcross: Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies
 - Dawson City: Healthy Families, Healthy Babies
 - Teslin: Teslin Prenatal Program
 - Watson Lake: Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies
 - Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre - Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies
 - Teen Parent Centre Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program
 - Skookum Jim Friendship Centre Prenatal Nutrition Program
 - Les EssentiElles.
- These programs support families and assist in setting the foundation for strong, healthy families and communities.
- Additionally, in 2022-23 we provided the Council of Yukon First Nations **\$262K** (\$262,000), which was used to research and identify Yukon First Nations prenatal and infant support needs in rural communities, as well as to fill a position to assist with Yukon First Nations prenatal and infant supports.
- In 2021, we formed a Prenatal Advisory Group to identify needs and best practices related to providing prenatal and infant supports for expectant people and families.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Family and Children**Health and Social
Services

- The group includes representatives from the Government of Yukon, Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Council of Yukon First Nations.
- The Government of Yukon has provided **\$175K** (\$175,000) in financial support to the Network for Healthy Early Human Development Yukon for the 2022-23 fiscal year.
 - This funding matches the federal funding that Network for Healthy Early Human Development Yukon receives through the Community Action Program for Children.
 - The funding has strengthened Network for Healthy Early Human Development Yukon's ability to deliver the Partners for Children program to Yukon families with young children.
 - The Partners for Children program provides a variety of services to promote healthy childhood development, including parenting groups, workshops, trainings, and support for child care centers.

Approved by_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Food Security and Programs**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to closing the gap for low-income Yukoners and promoting nutrition across the territory.

Key messages:

- We recognize that some Yukoners face financial challenges in meeting core needs like food and shelter.
- Our government collaborates with many organizations who deliver food aid to Yukoners.
- I would like to thank all our partners for their crucial work to address food security.
- The department's Social Services Division delivers social assistance and the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement to eligible Yukoners to assist with meeting basic needs including food.

Key facts:

- In response to growing inflationary pressures, we have committed **\$100K** (\$100,000) to the Yukon Anti Poverty Coalition to support the Yukon Food Network to help coordinate food security initiatives in communities.
- The department matches the federal government's funding to Canada Prenatal Nutrition Programs in the territory.
- In response to inflationary pressures, active recipients of both social assistance and the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement programs received an additional \$150 one-time payment in the fall of 2022.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Food Security and Programs**Health and Social
Services

- During the 2021-22 fiscal year, Meals on Wheels provided 21,094 meals in Whitehorse and to the surrounding area and 4,837 meals in Dawson City and to the surrounding area.
- During the 2020-21 fiscal year, Meals on Wheels provided 16,195 meals in Whitehorse and to the surrounding area and 4,354 meals in Dawson City and to the surrounding area.

Food Security in Communities:

- The department's Health Promotion Unit has received 5-year funding through the Public Health Agency of Canada (Yukon Northern Wellness Project) to work with Yukon communities and other partners to support equitable access to food literacy initiatives in rural communities and support on-going local efforts within the Yukon.
- The Health Promotion Unit also supports school food programs across the territory through funding provided to the Yukon Food for Learning Association.

Bagged Meals from the Family Hotel:

- In spring 2020, COVID-19 public health measures forced emergency meal programs through the Sally & Sisters program and Whitehorse Emergency Shelter to temporarily halt or reduce services.
- In response, the department entered into an agreement with the Food Bank Society of Whitehorse in April of 2020 for the Society to distribute bagged meals to homeless and street-involved Yukoners.
- This arrangement was to promote social distancing at the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter, as one of the COVID-19 pandemic measures.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Food Security and Programs**Health and Social
Services

- The Food Bank Society stopped distributing bagged meals in October 2020 and in November 2020 the Family Hotel became the distribution site. Meals were initially prepared at the Coast High Country Inn and then at Whistle Bend Place. Meals were served from 5 to 6:30 pm at the hotel.
- This contract with the Family Hotel ended on November 30, 2022 at its scheduled end date and was not renewed, as recommendations for COVID-19 mitigation have evolved since April 2020.
- This is also consistent with Yukon government's integration of COVID-19 services into existing programs, as outlined in *Charting the Course: Living with and managing COVID-19*.
- Between April and November 2022, Continuing Care's Meals to Go prepared an average of 50 meals per day for the Family Hotel.
- Between November 2020 and February 2022, an average of 35 meals were distributed per night at the Family Hotel.
 - During this period, a combined total of 16,891 meals were distributed through the Family Hotel.
- Sally and Sisters is now administered by Yukon Aboriginal Women's council and has resumed a hot meal service since 2021. A similar meal program is run at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre.
- We are exploring options for the future with community partners, and determining whether there are any unintended gaps in our meal programming we should consider filling.
- At this time, there continues to be a number of other community food aid supports available to residents.
 - Three meals a day for homeless and street-involved Yukoners at 405 Alexander Street, with dinner for shelter clients only.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Food Security and Programs**Health and Social
Services

- Lunch is available at Mary House on Tuesday and Thursday
- Lunch for women and children on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at Sally and Sisters, and on Wednesday and Friday at the Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre.
- Boys & Girls Club Yukon provides youth-only dinners Tuesday to Saturday at 306 Alexander Street.
- The Whitehorse Food Bank hamper is available on Tuesday and Thursday with family-only pick-up each Wednesday morning.
- We understand the importance of long-term food security.
- As part of our response to *Putting People First* and *Our Clean Future*, we are looking at ways to support food security throughout the territory and close the gap for low-income Yukoners.

Meals on Wheels:

- Meals on Wheels provides food to Yukoners who may not have the ability to independently make or have access to nutritional meals.
- Frozen meals are available to clients living in Whitehorse, or within a two-hour travel time from Whitehorse, as well as in Dawson City and those living within a two-hour travel time from Dawson City.
- Meals on Wheels provides clients with up to seven lunch time meals per week.
- Meals can be delivered to clients or picked up at either Whistle bend Place or McDonald Lodge.
- In Whitehorse and the surrounding area, clients pay \$3.00 per meal. In Dawson City and the surrounding area, clients pay \$2.50 per meal.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Food Security and Programs**Health and Social
Services

- To receive Meals on Wheels, referrals may come from health care professionals including Physicians, Home Care staff, Community Nurse Practitioners, Social Workers, or the Assessment and Admission Coordinator.
- Clients may also self-refer to the program by contacting the Assessment and Admissions Coordinator.
 - In Dawson City, self-referrals can be made directly to the Home Care Nurse or McDonald Lodge Manager.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon remains committed to ending and preventing homelessness in the Yukon and working closely with our partners.

Key messages:

- We continue to work in partnership with Yukon First Nations, other governments and the non-government sector to address homelessness in the territory and help people access the services they need.
- Our government is committed to ending and preventing homelessness through community collaboration initiatives such as the Yukon's Housing Action Plan, Safe at Home: Community-Based Action Plan, and the federal Yukon Reaching Home program.
- Our government is an active participant in multiple initiatives aimed at ending and preventing homelessness, including the Housing Action Plan Implementation Committee, the Safe at Home Government Partners Committee, and the Reaching Home Community Advisory Board.
- We are working to increase access to housing and support services to Yukoners. We are pursuing government-led projects while also supporting partners to develop new additions to housing with services for vulnerable Yukoners.
 - Projects include support for a Council of Yukon First Nations Indigenous women and children's shelter; a Housing First residence in Watson Lake; the Safe at Home Society's commitment to supportive housing prioritizing women, youth and Indigenous Yukoners; seniors' supportive housing such as Normandy Living and Vimy Heritage Housing Society's proposed Rowan Place.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- I would like to thank our many community partners for their commitment to ending and preventing homelessness in the territory.

Key facts:

- As of February 20, 2023, there were 240 people in Whitehorse on the By Name List due to experiencing homelessness.
 - There are an additional 71 children connected to those on the List.
- The majority of those experiencing homelessness are in temporary sheltered situations such as couch surfing, shelters, hotel/motel, public institutions like corrections and treatment centers or are in transitional housing situation.
- 79% of those on the By Name List are experiencing chronic homelessness.
 - This equates to 190 individuals who have been homeless for at least six months or have been homeless 18 out of the previous 36 months.
- From July to September 2022, there was an average of 74.8 shelter guests per night across the Yukon.
- Community Outreach Services provided intensive case management focused on meeting basic needs, including housing, for an average of 63 households per month in 2022.
- The Point-in-Time Count and survey on homelessness in Whitehorse, led by Safe at Home Society, was last completed on April 24, 2021.
 - In 2021, there were 151 individuals identified as homeless.
 - In 2018, there were 195 individuals.
 - In 2016, there were 219 individuals.
 - Safe at Home started a new Point-in-Time survey on April 18, 2023, which is being conducted over a 24-hour period that ends the afternoon of April 19, 2023.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing and Homelessness

Health and Social
Services

Emergency Shelters:

- We provide funding to support shelters in Whitehorse, including 405 Alexander, Kaushee's Place and Skookum Jim Friendship Centre's Youth Emergency Shelter in Whitehorse.
- We also provide funding to support shelters in Yukon communities, including Help and Hope for Families in Watson Lake, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Jëje Zho in Dawson City and the Dawson Women's Shelter.
- Our government continues to support the development of an Indigenous women's shelter in the Yukon led by the Council of Yukon First Nations.

