



March 20, 2024

The Honourable Tracy-Anne McPhee
Minister of Health and Social Services
Box 2703 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: Support for the establishment of Shāw Kwā'ą / Health and Wellness Yukon / Santé et mieux-être Yukon via the proposed Health Authority Act

Dear Minister McPhee,

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is very pleased with you tabling the Health Authority Act that establishes Shāw Kwā'ą / Health and Wellness Yukon on March 11, 2024. We support this legislation and the collaborative way that it was drafted with Yukon First Nations throughout the development process.

Yukon First Nations have never had a seat at the table when past health legislation was established, and we have long suffered from the systemic racism and poor health outcomes from the resulting systems. This legislation is a necessary first and foundational step to address the fragmented nature of the Yukon's health and social services system.

The current system is difficult for all Yukoners including our Citizens and with Old Crow being the only fly-in community in Yukon, the system is even more fragmented and challenging to navigate for residents in our community. The system is also challenging for health and social service providers and non-government organizations to navigate. Ensuring people, whether living in rural or urban settings, get the very best in care when transferred between hospitals, community health centres and other providers is of critical importance, and this new law will enable this to become a reality. The Yukon, except Nunavut, is the last Canadian jurisdiction to move towards a health authority model.

The proposed Health Authority Act outlines important concepts for health system transformation as goals for the health system: enhancing patient and staff experience, improving population health and value for money all while advancing health equity. The proposed governance structure of the health authority integrates Yukon First Nations, and the new requirements for broad health system planning through the Yukon Health and Wellness plan, community health and wellness plans, and a cultural safety framework are crucial to increase community-level involvement in the health system.

It is also crucial to maintain the Yukon as an attractive place for healthcare professionals to practice, and it is our belief that establishing a modern and culturally responsive health authority will support this.

We encourage the Government to pass this legislation as soon as possible. We know the legislation is foundational and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation supports the establishment and implementation of Shāw Kwā'ą. We are committed to continue to partner on this important work as the implementation and development of Shāw Kwā'ą / Health and Wellness Yukon continues, and excited to work with all partners in the health care system to innovatively transform our system for both those who are clients of the system and those that work in the system.

Mahsi' choo,



Chief Pauline Frost
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation