

Russell Neudorf
Associate Deputy Minister
COVID-19 Coordinating Secretariat
6th Floor, Centre Square Tower
5022 49th Street, PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9

November 4, 2020

Re: Response To Self-Isolation and Our Communities Discussion Paper

Dear Mr. Neudorf,

The Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce is pleased to provide feedback in response to the *Self-Isolation and our Communities* Discussion Paper.

We are aware that the isolation centres represent more than half of the territory's costs for implementing the Public Health Orders, with individual stays costing roughly \$4000 for a 14-day period. We support the pursuit of cost saving measures and broadly believe that the GNWT should look at the circumstances where exceptions have been granted by the Chief Public Health Officer to see if processes can be developed to make it easier for residents to self-isolate at home.

We are aligned with the NWT Chamber of Commerce in that we do not think NWT residents should cover the costs for isolation centre stays if travel is for personal or discretionary reasons. We recommend that the GNWT eliminate cost-coverage for isolation centre stays that are not required as a matter of GNWT policy or medical recommendation.

Businesses are required to cover the costs associated with mandatory self-isolation for their staff, a financial burden for many small businesses. Our members have shared stories of hardship - from an inability to afford to bring in the staff needed to complete a project, to staff struggling with self-isolation and leaving the NWT before the self-isolation period ends (a cost employers must bear even if no work was completed), and the challenges of needing the services of specialized firms who are unwilling to cover wages during the self-isolation period for their staff to travel to the NWT.

If the GNWT is going to continue to pay the self-isolation costs for individual's discretionary travel, then we suggest that the GNWT consider providing financial support to help offset these mandatory costs for businesses.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this submission further, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Tim Syer, President
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce



Deneen Everett, Executive Director
Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

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