Funding for NGOs:

- In 2022-23, we have committed **\$13.1M** (\$13,108,990) to non-governmental organizations to address homelessness. We have:
 - Budgeted **\$3.8M** (\$3,812,000) for the not-for-profit sector for the operation of shelters in the territory, excluding 405 Alexander.
 - Committed **\$3.2M** (3,176,274) for 2022-23 and **\$5.4M** (\$5,427,000) for 2023-24 and 2024-25 annually for operations of 405 Alexander under Connective.
 - Committed **\$1.1M** (\$1,090,227) in funding for Opportunities Yukon to operate supportive housing options for adults with disabilities (Max's Place and Granger Haven)
 - Committed **\$1.3M** (\$1,332,548) in funding for Options for Independence to operate two supportive housing options for adults with disabilities.
 - Committed **\$305K** (\$305,140) with Aspen Group Home for supportive housing for adults with disabilities.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- Committed up to **\$727K** (\$727,139) for Opportunities Yukon to deliver Supported Independent Living services for identified tenants at the Cornerstone Community Building.
- Committed approximately **\$2.2M** (\$2,189,310) to Connective for both of the Housing First on Wood Street project and the supportive living arrangements for Yukon Review Board clients.
- Committed **\$476K** (\$476,352) to Safe At Home to provide partial and temporary accommodations at the former High Country Inn for 6-months to provide safe secure accommodations for single individuals and couples.

Hotels:

- We are aware that some Yukoners rely on or choose to live or stay in hotels.
- From July to September 2022, an average of 2% of social assistance clients stayed in a hotel for a month or part of a month.
- Seasonal fluctuations with the Yukon's hotel availability and affordability commonly occurs due to increased tourism in the summer.
- Safe at Home Society has created a task force to provide opportunities for community dialogue regarding housing and homelessness, including the role that hotels/motels play in our housing continuum.
 - Health and Social Services is a participant in these discussions.

Housing First:

- Housing First is a philosophy and program approach. Its goal is to permanently house Yukon's most vulnerable people by shifting to a low-barrier, high-support model of service delivery.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- We are committed to a Housing First approach to ensure the most vulnerable in our community can access stable homes.
- It is an approach focused on empathy and compassion.
- Every Yukoner deserves to have access to a safe and affordable home.
- Housing First is an approach that reduces barriers such as sobriety or receiving treatment.
- We have committed to working closely with our partners to advance a range of treatment, harm reduction, prevention, and awareness initiatives in response to the substance use health emergency.
- Over the next 24 months, we expect to see new additions to housing with services for vulnerable Yukoners.
- There are already 57 supportive housing units available in Whitehorse operating under Housing First principles.
- We will continue to promote initiatives which meet the supportive housing and temporary shelter needs of vulnerable Yukoners.

Housing Stock:

- There are **105 shelter beds available** in the territory.
 - There are 54 beds at 405 Alexander, 15 beds at Kaushee's Place, and 11 beds at Skookum Jim Friendship Centre's Youth Emergency Shelter in Whitehorse.
 - There are 11 beds at the Help and Hope for Families in Watson Lake, 5 beds at Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Jëje Zho, and 9 beds at the Dawson Women's Shelter in Dawson City.
- There are **19 units for second stage housing for women and their children** fleeing violence in the territory.
- There are **57 supportive housing units** available in Whitehorse operating under Housing First principles.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- This includes 20 units at 405 Alexander, 16 units at the Wood Street Housing First location, and 21 beds at Cornerstone.
- There are **31 approved caregiver homes** for adults with disabilities.
- There are **41 supportive housing beds** available in Whitehorse for those with disabilities.
 - This includes 3 beds at Max' Place, 4 beds at Granger Haven, 14 beds through Options for Independence, 3 beds at Aurora House, 5 beds at Aspen group home, 10 beds at Saint Elias group home, and 2 residences for Yukon Review Board clients.

OAG Report:

- On May 25, 2022, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada released a report on housing in the Yukon.
- The department accepts all recommendations and is on track to complete all department-specific recommendations by spring 2023.
- The department is actively in conversation with the Yukon Housing Corporation regarding enhanced collaboration and coordination of housing and services, including consideration for enhanced government alignment.
- In May 2022, the department and the Yukon Housing Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding to serve as a framework for cooperation on affordable housing and housing with services in the Yukon for the purpose of providing vulnerable Yukoners with adequate, suitable and affordable housing.
- On August 22, 2022, we released a draft Action Plan with the Yukon Housing Corporation.
 - This plan outlines how our government will address the recommendations from the OAG report, timelines, and status.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- Health and Social Services is committed to addressing the recommendations in this report. This includes:
 - # 62. The Department of Health and Social Services should, in consultation with housing partners, undertake regular and comprehensive needs analysis, including a review of the use of hotels as temporary accommodation, and take appropriate action to meet client needs.
 - #64. The Department of Health and Social Services should ensure that agreements with third-party providers are comprehensive and are monitored for key deliverables.
 - #79. The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should ensure that there is governance and oversight in place by effectively working together and with other housing partners to demonstrate meaningful progress, resolve problems, and achieve results.
 - #87. The Yukon Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services should work together and with housing partners to identify gaps and improve information systems to provide relevant, accurate and timely information to support decision making and to report on the planning, delivery, and results related to housing in Yukon.
 - #91. The Department of Health and Social Services should establish appropriate performance indicators as well as conduct regular program and housing provider evaluations to assess and report on the achievement of desired results.
- The department and the Yukon Housing Corporation jointly produced an Action Plan to guide implementation of this work.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- The Plan was shared with the Office of the Auditor General in late November 2022 and released publicly.

Safe at Home and High Country Inn:

- Our government appreciates the ongoing work done by the Safe at Home Society to end and prevent homelessness in our territory.
- In February 2023, the Safe at Home Society began providing short-term supportive housing at 4051 4th Avenue, the former Coast High Country Inn, to alleviate the pressures of homelessness faced by vulnerable Yukoners.
 - The Transfer Payment Agreement was signed on February 15 with budget and expectation to fill 20 units (bachelor suites)
 - This agreement is temporary until June 30
 - The cost in 2022-23 is \$476,352 and there is \$340,252 budgeted in 2023-24.
- This initiative aligns with their goal to provide supportive housing to those experiencing significant vulnerabilities.
- We will continue to work with the Safe at Home Society and other partners on new, innovative ways to address homelessness in our community.
- Conversations are ongoing between the Department and Safe at Home Society to explore the supports and services that may be required for future tenants in these supportive housing units.

Supportive Housing:

- Supportive housing units are subsidized housing options that provide residents with various supports and services, depending on the needs of the individual and structure of the program.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- Supportive housing is an important part of our housing continuum, as it delivers person-centered services in the most cost-effective manner.
- In alignment with commitments made to respond to the OAG report, the department is working with housing partners to understand Yukoner's current supportive housing needs and finalizing a framework for forecasting Yukoner's supportive housing needs going forward.

405 Alexander:

- Our government provides funding to support 405 Alexander, which is operated by Connective in partnership with Council of Yukon First Nations.
- We continue to provide a range of supports on-site including EMS, home care, social supports, and Mental Wellness and Substance Use outreach services.
- We understand that many of the homeless and street-involved individuals connected to 405 Alexander also experience drug and alcohol-related dependencies.
- We are committed to ensuring these Yukoners can access the supports they need directly at the shelter. These supports include:
 - access to wrap-around Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services, including counselling, social work and nursing supports;
 - access to a physician from the Referred Care Clinic provides Opioid Treatment Services at 405 Alexander two days per week, an approach which has been very successful in increasing engagement in Opioid Treatment Services;

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Housing and Homelessness**Health and Social
Services

- access to a mobile Paramedic Response Unit supported by Yukon EMS at 405 Alexander Street, which is equipped to provide mobile drug testing services and other health care services;
- access to harm reduction education and supplies, including Naloxone kits, and connection to appropriate supports and services; and
- we are working with Blood Ties Four Directions to increase awareness of the Supervised Consumption Site among guests of 405 Alexander and have expanded the services and hours of operation of the outreach van.

Approved by:_____
Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services_____
[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Income Supports (Social Assistance)** Health and Social Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with our partners to alleviate poverty and reduce the cost of living impacts on low-income Yukoners.

