

YUKON
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
COUNCIL

2009 - 2010
ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	3
SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES	4
DELIBERATIONS	5
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS	7
FINANCIAL STATEMENT	8
COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP	9
CONTACT INFORMATION.....	9

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

“The Health and Social Services Council shall, no later than June 30 of each year, provide the Minister with an annual report containing a summary of its activities, deliberations, and recommendations during the preceding year. On receiving the report, the Minister shall lay a copy of it before the Legislative Assembly during the session then in progress or the next session”. S.31, Health Act, (Yukon).

This annual report outlines activities undertaken by the Health and Social Services Council (the Council) in 2009-2010 in its efforts to meet its legislated mandate in working collaboratively with interest groups, agencies, government and the public at large to improve the health of Yukoners.

The assistance and dedication of all the members of this Council and to those who supported the Council in its work is appreciated. Thank you to all of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin McDonnell', is written in a cursive style.

Kevin McDonnell
Chair

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Council held four meetings during 2009 – 2010: May 29, 2009; October 2 & 3, 2009; December 11 & 12, 2009 and March 26 & 27, 2010. A summary of its deliberations during these meetings is below.

On April 3, 2009 the Chair de-briefed Minister Glenn Hart and his Executive Assistant on Council activities.

The Council struck a Sub-committee to review previous Council work on senior's issues and to identify and bring forward recommendations for Council consideration. The sub-committee report *Senior Services Gaps and Issues from HSS Council meetings* was submitted to Council for discussion at their May 29, 2009 meeting.

During the May 29, 2009 meeting, the Council developed its workplan for the year, and two priority themes were identified: Aging Symposium and Prevention programs.

On December 3, 2009, the Chair met with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to provide input on the audit being done of the Department of the Health and Social Services.

During its March 26 & 27, 2010 meeting, the Council struck a sub-committee to work with the Communications Branch in the Department of Health and Social Services to develop a communication plan, including an updated website.

The Council also initiated a review of its 1990 terms reference and operating procedures due to concerns they may be outdated.

DELIBERATIONS

The Council investigated the issue of services to seniors. It received a presentation from **Hospice Yukon** regarding the grief and bereavement support services Hospice provides. The Council also heard from the **Yukon Council on Aging** regarding the services they provide and also their views on program improvements and draft Council recommendations.

The Council provided input to the **Aging Well Expo** put on by the Department of Health and Social Services with a Council member sitting on the Community Reference Group. The Council also participated in follow-up discussions.

The Council investigated the issue of whether the government's approach to providing **social housing funding** may inadvertently be a disincentive for clients to reduce their reliance on such funding. The Council received a presentation from Yukon Housing and came to the conclusion that it is challenging for clients to see a reduction in housing assistance while they are trying to become self-sufficient. Council was unable to develop any recommendations but continues to consider this issue.

The Council also focused on investigating **Prevention Programs**. The Council worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to identify and organize by theme the different prevention programs in order to understand what are available and to support future assessment of them.

The Council received updates from the Department of Health and Social Services on the government's response to the **H1N1 flu pandemic**. The Council encouraged the Department to continue providing factual information to the public on the flu and the immunization program due to Council's concerns that the public may have misunderstandings regarding the flu and immunization.

The Council was concerned about the adequacy of **public emergency notification procedures**. It was concerned that the public be notified in a timely manner of such things as extended power outages during winter conditions, that the public be aware of how to find out information during an emergency, and that it also be informed in a timely manner of emergency reception centers. The Council followed up on these issues with the Emergency Measures Organization who explained the processes in place for public notification and response. The Council was satisfied with the information, but encouraged the Emergency Measures Organization to consider additional ways to keep the public informed, such as by enclosing information pamphlets in with utility notices that are mailed to Yukon residents.

The Council followed up on a concern it had that rural residents were experiencing **lengthy waiting times** before being reimbursed by the government for medical travel. Additional information provided by the Department of Health and Social Services

clarified that there did not appear to be a problem with the time it takes for government to reimburse rural residents.

The Council looked into the utilization of the **Thomson Centre**. It was concerned that the Thomson Centre was not being utilized in the best manner. The Council also wanted to find out about the future plans for the facility. The Council toured the Centre and received information on the current and future plans for the facility from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Department of Health and Social Services. The Council was pleased to hear about plans to renovate and make better use of the facility.

The Council was interested in learning about programs to ensure **safe drinking water** in the communities and received information from Environmental Health on drinking water standards and testing.

Officials from the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services provided information on the **Department's health promotion activities related to sexual health and tobacco use**. The Council was concerned that there were challenges getting health promotion programs into the school curriculum and is following up on this issue.

The Council received information on the **Health and Safety Programs** put on by the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

The Council recognizes that it needs to work closely with the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure the Council's efforts are relevant and its recommendations are timely and where appropriate, can be assimilated into the Department's programs. In light of this, the Council heard from the **Minister** and the Department's **Deputy Minister** regarding their views on issues the Council may wish to focus on. The Council also heard from Departmental policy officials about the status of the **Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative** and the **Territorial Health Access Fund** program. The Council was also updated on the status of the **Health Privacy Legislation**.

The Council heard from the Department of Health and Social Services about the **Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion** initiative it was embarking on, and committed itself to monitoring this program for future opportunities to provide advice and input.

The Department of Health and Social Services presented information on the **Social Assistance program** to Council.

The Council also received an update on the **new jail and psychiatric facilities**.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS 2009-2010

The Council put forward the following recommendations to the Minister of Health and Social Services:

- Whereas currently there are a few programs based on age of individual which appear to be discriminatory;

Therefore, the Council recommends to the government to investigate and address issues of legislative discrimination against persons aged 60-65 based on marital status – Legislation provides benefits to 65 years of age or those who are 60 with spouse who is 65. This discriminates against widows/widowers who likely need it more than married spouses between the ages of 60-65. Access based on age should be same regardless of marital status, or on age of the spouse.

- Whereas Yukon pharmacies are not connected to share the prescription information which may contribute to prescription drug abuse;

Therefore, the Council recommends that government move quickly to the on-line, real time pharmacy adjudication system to allow pharmacists share prescription information across the territory.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2009-10
AS TO MARCH 31, 2010**

YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

BUDGET: **\$40,000.00**

Honoraria \$14,100.00

Travel Costs \$ 6,725.27

Meeting Expenses \$ 3,323.01

Advertising \$1,325.51

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$25,473.79**

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP DURING 2009 - 2010

- Kevin McDonnell – Chair
- Cindy Gosselin (Resigned June 2009)
- Marie Cox
- Maxwell Rispin
- James Allen
- Graham Lang
- Joseph Graham
- Doug MacPheat
- Doug Kearns
- Peter Morawsky (start date: March 11, 2010)

CONTACT INFORMATION

For information on the Yukon Health and Social Services Council, please contact:

Yukon Health and Social Services Council
Attention: Yukon Health and Social Services Council Secretariat
Box 2703 (H-1)
Whitehorse, Y.T. Y1A 2C6

Phone: (867) 667-5770 or Toll free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5770

Fax: (867) 456-6545