

**Norman Wells Chamber of Commerce
Annual General Meeting
Speaking Notes
March 21, 2017**

- Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to be with you tonight;
- I want to acknowledge my colleagues who are with me here tonight – Wally Schumann, Minister of ITI, Transportation and Public Works and Services and Sahtu MLA Danny McNeely
- I also want to recognize Jim Antoine, Chairperson of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority Leadership Council who is here with us tonight
- This is a great opportunity to provide you with a quick update on key initiatives of the Department of Health and Social Services;
- Almost a year ago, I met with representatives of Aboriginal governments from across the NWT here in Norman Wells to provide an update on the establishment of the new Territorial Health and Social Services Authority and its new governance structure;
- I am pleased to report that since its establishment on August 1 of this year, excellent progress has been made. Some highlights so far include
 - the Leadership Council has begun its work to implement its mandate and has held three formal public meetings;

- the Regional Wellness Councils are building an understanding of their roles with a particular emphasis on engaging residents so that regional concerns and solutions can be well represented and understood within the system;
- I understand the Sahtu Regional Wellness Council has held its first public meeting and plans are underway for another one in April.
- These are still early days for our new health and social services system and we will continue to focus on improving on the delivery of the best possible care to patients and clients across the NWT.
- We are also very excited about the construction of the new Health and Social Services Centre and Long Term Care facility which is scheduled to be completed in October 2017.
- The new 18-bed Long Term Care Centre is a first for the Sahtu region and will mean that elders and others requiring these services can potentially remain closer to home and to their families and friends.
- The new Health and Social Services Centre will house all services under one roof including Child and Family Services, Mental Health and Addictions services and the Sahtu Region administration.
- We are planning to phase in services.
- The Health and Social Services Centre will be open to the public first in October 2017.

- The Long Term Care facility will begin accepting patients into House One in January 2018. House Two will open to patients in April 2018
- Funding to support 22.5 new positions has been approved in 2017-18. These positions will support the programs and services of the new facility. These positions include:
 - 1 Regional Facility Manager
 - 2 Client Service Coordinators (clerk)
 - 4 Housekeeping/Laundry/Maintenance (Infection Control) staff
 - 1.5 Cooks
 - 1.5 Cook Helpers
 - 7.5 Registered Care Aides
 - 3 Long Term Care Nurses
 - 1 Nurse Supervisor Long Term Care
 - 1 Activity Aide
- In preparation for the opening of the new facility, the Authority has also offered several health care related training programs in a number of Sahtu communities to prepare people for new employment opportunities.
- Another critically important area of work Health and Social Services has undertaken over the past year is moving forward with our Mental Health and Addictions Action Plans to support youth mental health, to provide more support to deal with addictions, and provide better services for families.
- The Department has begun the work and is engaging with youth, community members, families and others to add their voices to the discussion.
- Finally, I want to ensure that our health and social services system is responsive to the needs of indigenous people of the NWT.

- That means making sure we provide services in ways that are culturally respectful; that explores ways to include traditional healing and supports within our system and educating our non-indigenous staff on indigenous cultures and perspective.
- I've provided just a small example of the work my Department and the Authorities are undertaking to achieve our collective goal of best health, best care for a better future.
- Thanks again for your kind invitation to be here tonight
- I look forward to being back in Norman Wells to open the Sahtu Go'tine Regional Health and Social Services Centre and the Sahtu Dene Necha ko Long Term Care Facility.