Key messages:

- We recognize that some Yukoners face financial challenges in meeting core needs like food and shelter.
- Our government, along with a number of community partners, have programs and services available to help alleviate poverty.
- We continue to explore ways to support Yukoners most affected by rising inflation.
- We are preparing a review of social assistance rates and examining income supports in response to the *Putting People First* recommendations.
 - This includes a recommendation to increase the Yukon Supplementary Allowance for those excluded from the workforce due to disability or age.
 - The Confidence and Supply Agreement also includes starting public engagement on social assistance rates in 2023.
- I would like to thank our many community partners for their commitment to helping to alleviate poverty for Yukoners.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$22.8M** (\$22,762,000) for legislated grants related to social assistance in the territory.
- In 2023-24, we budgeted **\$4.7M** (4,717,000) in total for the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement and Pioneer Utility Grant.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Income Supports (Social Assistance)** Health and Social Services

-
- In 2022, there was an increase in the Consumer Price Index of 5.7% in Whitehorse. As of November 1, 2022, there was a 5.7% increase to basic assistance rates.
 - In 2021-22, there was an average of 897 social assistance cases (households) monthly, comprising an average of 1,261 recipients (individuals).
 - An average of 52.4% of social assistance cases (470 households) were in receipt of the Yukon Supplementary Allowance.
 - In the third quarter of 2022-23, there was an average of 877 social assistance cases (households) monthly, comprising an average of 1,242 recipients (individuals).
 - An average of 53% of social assistance cases (465 households) were in receipt of the Yukon Supplementary Allowance.
 - In 2021-22, there were 1,350 **Yukon Seniors Income Supplement** recipients and 2,146 **Pioneer Utility Grant** recipients.
 - Between April and December 2022, there was a monthly average of 1,023 **Yukon Seniors Income Supplement** recipients.
 - As of January 17, 2023, there were 2,260 **Pioneer Utility Grant** payments issued for 2022.

Federal Benefit Exemption:

- The Government of Canada has introduced new benefits for Canadians, including a top-up to the Canada Housing Benefit for eligible Canadians, and a temporary Canada Dental Benefit for children under the age of 12 without access to dental insurance.
- Our government has amended our *Social Assistance Regulation* to ensure that these new federal benefits are not counted towards income

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Income Supports (Social Assistance)** Health and Social Services

when determining a recipient's social assistance eligibility and determination of assistance in the Yukon.

Guaranteed Annual Income:

- *Putting People First* recommendation 5.7 recommends the government design and implement a guaranteed annual income pilot in collaboration with the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, and potential other partners such as the federal government, health and social research programs, and others.
- The Department of Health and Social Services is conducting preliminary research regarding a guaranteed annual income program.
 - This includes preparing for a feasibility study of guaranteed annual income in the Yukon.
- We are also preparing for a review of our income support programs to ensure services effectively meet the needs of clients.
 - The Final Report on Basic Income in BC, released by an expert panel in January 2021, recommends the province should work to improve existing social programs rather than implementing a separate guaranteed annual income.

Inflation:

- The Yukon's social assistance benefit rates are among the highest in the country. Our earned income exemptions, which support people re-entering the workforce, are also greater than many other jurisdictions.
- Social assistance rates for shelter, food, fuel and utilities, and clothing are tied to annual inflation.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Income Supports (Social Assistance)** Health and Social Services

-
- The increase takes effect in November and is based on the Consumer Price Index for Whitehorse, which was 5.7% in fall 2022.
 - The Yukon Seniors Income Supplement will also increase by 5.7%, effective as of October 2022.
 - The Yukon's rate increases over recent years include: a 1.9% increase in November 2019, a 1.6% increase in November 2020, and a 1.9% increase in November 2021.
 - The rates of social assistance payment vary by family size and location.
 - As of November 2022, the amount given to a single person living in Whitehorse on social assistance to meet their monthly food, clothing, and incidental needs is \$455.
 - The maximum rate for shelter varies by family size.
 - For a single person the maximum amount provided monthly for shelter is \$635.
 - The maximum rate for fuel and utilities varies by season, family size, and location.
 - For a single person living in Whitehorse, the maximum monthly rate in the winter is \$568.
 - Our government provided social assistance and Seniors Income Supplement clients with a one-time \$150 top-up payment to address inflation and the rising cost of living.
 - This top-up was issued with November benefit payments.
 - To further address the impacts of inflation on Yukoners, we have provided Pioneer Utility Grant recipients for the 2022 calendar year with a one-time 10% top-up payment, which was distributed in February 2023.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Income Supports (Social Assistance) Health and Social Services

- Discretionary Aid is an available option for those currently in receipt of social assistance and may be used to address situations of transient need.
- People who are ineligible for assistance through the *Social Assistance Regulation* may be eligible for Emergency Aid to alleviate an immediate health or safety risk.
- As part of inflationary relief measures the 2023 Confidence and Supply Agreement includes implementing a \$100 per month increase for social assistance recipients until the more comprehensive rate enhancements are in place.

Pioneer Utility Grant:

- The Pioneer Utility Grant assists Yukon seniors with the cost of heating owned or rented homes.
- Yukon seniors who are 65 or older in the year of the grant can apply and they must apply every year thereafter.
- The Pioneer Utility Grant increases annually based on the Consumer Price Index in January.
 - In 2022, there was an approximately 3% increase over the 2021 Pioneer Utility Grant.
- To address the high rate of inflation in 2022, we provided Pioneer Utility Grant recipients with a one-time top-up of 10% in February.
- Pioneer Utility Grant payments for 2023 will be based on the Consumer Price Index increase as of January 2023.
- Yukoners must apply annually to receive the Pioneer Utility Grant; applications are accepted between July 1 and December 31 of the year.
- Eligible applicants receive one payment, typically within a few weeks of application.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Income Supports (Social Assistance) Health and Social Services

- Eligibility for the grant is based on income, marital status and residential address.
- If you receive another housing subsidy or subsidized housing, you are ineligible for Pioneer Utility Grant.
- The difference paid to couples and singles is because couples may have more expenses than singles.
- The maximum amount available is \$1,173 in Whitehorse and \$1,257 outside Whitehorse.
- Amounts are based on income which cannot exceed \$130,923 for a single person and \$184,636 for married or common law couples.

Seniors Income Supplement:

- All Canadians aged 65 years and older receive Old Age Security.
- In addition to Old Age Security, eligible seniors will receive Guaranteed Income Support.
- This income support provides a monthly non-taxable top-up to the Old Age Security. The program is income-tested and intended for people in the lowest income bracket.
- An additional **\$808,000** has been budgeted in the 2023-24 Main Estimates to reduce inflation and interest-related financial pressures for Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement recipients.
- Recipients will receive temporary inflation relief payments monthly valued at approximately 38.75% of their Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement payment.
- The additional relief payments will be applied from April 2023 to March 2024.
- Following the October 2022 CPI adjustment of 5.7%, the maximum monthly payment for Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement recipients is \$288.61.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Income Supports (Social Assistance) Health and Social Services**

- The proposed percent increase of 38.75% is comparable to the average increase of 37.13% of costs for fuel (61.1%) and energy (18.9%) between October 2021 and October 2022.
- Approximately 1,100 Yukoners are receiving Yukon Seniors' Income Supplement payments.
- As part of the *Aging in Place Action Plan*, the Department of Health and Social Services is preparing a more in-depth review of income supports for seniors to ensure they have funding that helps meet their needs.

Rising Rental Costs and Hotel Use:

- The shelter allowance for social assistance clients is provided by regulations and varies by household size and location and is indexed to inflation.
- For a single individual in Whitehorse, the current monthly shelter allowance is \$635.
- Recipients may also qualify for additional funding for fuel and utilities (for a single person living in Whitehorse \$426 to \$568 per month depending upon the season).
- According to the Yukon Bureau of Statistics' April 2022 Yukon Rent Survey, the Yukon's median rent was \$1,300 for all building types.
- We are aware that there are Yukoners, including those in receipt of Social Assistance, who may be living in hotels for extended periods due to lack of alternatives.
- Living in a hotel is considered to be 'provisionally accommodated' as it is temporary and lacks security of tenure.
- Health and Social Services is a participant to the Housing and Homelessness Taskforce chaired by the Safe at Home Society to

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Income Supports (Social Assistance) Health and Social Services

consider the opportunities to better meet the needs of provisionally accommodated and homeless Yukoners.

Social Assistance and Rate Review:

- Our government is committed to a review of social assistance rates alongside the *Putting People First* recommendations outlined in Chapter 5 – Closing the gaps for low-income Yukoners.
- The Yukon’s social assistance rates are among the highest in Canada and are indexed to inflation; however, we continually monitor the program and rates.
- We are finalizing a plan to respond to the *Putting People First* recommendations pertaining to income supports.
 - This includes action towards recommendation 5.11 to increase the Yukon Supplementary Allowance for those excluded from the workforce due to disability or age to reflect inflation and continue to index Yukon Supplementary Allowance to inflation going forward.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****1Health**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to advancing health care technology across the territory and improving our health care system for Yukoners.

Key messages:

- Our government is working with key stakeholders including the Yukon Hospital Corporation, physicians and other health care professionals using 1Health to advance health care technology across our health system.
- We appreciate the adaptability and hard work of all of the Yukon's health and social service providers as we implement these changes.
- Yukoners are at the core of these important changes to our health care system.
- The ongoing implementation of 1Health supports a more seamless care experience for Yukoners as they navigate our health care system.

Key facts:

- In 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$4.4M** (4,445,744) for 1Health, including **\$3M** (\$3,023,798) in O&M and **\$1.4M** (\$1,421,946) in Capital funding for the project.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation was the first to go live with 1Health in June 2021, transitioning from primarily paper to electronic charting.

