

INTERDEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO H1N1 FLU PANDEMIC

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were elected in October 2007, and immediately after being elected, we worked together as 19 Members to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for the people of the Northwest Territories. After that, Cabinet was selected and given the task to lead the bureaucracy and implement the collective strategy plan.

As a Regular MLA, I feel that my role is to bring forward and help address constituent issues and concerns; review, discuss, debate and either support or reject bills; review, discuss, debate and make recommendations on government business plans; bring forward ideas and initiatives that are in the best interests of residents of the Northwest Territories and to hold the government to account. I take my role very seriously and I have no problem holding Cabinet to account when they stray from our strategic plan. However, I don't believe my job is to criticize everything that Cabinet does or says.

When something is done well, I think it should be recognized. A lot of good has occurred in the last two years and a lot of important things have happened. However, in this venue, official session, it's seems to be a lot more about criticism.

So today I'd like to actually break away from my normal challenges to Cabinet and highlight a positive: specifically, this government's response to H1N1. I talk an awful lot in here in this building about breaking down departmental silos and departments working together. In responding to the threat of H1N1, I feel strongly that Health and Social Services, MACA and Education, Culture and Employment have broken down their silos and have found ways to work together to effectively respond to H1N1.

MACA, as an example, has played a key role through their Territorial Emergency Response Team. They have worked closely and collaboratively with the Department of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment to respond to H1N1. Health professionals have gone above and beyond and have committed time beyond their normal business days to actually respond to H1N1.

I was at the clinic yesterday getting my H1N1 shot and I was very impressed by just the flow of people through that centre. It was smooth. It was effective. I was in there and I was out of there, and I had my shot and my arm hurts a little bit, but otherwise I'm fine. This is clearly evidence that these departments can work together for positive results, and I applaud the staff of Education, Culture and Employment, MACA, and Health and Social Services for their continued dedication and support to the people of the Northwest Territories. Without our quality staff, there are no services to the people of the Northwest Territories. So to our staff: thank you very, very, very much. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker