

MEMBER'S STATEMENT – GREAT SLAVE – OCTOBER 3, 2008

**DENTAL SURGERY SERVICE AT STANTON TERRITORIAL  
HOSPITAL**

Thank you Mr. Speaker,

In June I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services a number of questions on the provision of dental surgery services in the NWT. At that time, the Minister indicated that the Department was investigating the possibility of making services available.

Since then, it has come to my attention that senior officials with the Department of Health and Social Services had discussed the issue with Health Canada who has agreed to increase the coverage under NIHB for the facility fees associated with the provision of First Nations and Inuit children's dental treatment under general anesthetic at hospitals in the NWT. The increase provided by Health Canada does not cover the complete cost of the service, but it does offset the cost that the GNWT would have to cover to allow these services to be provided in territorial hospitals. Based on these changes, the Department of Health and Social Services has re-evaluated their stance on dental surgeries for children and dental surgeries are currently being booked in both the Hay River and Inuvik hospitals.

This is excellent. This is the right thing to do, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank both the Minister and the department officials who made this happen.

Now, I would like the Minister to take the next step and make the same services available in Yellowknife through Stanton Territorial Health Authority. Yellowknife has the largest population in the NWT and has a large number of children who are suffering and require dental surgery. Yellowknife based dentists are willing to provide the services that require access to an operating room in extension to perform these treatments.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services some questions on this issue.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.