1Health Program:

- 1Health Yukon is an important component of an integrated health information system that connects health records across care settings.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

1Health

Health and Social
Services

- We are working towards a digital health strategy and engaging on operational matters to support this work.
- 1Health Yukon leverages Medical Information Technology, Incorporated (MEDITECH) Expanse as one of the core systems to help integrate lab, diagnostic imaging, acute and other clinical information across multiple care settings, supporting a comprehensive health record for Yukoners.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Hospital Corporation**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to meet the needs of Yukoners through the Yukon's three hospitals, and to increasing access to timely, safe, quality, and culturally safe services.

Key messages:

- The Government of Yukon works with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to ensure that core funding needs are met.
- We will continue to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation to identify future funding needs and ensure we are providing the services and supports Yukoners need to access safe and excellent hospital care.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation is an important partner as we move forward with the direction laid out in the *Putting People First* report.
- Yukon hospitals are identifying and eliminating systemic barriers to care; building competency and capacity at all levels; diversifying the workforce and leadership; and continuously assessing policy, programs and services to support equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Yukon Hospitals are committed to Truth and Reconciliation and undertaking Indigenization initiatives.
- In an effort to better coordinate and collaborate, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yukon Hospital Corporation are holding regular joint executive meetings.

Key facts:

- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, we budgeted **\$93.64M** (\$93,637,000) for Yukon Hospital Services O&M funding.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Hospital Corporation**Health and Social
Services

- During the 2023-24 fiscal year, we budgeted **\$12.2M** (\$12,200,000) in capital funding for Yukon Hospital Services.

Budgeted positions:

- As of December 31, 2022, there were 500.0 FTEs within the Yukon Hospital Corporation, including:
 - 444.0 FTEs at the Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - 34.0 FTEs at the Watson Lake Community Hospital.
 - 22.0 FTEs at the Dawson City Community Hospital.

COVID-19:

- The Yukon Hospital Corporation works with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Department of Health and Social Services to plan and respond to COVID-19.
- Surge capacity and bed availability levels in Yukon hospitals are closely monitored.
- When necessary, human resources are prioritized to ensure access to care and minimize service interruptions.
- Control measures are in place such as pre-appointment screening, on-site screening, and maintaining physical distancing where possible.

Discharges:

- As a standard practice, Yukon hospitals do not discharge patients during the night; however, the hospital cannot prevent an individual from leaving outside of daytime hours.
- In some cases, individuals who arrive by Medevac are assessed at the Emergency Department and released.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Hospital Corporation**Health and Social
Services

- Patients who are receiving care in the Emergency Department are released once their care needs are complete, this can happen at any hour of the day.
 - Efforts are made to put discharge plans in place to support the ongoing care needs of the patient however, the amount of time the team has to complete these tasks are hours as opposed to inpatient discharge plans which take days to put in place.
 - During daytime hours more services are available to support on short notice.
 - The First Nations Health Program is available to assist patients on a 24-hour basis and do all they can to help support discharge planning from the Emergency Department.
- Several supports are available to patients who may require assistance when preparing to leave the hospital:
 - The First Nations Health Program provides 24-hour, culturally safe assistance to patients who identify as First Nation, Inuit, or Métis, including by supporting clients to access transportation back to their community, accommodation, and assistance with navigating hospital services.
 - Whitehorse General Hospital is equipped with a number of sleep rooms to provide on-site accommodations.
- Our government is funding the United Way to operate the 211 service, which is available to assist Yukoners to connect with programs and available local services such as shelters and accommodation.
- The department and the Yukon Hospital Corporation have recently started a quality improvement initiative with BC Patient Safety and Quality Council focused on improving care transitions between hospital,

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Hospital Corporation**Health and Social
Services

home and community. In the 2023-24 Main Estimates, we have budgeted **\$40K** (\$40,000) to support this **Bridge to Home** initiative.

- Our government has established a Care Coordination Unit that will work to provide wraparound supports to individual who need to leave their home communities to access medical services.
- We are working to explore opportunities to establish medical travel residences in Whitehorse.

Mental Wellness Unit:

- Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, we have budgeted **\$24.8M** (\$24,743,908) to build a new Mental Wellness Unit at Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - In the 2023-24 Main Estimates, we have budgeted **\$12.2M** (\$12,200,000) for capital for the Mental Wellness Unit.
 - A total of **\$10M** (\$9,990,000) of the project's overall funding is recoverable through the Canada Infrastructure Program's COVID-19 Resilience program.
- We have signed an agreement with the Yukon Hospital Corporation, which will provide funding to the hospital to tender and begin construction of the Unit.
- Timelines for construction and completion were delayed due to factors such as changes in building code requirements, which required the Yukon Hospital Corporation to complete new detailed design work. This work is now complete.
- Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2023.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Hospital Corporation

Health and Social
Services

Hospital Staffing:

- Yukon hospitals are committed to maintaining safe and quality care with minimal service disruptions in an environment with a local, national and global health care provider shortage.
- Hospital staff continue to deliver excellent patient care and their efforts are ensuring that Yukoners have access to hospital services.
- The Canadian healthcare system is facing a shortage of technical and specialized positions, including nurses. Yukon Hospitals is also dealing with a number of vacancies in our hospital system.
- A vacancy is defined as a regular, indeterminate position (permanent) that is not filled by a regular, indeterminate (permanent) employee – whether or not filled temporarily. The Yukon Hospital Corporation tracks regular indeterminate vacancies because it ensures our hospitals focus on our long-term needs.
- Currently there are 24 nursing vacancies through our three hospital sites with a nursing vacancy rate of 8.4%.
 - 16 at Whitehorse General Hospital;
 - 2 at Dawson City Community Hospital;
 - 6 at the Watson Lake Community Hospital.
- The majority of the vacant positions noted above are being filled by temporary employees, or where that is not possible, with short-term agency nursing staff. These means that just because there is a vacancy, it does not necessarily mean the shift goes unfilled. A reported vacancy does not necessarily mean short-term needs are not met.
- **A greater number of positions are posted on the Yukon Hospitals website because they also include casual-on-call opportunities, temporary (term) positions, or new additional positions.**

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Hospital Corporation**Health and Social
Services

- There is no single strategy that will solve the recruitment and retention challenges that exist for the Yukon Hospital Corporation and a multi-faceted approach is required in order to continue to offer current services and retain employees.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation has never had to mandate an employee to work at the Watson Lake or Dawson City Community Hospitals.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation is working with the department, Yukon University, and the Yukon Registered Nurses Association to develop strategies and support initiatives to bring qualified healthcare professionals to the Yukon, and to support Yukoners to grow into healthcare careers.
 - These include recruitment campaigns, incentives, and mentorship opportunities to grow current staff.

Hospital Staff Survey:

- The Yukon Hospital Corporation recently put out an Employee Engagement Survey, which closed in late-February 2023.
- Prior to this, the last survey was conducted in August and September 2020. Gaps in 2021 and 2022 were due to COVID-19 related pressures.
- The goal of the survey is to hear from employees and identify opportunities for improvement at the departmental and organizational level.
- The survey provides overarching feelings from employees that is then used to work across the organization to engage staff about improvements.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation has traditionally not put these survey results on the public website.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Hospital Corporation

Health and Social
Services

- The Yukon Hospital Corporation is currently reviewing this years survey results, and developing a plan to communicate and engage staff with the results.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

Government priority:

- The Government of Yukon is committed to working in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association to support access to in-territory services and specialist programs.

Key messages:

- We work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association to address timely and appropriate access to speciality services closer to home and reduce the need for out-of-territory medical travel.
- Our investments are supporting Yukoners to access specialist services.
- Managing hospital occupancy and ensuring patients receive care at the right place and at the right time remains a daily priority.

Key facts:

- As of December 31, 2022, a total of 410 cataract surgeries had been completed during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
 - As of January 2023, the program was on target to complete 570 cataract surgeries during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- As of December 31, 2022, a total of 35 total hip and 43 total knee replacement surgeries had been completed during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- As of December 31, 2022, the cast clinic supported 1,863 visits during the 2022-23 fiscal year.
- As of December 31, 2022, there had been a total of 34,092 visits to the emergency department at Whitehorse General Hospital.
 - As of December 31, 2022, there had been 2,443 visits to the Dawson City Community Hospital Emergency Department

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

- As of December 31, 2022, there had been 2,446 visits to the Watson Lake Community Hospital Emergency Department.

Cardiology:

- Cardiology services are provided by visiting specialists. Wait times and wait lists can fluctuate based on the frequency of visits by the visiting specialist.
- Whitehorse General Hospital is supported by three visiting cardiologists who provide six visits per year, and two visiting pediatric cardiologists who offer two visits per year.
- Currently, the wait time to access a visiting cardiologist is approximately five months.
- As of January 2023, there were 280 individuals on the wait list to access this service.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation triages referrals for cardiology services with those with the highest need supported first.

MRI:

- Yukon hospitals follow national guidelines in triaging MRI referrals to ensure those with the highest need are supported first.
- As of December 31, 2022, a total of 2,411 MRIs were completed in the 2022-23 fiscal year, and all wait time targets were being met.
- Urgent MRI cases aim to be supported within seven days and are being completed within this target.
- Semi-urgent MRI cases aim to be supported as close to 30 days as possible and are being completed within this target.
- Non-urgent MRI cases aim to be supported as close to 90 days as possible and are being completed within this target.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

- The Yukon Hospital Corporation is using a combination of part time, locum and casual technologists to ensure services are provided within appropriate wait times.

OB/GYNs:

- Our government is committed to working with our physician community, including our two resident Obstetric-Gynecologists to ensure physicians are supported and that Yukoners have access to the safe delivery of care.
- We are working to finalize agreements with some physicians and specialists as part of our regular contract negotiation cycles for the coming fiscal year.
- Throughout this process we will continue to work closely with our physician community to address outstanding concerns and discuss next steps while ensuring access to care remains available.
- We appreciate the ongoing opportunity to meet with our resident Obstetric-Gynecologists to discuss questions during this process.
- Obstetric Gynecologists are based at an independent clinic at Whitehorse General Hospital with care accessed by referral.
- In partnership with the resident Obstetric-Gynecologist, we have recruited a second resident specialist, who started on August 1, 2022.
- We are working to explore options to increase access to Obstetric-Gynecological services to three resident Obstetric-Gynecologists.
- Access to services is triaged based on level of need.
- The wait time for non-urgent services is approximately 10 months.
- With the second resident Obstetric-Gynecologist Specialist in place, we anticipate waiting times to steadily reduce.
- When necessary, medical travel is available to Yukoners living in communities to access Obstetric-Gynecologist services in Whitehorse.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

- Sexual, reproductive, prenatal, and termination services are available through a number of general practice physicians.

Ophthalmology:

- In 2019, we implemented a two-year plan to successfully reduce wait times for cataract assessments.
- This plan has been extended to support managing wait times.
- We are meeting our target of completing cataract assessments within four months.
- The target wait time for cataract surgery is six months, and as of January 2023, was 10 months.
- The Yukon Hospital Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services in partnership with the Ophthalmologists are currently on track to have this wait time within target by the end of this fiscal year.
- Between 2019 and 2020, a combined total of 870 cataract surgeries were completed.
- In 2021, the Yukon Hospital Corporation completed 450 cataract surgeries.
- In 2022, capacity for cataract surgeries increased to an anticipated 570 surgeries per year.

Orthopedic:

- In 2017, we introduced a resident orthopedic program at Whitehorse General Hospital. This program is now supported by three orthopedic surgeons.
- In 2017-18, a total of 28 joint replacements were performed only allowing for knee replacements in the Yukon.
- In 2021-22, the first in-territory hip replacement surgery was performed.
- The current orthopedic agreement allows for 100 procedures per year.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

- During the 2022-23 fiscal year, this target was surpassed and a total of 104 total joint replacement procedures were completed.
 - This allocation has been incrementally increased since the orthopedic program was introduced in 2017; beginning with 80 surgeries allowed for knee replacements that has now been increased to 100 with the addition of hip replacements.
- The Government of Yukon is aware of recent communication from the resident orthopedic surgeons to their patients.
- We are aware of the concerns they have expressed around wait times and barriers in accessing orthopedic services.
- The Department of Health and Social Services, the Yukon Hospital Corporation, and the Yukon Medical Association continue to work together through a joint committee to discuss access to specialist services in the Yukon.
- Additionally, a committee including the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon surgeons reviews surgical services agreements and allocate the number of procedures per discipline based on factors including, wait times, urgency, and space for emergency surgeries.
- Our current system is designed and funded for a total of 3,200 surgeries per year, which we continue to surpass with approximately 3,800 being done per year.
- We have reached out to the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Hospital Board of Directors and will be working with them to continue to plan for the future.
- Our government continues to work in partnership with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Medical Association to address timely and appropriate access to specialist services and we continue to make investments that have resulted in improved wait times for multiple specialist services, including orthopedics.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Specialist Services**Health and Social
Services

Surgery Slowdown:

- From February 13 to March 31, 2023, Whitehorse General Hospital reduced the number of scheduled (elective) surgeries due to ongoing staffing challenges.
- Everyone who had a surgery re-scheduled has been contacted and full services have resumed.
- Thank you to all frontline care staff who continue to meet the urgent care needs of Yukoners.
- We continue to work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Whitehorse General Hospital to address the widespread staffing issues we are facing locally, nationally, and globally.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Health and Social Services

[Date approved]

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

Recommended response:

- As we are aware, homelessness has far-reaching consequences that impact Yukoners. The substance use health emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic have only intensified these issues.
- Meanwhile, rental options are too few and often too expensive. Vacancy rates in the rental market have dropped to 0.8% - the lowest in years –a reality that influences the Yukon Housing growing waitlist.
- Down payment costs remain out of reach for many Yukoners, and homeownership may be less affordable as interest rates rise.
- Across government, we are working with stakeholders to develop new land parcels, increase housing stock, and rapidly increase housing supply while also responding to the findings of the 2022 Office of the Auditor General Report on Housing.

Additional response:

- We continue to enhance our Community Housing stock to support a full housing continuum - 47 new affordable units at 401 Jeckell, 10 units of affordable and supportive housing for seniors through Normandy Living and three new triplexes in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse demonstrate how we are responding to the 2022 Office of the Auditor General of Canada recommendations on housing.
- Partnership with Da Daghay Development Corporation for the construction of 98 new units is one of numerous housing examples that further support vulnerable Yukoners.
- Through our new approach to housing YG employees in communities, we aim to decrease the housing cost disparities in communities, further incentivize private sector investment in housing, and prioritize

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

allocations of the government's existing staff housing units to meet critical needs for community well-being.

- Finally, as part of the response to the 2022 Office of the Auditor General of Canada recommendations on housing, we have expanded capital incentive programs to include land development for residential housing, while also enhancing our Community Housing stock.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Since COVID-19, Yukoners have faced additional housing challenges including increased housing prices and low vacancy rates.
- The recently declared substance use health emergency in the Yukon and closure of Chilkoot Trail Inn have added strain on the housing crisis.

Background:

Recent interest rate hikes

- The Bank of Canada raised interest rates for an eighth time in January, bringing the Bank rate to 4.50%. At the start of 2022, that rate was 0.25 %. Rising debt costs will make it more challenging for homeowners to qualify for a mortgage and will increase monthly debt costs for existing homeowners and developers.

Housing Action Plan and Safe at Home Plan

- The 10-year Housing Action Plan (HAP) for Yukon was launched in 2015 and provides guidance on housing priorities for the territory.
 - A Housing Action Plan Implementation Committee (HAP – IC) made up of key housing stakeholders and partners from across the territory oversees its implementation.
- The Safe at Home community-based Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness (Safe at Home) was launched in November 2017.
- The Safe at Home plan was developed by the Government of Yukon, the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and a number of local NGOs.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

- The Safe at Home Society was awarded \$10 million under the Northern Carve-Out of the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, \$5 million in funding under the federal Rapid Housing Initiative 2.0, and \$1.02 million in funding from YHC's Housing Initiatives Fund - for a supportive housing project proposal.

Land Development

- The Government of Yukon continues to support new land development to increase the supply of land available for housing development. This includes:
 - Government-led land initiatives in Whistle bend, as well initiatives to sell the 5th and Rogers site (See TAB #34) and old Macaulay Lodge site (See TAB #37);
 - First Nations land development projects – KDFN's Copper Ridge West (See TAB #35) and Range Point projects;
 - Private Sector land development project initiatives – the Tank Farm (See TAB #40).
- Community Services estimates an additional 1,476 new housing lots will come online by 2026, enough to accommodate 2,713 additional housing units.

New Housing Construction and partnerships with the Private Sector

- Yukon Housing Corporation offers several loans and grants programs (See TAB #4) to incentivize new housing construction – namely, the *Housing Initiative Fund* (See TAB #63), the *Developer Build Loan* (See TAB #59), and the *Municipal Matching Rental Construction Program* (MMRCP).
- These territorial-based programs complement new housing construction incentive programs under the National Housing Strategy, including the *National Housing Co-investment Fund* and the *Rapid Housing Initiative*.
- Finally, we provide subsidies to households living in private market housing through the *Canada Yukon Housing Benefit* (See TAB #57) and the *Rent Supplement* program.

Community Housing and the Most Vulnerable

- Yukon Housing Corporation and its partners continue to implement the new Community Housing Program, which aims to improve better client outcomes and fiscal resiliency (See TAB #58)
- Currently, YHC offers over 700 units through the Community Housing program in which eligible Yukoners pay 25% of their income for rent (rent-geared-to-income), we provide

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing Issues

Yukon Housing Corporation

support to more than 80 households through our rent supplement program and more than 130 Yukoners through the Canada-Yukon Housing Benefit.

- Starting in early 2023, YHC is introducing a mixed-income and mixed-use tenant's allocation policy to its Whitehorse buildings while providing tenants with appropriate partner supports to help them maintain housing.
- Work continues with the Safe at Home Society with the intent of allocating a percentage of units to individuals on the By-Name List.
- YHC is working to implement the Aging in Place Action Plan, which includes broadening programming to include Senior Supportive Housing Program as an option for seniors who require additional supports.
- Finally, YHC and housing providers have recently completed or are currently making significant capital investments to expand the community housing stock, including:
 - The 401 Jeckell – 47-unit building (See TAB #19);
 - Three new triplexes in Mayo, Watson and Whitehorse (See TAB #21);
 - A new Housing First building in Watson Lake (See TAB #25);
 - A new 10-plex in Old Crow (See TAB #23);
 - Duplexes in Carmacks, Dawson, Faro and Mayo (See TAB #20); and
 - New emergency shelters in Dawson and Whitehorse (See TAB #42).

Major investments in housing include:

- The Canada Yukon Housing Benefit, an eight-year rent subsidy program to support low to moderate income Yukoners renting private market rental housing (See TAB #57).
- \$3.5M for Normandy Living, a private senior's residence with supports (See TAB #38)
- \$21.7M for the design and construction of the 4th and Jeckell, a 47-unit mixed-income housing development in Whitehorse (See TAB #19).
- \$2.4M over 2021-2022 for the construction of three triplexes in Mayo, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse in addition to \$3M in federal funding under the Rapid Housing Initiative - contributing nine units of housing options. (See TAB #21)
- \$400K in 2021-2022 for the design of the Watson Lake Housing First project which will be tendered in the Fall 2023 (See TAB #25).
- Design work to support the housing needs in the communities of Teslin, Carcross and Dawson in 2022-2023.
- \$5.7M annually under the Housing Initiatives Fund (See TAB #63).
- \$2.4M to Yukon through a Northern Housing Fund under the National Housing Strategy.

Session Briefing Note

Spring 2023

Housing Issues

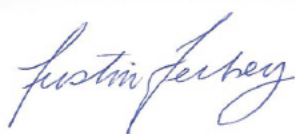
Yukon Housing Corporation

- \$6.9M for First Nation Energy Efficiency Program and \$8.4M for Community Housing retrofits under the Low Carbon Economy Fund (LCEF) provided on a 75% (Canada) - 25% (territory) cost-matching ratio between 2019 and 2024. (See TAB #60 & #61)
- \$4.1M for the construction of a Housing First residence for vulnerable individuals (5th and Wood St.) in Whitehorse
- Continued commitment by Government of Yukon toward the Municipal Matching Rental Construction program for new rental units.

Affordable rental housing incentives (in partnership with the private market):

- Since its inception in 2019, the Housing Initiatives Fund (HIF) intakes have brought on line 361 units and 159 are under construction. (See Tab #63).
 - The sixth intake of the Housing Initiative Fund was launched in November 2022. The deadline to submit an application February 3, 2023.
- The Municipal Matching Rental Construction Grant has supported the construction of over 126 new rental homes throughout the Yukon, ten of which are in progress.
- Since 2020, our homeownership loan program that focuses on providing financial support for the purchase and construction of building projects in rural Yukon, has helped 21 Yukoners to buy or build their first homes. 14 of these projects are completed.

Approved by:



Justin Ferbey
President, Yukon Housing Corporation

January 31, 2023

Date approved

Session Briefing Note**Our Clean Future Annual Report**Environment
Energy, Mines and Resources**Recommended response:**

- We continue to make significant progress in the implementation of *Our Clean Future*.
- In September 2022, we released our second annual report. It outlines the progress we made in taking action on climate change in 2021.
 - Notably, in 2021, the Yukon Climate Risk Assessment was released and we saw a 12% decrease in our emissions when compared to 2020.
- Through this report we introduced five new actions and revised 13 existing actions to better meet our goals.
- *Our Clean Future* is an adaptive strategy, which means that we assess and adjust the actions we are taking year-over-year to stay on track to meet our long-term goals.
- We will continue to track and report our progress annually.

Additional response:

- Over the past year, we have advanced several key actions, such as:
 - Legislated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and associated reporting through the *Clean Energy Act*;
 - Received and analyzed the recommendations from the Yukon Climate Leadership Council ([Ref ENV #24 / EMR #34](#));
 - Established a standard method for determining the health of wetland ecosystems, and tracking baseline conditions to understand future changes;
 - Established a geohazard mapping program to understand risks to the Yukon's transportation corridors; and,
 - Enacted the single-use paper bag ban on January 1, 2023.

Session Briefing Note**Our Clean Future Annual Report**Environment
Energy, Mines and Resources**Third response:**

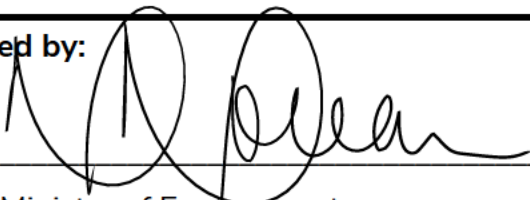
- Although we have made progress on many of our commitments, there is still significant work required to meet our 45 per cent greenhouse gas emissions target reduction by 2030.
- We will continue to build on *Our Clean Future* as we learn more about climate change and introduce more actions. This will be reflected in future annual reports.
- We will also continue to work with experts, stakeholders and partner governments across the territory and beyond, to identify opportunities for new actions and to accelerate and intensify existing actions to reach our ambitious target.

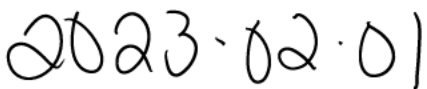
Context — this may be an issue because:


- Climate change is of high interest to Yukoners; they will want to know the government's progress in delivering on *Our Clean Future* commitments.


Background:

- *Our Clean Future* was released in September 2020 and is a 10-year strategy.
- *Our Clean Future* contains 136 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and supports the Yukon to be highly resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Approved by:

Deputy Minister of Environment

Date approved

Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources

Date approved

**Joint Corporate Note Inflation
and affordability**

Finance
Executive Council Office

Recommended:

- All Yukon households are seeing their budgets stretched by elevated levels of inflation, with lower-income households often feeling the effects more than others.
- The government continues to assess how inflation is impacting Yukoners and several measures included in the 2023-24 Budget will help make life more affordable for Yukoners.
- In 2023–24, the government is extending the Inflation Relief Rebate Program, which provides a \$50 per month rebate on ATCO Electric and Yukon Energy utility bills for the April and May billing periods, along with an additional three months later in the year.
- Other measures in the 2023-24 Budget to help make life more affordable to Yukoners include funding for food in Yukon schools, the timber harvesting incentive to boost fuelwood supply, a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible recipients of the Yukon Senior Income Supplement, and a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

Additional response:

- This government already established a strong record of making life more affordable for Yukoners with almost \$10 million-worth of inflation relief made available in last year's budget.

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- This included more funding for Food Network Yukon, a 10 per cent top up to the Pioneer Utility Grant and rebates on the purchase of firewood.
- Yukoners are also receiving inflation relief from the federal government. This includes the accelerated Canada Workers' Benefit, the elimination of interest on student loans, a doubling of the GST tax credit, dental care and the Canada Housing Benefit for renters.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- Inflation has increased to decade highs in many countries, including Canada, which is experiencing the highest inflation in almost 40 years.
- Energy prices have been a significant driver and these prices are more obvious to consumers.
- Housing affordability has been a concern in the Yukon for several years.
- [March's rate of inflation in Yukon was the highest in Canada at 5.5 per cent vs 4.3 per cent nationally according to the Whitehorse Consumer Price Index.](#)

Background:

Key government initiatives addressing affordability in Yukon

Highlight of affordability spending in Budget 2023-24

- \$5.3 million to extend the Inflation Relief Rebate. Yukoners will receive a \$50 credit on their power bill in April and May and for an additional three months later in the year.

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- \$300,000 for the Timber Harvesting Incentive program.
- \$1.5 million to increase monthly social assistance payments by \$100.
- Over \$800,000 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- \$500,000 for food in schools.

This builds on previous programs to protect the affordability of Yukoners including

- Last year, the Government of Yukon announced almost \$10 million in new inflation relief measures targeted at vulnerable groups.
- The inflation relief rebate covered seven months at a total cost to Government of \$7.6 million. The inflation relief rebate automatically applied a \$50 credit to all residential and commercial ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy electricity bills.
- Yukoners on social assistance received a one-time payment of \$150.
- Seniors were supported by a 10 per cent top up in the Pioneer Utility grant and a one-time payment of \$150 to recipients of the Yukon Seniors Income Supplement.
- Yukoners who heat their homes with wood are eligible for a \$50 rebate per cord of fuel wood, this program is retroactive to April 1, 2022. Yukon also introduced the Timber Harvesting Incentive that gives commercial timber harvesters \$10 per cubic metre.
- The pilot program giving an extra \$500 per month to Extended Family Caregiver agreement caregivers and foster caregivers was extended to the end of the fiscal year.
- In June 2022, the Yukon government extended the Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement and Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement programs, administered through Economic Development.

Yukoners are also supported by Federal Government affordability programs

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- Accelerated Canada Workers Benefit payments and new minimum entitlement starting in July 2023 (\$4 billion over six years, starting in 2022-23).
- Making all Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans permanently interest-free, starting in April 2023 (\$2.7 billion over five years and \$556.3 million ongoing).
- **GST Tax Credit:** The GST tax credit will be doubled for six months in current benefit year. Additional payment will be provided in one lump-sum, before the end of the benefit year. Targeted to individuals and families with low incomes (below \$39,826, and gradually phased out above that level). Single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234 and couples with two children would receive up to an extra \$467 this year. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average.

Inflation outlook

- The inflation rate in Whitehorse was 5.5 per cent in March, down from 7.0 in February, but 1.2 percentage points higher than the national inflation rate of 4.3 per cent. Whitehorse's inflation rate was the highest in Canada for fourth consecutive month.
- This ranking is a reversal from earlier in 2022 when Whitehorse had the lowest inflation in Canada. For 2022 as a whole, the relatively lower inflation at the beginning of the year and higher inflation at the end of the year cancelled out, and so, the annual inflation rate in Whitehorse was the same as the national rate: 6.8 per cent.
- It is natural that relatively lower inflation in Whitehorse is eventually followed by relatively higher inflation as prices in Whitehorse follow the national trend over the long term.

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- The Bank of Canada has started to take a more aggressive approach to battling inflation by raising interest rates 4.25 percentage points since March 2022. The Bank's increase of 0.25 percentage point on January 25 brought the overnight rate to 4.5 per cent, the highest rate since early 2008. [This rate was maintained at the April rate announcement.](#)
- The housing market in the Yukon has stayed resilient the face of higher interest rates that have cooled markets in most other parts of Canada. Yukon was the only Canadian jurisdiction that saw residential sales in 2022 increase over 2021
- It wasn't until the fourth quarter until signs of cooling showed in the Yukon data, with average sales prices falling across all housing type. Compared with the end of 2021, prices were down by 1.2 per cent for single-detached, 3.9 per cent for duplexes, 11.4 per cent for condos, and 1.6 per cent for mobile homes.
- Most forecasters expect inflation in Canada will move towards historic norms over the next couple of years as supply chain problems subside and the effect of higher interest rates move through the economy. Canadian inflation is expected to decline from near 7 per cent in 2022, to between 3.5-4.0 per cent in 2023. Inflation in 2024 is expected to return to the midpoint of the Bank of Canada's target range of 1-3 per cent.
- Inflation in Whitehorse follows the national trend and therefore expected to fall to 3.8 per cent in 2023 and to 2.5 per cent in 2024.

INFLATION RELIEF ACROSS GOVERNMENT

Tourism and Culture:

COVID-19 Business Relief Programs

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Yukon acted quickly and decisively by implementing one of the most robust business relief programs in the country, beginning with the Yukon Business Relief Program (YBRP) in

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

2020, which was open to any business from any sector that experienced at least a 30% revenue loss due to the pandemic.

- In that same year, Tourism and Culture (T&C) also launched the Tourism Relief and Recovery Plan (TRRP), which was reviewed and endorsed by the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board (YTAB) and industry.
- The TRRP committed \$15 million over three years to support the tourism sector and was focused on four key themes:
 - Providing tourism sector leadership;
 - Rebuilding confidence and capabilities for tourism;
 - Supporting the recovery of tourism industry operators; and
 - Refining the brand and inspiring travelers to visit.
- Through the TRRP, various financial support programs were rolled out during the course of the pandemic to sustain the tourism industry and prepare it for the eventual reopening of borders, including:
 - Tourism Accommodation Sector Supplement (TASS);
 - Tourism Non-Accommodation Sector Supplement (TNASS);
 - Culture and Tourism Non-profit Sector Supplement;
 - Great Yukon Summer (GYS) program;
 - Great Yukon Summer Freeze program;
 - ELEVATE program; and
 - A top-up to the Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund (TCMF).

Community Tourism Destination Development Fund

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- In October 2022, the Department of Tourism and Culture announced the creation of the new Community Tourism Destination Development Fund, which is slated to run for an initial three-year term.
- The new annual funding program is available to local businesses, First Nations governments, First Nation Development entities, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations for projects that will improve tourism-related services and infrastructure.
- Projects can focus on infrastructure like accommodations, attractions, activities and amenities, and special consideration will be given to umbrella projects, where multiple organizations are working together.

Creative and Cultural Industries

- In November 2021, the Department of Tourism and Culture released *Creative Potential; Advancing the Yukon's Creative and Cultural Industries*, a 10-year strategy to support the growth and development of the creative and cultural industries in the Yukon.
- The CCIS identifies 4 strategic objectives and 22 key actions, which reflect input gathered through extensive public and sector engagement.
- We have identified 10 actions in support of pandemic recovery to be completed over three years as Phase 1 implementation, which includes:
 - Modernizing existing funding;
 - Offering new funding streams;
 - Industry branding and promotion;
 - Marketing and export strategies;
 - Workshops; and

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- Labour market supports.

In 2023-24, three new funding programs will provide \$450,000 annually to the creative and cultural sectors, including:

- Express Micro-grant;
- Indigenous Artists and Cultural Carriers Micro-grant; and
- Creative and Cultural Career Advancement Fund.

Additional Funding Programs

- Tourism and Culture also provides annual supports to the tourism and culture sectors through Transfer Payment Agreements (TPAs) with many NGOs across the Yukon and through a number of regular funding programs, including:
 - Advanced Artist Award;
 - Arts Fund;
 - Arts Operating Funds;
 - Cultural Industries Training Funds;
 - Culture Quest;
 - New Canadian Events Fund;
 - Touring Artist Fund;
 - Historic Properties Assistance Program;
 - Historic Resources Fund;
 - Museums Contribution Program;
 - Special Projects Capital Assistance Program (SPCAP); and

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- Tourism Cooperative Marketing Fund;

Yukon Development Corporation:

Inflation Relief Rebate

- The Inflation Relief Rebate provides \$50 per month to all non-government residential and commercial electricity customers to help ease the impacts of rising inflation.
- The IRR initially covered June, July, and August 2022, and was extended to cover October, November, and December 2022. The budgets for these were included in 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates.
- The IRR was subsequently extended for March, April, and May 2023. The budget in 2023-24 is comprised of:
 - \$2,056,000 for program costs in April and May 2023 (costs for March 2023 are included in the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2).
 - \$3,246,000 for a further three additional months. We will continue to monitor inflation and costs of living, and we anticipate this will show on electricity bills next winter when electricity bills are typically higher.

Economic Development:

- Economic Development is in the process of developing a temporary paid sick leave program. Program criteria, including eligibility and duration, are currently being developed.

Energy, Mines and Resources:

Energy retrofits and funding to improve efficiency and offset costs

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- Our energy programs are successfully encouraging Yukon residents and local businesses to reduce their energy use, save money and choose low carbon options to live and move.
- Energy efficiency programs are available for the transportation sector, renewable heating sector, and the construction sector focusing on high efficiency buildings.
- For existing homes, the Energy Branch offers the Good Energy rebate program for high performance heating systems and upgrades to thermal enclosures including insulation and windows and high performance new homes. Taking these measures will save homeowners money on their energy costs.
- For commercial and institutional buildings, the Energy Branch offers rebates for greenhouse gas-reducing retrofits and renewable heating.
- For First Nation and municipal buildings, the Energy Branch offers retrofit and funding support through its Community Institutional Energy Efficiency Program.
- There are two current incentives for wood, one for harvesters and one to offset fuelwood costs:
 - In October 2022 we launched the timber harvesting incentive to provide registered Yukon timber harvesting businesses an incentive of \$10 per cubic metre of timber harvested or sold between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. We have paid out \$163,000 to industry so far.
 - In September 2022, we launched a new firewood rebate to offset the increased costs of firewood for home heating. The rebate provides \$50 for each cord of firewood purchased, up to a maximum of 10 cords. As of February 14, 2023 we processed 586 applications, and paid out approximately \$69,850 in rebates for 1,389 cords of firewood.

Yukon Housing Corporation:

Projects under the Five-Year Capital Plan which support housing affordability and those in need include:

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- The 47-unit housing complex at 401 Jeckell Street in Whitehorse opened in January 2023. The building provides new homes to Yukoners, including 5 three-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom, 16 one-bedroom and 14 bachelor units;
- The Opportunities Yukon 45-unit Cornerstone Development in Whitehorse opened in summer 2022 and is providing supportive living and accessible housing;
- Triplex housing units in Watson Lake, Mayo and Whitehorse were completed in spring 2022 and are providing affordable homes to families in each of these communities;
- In Old Crow, the 10-Plex Mixed-Use Housing complex is under construction with expected completion in summer 2023; and
- The 10-Plex Housing First Project in Watson Lake is included in the Northern Carve-Out. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2023-24.

Other highlights from the plan

- More homes will be created for Yukon families in rural communities through the construction of three duplexes in Dawson City, Mayo, and Carmacks. These homes are on track for completion in summer 2023.
- The demolition of Macaulay Lodge in Whitehorse was completed in October 2022. Planning for the redevelopment of the site to support mixed commercial and residential use is underway.

Health and Social Services:

For 2022-23:

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

- a one-time \$150 payment to social assistance recipients;
- a one-time payment of \$150 to Yukon Seniors Income Supplement recipients;
- a one-time 10 per cent additional payment to Pioneer Utility Grant recipients;
- a six-month extension of \$500 per month to caregivers of children in out of home care; and
- Committed \$100,000 to Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition to continue to support food security across the territory.

For 2023-24:

- a quarterly top-up of \$150 to eligible Yukon Senior Income Supplement recipients; and
- a \$100 monthly increase to eligible Social Assistance recipients.

Public Service Commission: *(no change from Fall BN)*

Remote work policy in support of employees working in communities

- In fall 2021, the Yukon government introduced a new remote work policy to support employees to continue working remotely in the long term.
- Implementing the new remote work policy is an action in the Our Clean Future strategy, as people are supported to work from home and reduce their emissions by commuting less.
- The new remote work policy also enables employees to work remotely from Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse, in some circumstances.
- The Public Service Commission will strive to support more long-term remote work arrangements throughout the Yukon government where it makes sense, and will track data on long-term arrangements going forward.

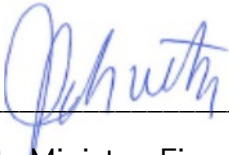
Session Briefing Note

FIN TAB #26
ECO TAB #73
Spring 2023

Joint Corporate Note Inflation and affordability

Finance
Executive Council Office

Approved by:



April 24, 2023

a/Deputy Minister, Finance

Approved

2023 04 21



Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

Approved

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Update on Calls to Action

Executive Council
Office

Recommended response:

- Reconciliation is an ongoing process, and the Government of Yukon is continuing our work to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- We are working collaboratively with First Nations to advance progress in key areas including health and social services, education, justice and heritage, through the Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan.
- We are also working with Yukon First Nations to implement Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy*, which will further advance reconciliation and address the Calls to Action.

Additional response:

- The Government of Yukon and Yukon First Nations governments are leaders in demonstrating a collaborative approach to reconciliation.
- At the Yukon Forum in November 2022, we discussed the approach to implementing and reporting on the Calls to Action with Yukon First Nations.
- We will continue our collaborative work to implement and report on the Calls to Action, including implementing the *Putting People First* recommendations for health and social services.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The Yukon government (YG) previously made public its intention to fulfill its commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.
- The Calls to Action were a topic at the November 29, 2022 Yukon Forum.

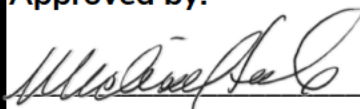
Background:

- The TRC report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was released in June 2015. It contains 94 Calls to Action focused on redressing the harms resulting

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission
– Update on Calls to Action**Executive Council
Office

from Residential Schools and creating better relations between the federal, provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples. Thirty-two of the Calls to Action relate directly to YG.

- YG and Yukon First Nations (YFNs) collaborate on addressing the Calls to Action through the Yukon Forum Joint Priority Action Plan.
- YG has taken steps to address the Calls to Action, including:
 - establishing the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of First Nations Initiatives at the Department of Education, signing an agreement to establish a YFN School Board, and entering into education agreements with all YFNs (speaks to Calls 7 and 10 directed to the Federal government);
 - supporting Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games (Call 88);
 - implementing the YFN Procurement Policy (relates to Call 92) and the Representative Public Service Plan: *Breaking Trail Together* (relates to Call 7);
 - working with YFNs and Yukon Indigenous women's groups to implement Yukon's *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2-Spirit+ People Strategy* (MMIWG2S+ Strategy) (relates to Call 41);
 - participating at the Trilateral Table on the Wellbeing of YFN Children and Families to address gaps for culturally appropriate parenting programs (Call 5); and
 - receiving input from YFNs on Health and Social Services programming through the Mental Health Advisory Committee (relates to Call 19).

Approved by:

Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office

February 6, 2023

Date

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

Recommended response:

- In 2023-24, the Yukon continues to demonstrate its robust position nationally with population and economic growth among the strongest in the country.
- Budget 2023-24 delivers spending initiatives aimed at making life more affordable for Yukoners while also including several inflation relief measures to help combat the rising cost of goods.
- This budget continues to invest in the Yukon's health and social system and includes investments in new and expanded health services through the implementation of *Putting People First*. This includes addressing the substance-use health emergency and supporting the mental health of Yukoners.
- It delivers on our commitment to support a green economy with investments outlined in *Our Clean Future*.
- There are also strategic investments in infrastructure, particularly in housing for the most vulnerable. Other investments in housing include funds for land development, investments in housing projects in Dawson City, Watson Lake and Teslin, subsidies and supports for renters and funding for various affordable and community housing projects.
- Like in previous budgets, Budget 2023-24 continues to build relationships and further reconciliation with Yukon First Nations.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

Additional response:

- The Yukon government is delivering on its commitment to grow a strong and resilient economy while ensuring robust, sustainable fiscal management.
- A surplus of 2.49 per cent of expenditures serves as a prudent fiscal management tool and demonstrates the ability of the government to address unforeseen events without going into a deficit.
- The fiscal summary includes a \$50 million contingency for presently undefined expected expenditures in 2023-24. This will not affect the Yukon's forecast fiscal position and allows the government to remain transparent about potential pressures.

Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2023-24 Main Estimates will be debated during the March 2023 legislative session.
-

Background:

- The 2023-24 Main Estimates include a surplus of \$48.2 million and year-end debt of \$374.8 million.
- Total revenue is expected to be \$1.58 billion in 2023-24. This is an increase of \$115.2 million or 7.3 per cent from the 2022-23 Main Estimates.
- Forecast O&M expenditures total \$1.45 billion, with O&M recoveries offsetting this amount by \$130.9 million. This is an increase of 2.6 per cent in net O&M expenditures from the 2022-23 Main Estimates.

Session Briefing Note**Spring 2023****Corporate Note – Budget Highlights**

Finance

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

- Forecast capital expenditures total \$483.8 million with recoveries of \$164.5 million. This is a 9.9 per cent decrease in net capital expenditures from the 2022-23 Main Estimates. This represents a reduction of \$63 million from last year's capital budget. This reduction reflects a sustainable approach to budgeting in the territory following elevated capital spending over the last two years, which helped stimulate Yukon's economy during the pandemic.
- There are 5,332.0 FTEs in the 2023-24 budget, which is a decrease of 89.1 FTEs from 2022-23.

Approved by:_____
a/Deputy Minister, Department

February 23, 2023

Approved

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2022-23

Supplementary Overview

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

TAB 71

Spring 2023

Recommended response:

- Overall, the changes outlined in the Supplementary Estimates #2 show a government that continues to make sure Yukoners and our economy remain healthy as we emerge from the pandemic while also responding to new and emerging challenges.
- Inflation continues to have an impact on Yukoners, as well as an impact on government projects. Several changes included as part of this Supplementary Estimates are in response to higher costs or work progressing faster than planned.
- The capital budget has no overall gross change in this Supplementary Estimates, but this is not because no adjustments were made. Major projects are still getting the resources they need to reach completion, but other projects were decreased to reflect timelines and funds were reallocated accordingly.
- The increase of \$37.5 million for the Department of Highways and Public Works is being offset by deferrals and offsets in other projects.

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2022-23

Supplementary Overview

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

TAB 71
Spring 2023

Additional response:

- The largest expenditures are on three important capital projects, accounting for \$53.8 million altogether.
- The first is the replacement of the Nisutlin Bay Bridge. This increase covers higher costs and an accelerated schedule. The additional work on this project results in an increase of \$35.8 million as part of this Supplementary Estimate.
- We also provided additional funding for building the Carmacks Bypass, which is part of the Yukon Resource Gateway Program. Work in this area makes up \$11.8 million of the Capital increase.
- The third project is the construction of the Dempster Fibre Line, which will open a second fibre optic link instead of relying just on one, and so give Yukoners more reliable access to the internet as well as necessary redundancy. This project includes a proposed increase of \$5.7 million.

Session Briefing Note

Corporate Note – Fin/HPW 2022-23

Supplementary Overview

Embargoed until day of budget tabling

TAB 71
Spring 2023

- These increases are offset by decreases in capital. The most significant reductions can be seen in the Yukon Housing Corporation. This is largely the result of revised timelines for various projects and initiatives as well as lower uptake in application-based programs, but also accounts for the housing and building cycle as Normandy Living, Cornerstone and the 47-unit 4th and Jeckell facility are all ready and taking in clients and we are now shifting towards building new relationships for potential future projects.

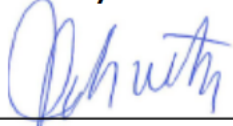
Context—this may be an issue because:

- The 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates #2 is tabled in the spring session and will be the subject of debate.

Background:

- Opposition may request an explanation for the changes included as part of the Supplementary Estimates #2.


Approved by:



a/Deputy Minister, Finance

March 02, 2023

Approved



Deputy Minister, HPW

March 02, 2023

Approved