



Office of the Minister
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

February 27, 2026

Dear Premier Dixon:

This letter is intended to report back on how the Department of Health and Social Services will advance our new government's mandate.

Our mandate prioritizes reliable and affordable energy, improved access to frontline and primary health care, putting students at the centre of our education system, increasing housing availability and affordability, strengthening public safety, and enabling private-sector-led economic growth. Responsibility for my department will require decisions that balance our inherited financial pressures with our commitment to provide strong public services to Yukoners. It will require joint action with other departments to advance their priorities. Working in partnership with Yukon First Nations, municipalities and other partners will also be central to achieving my mandate and delivering on our collective promise to Yukoners.

To balance this work, I will take a principled approach to decision-making and priority setting that considers:

- protecting frontline services that help Yukoners and keep our communities safe and healthy;
- respect for taxpayers and making sure there is value for money in government spending;
- partnership, collaboration, and respect; and
- responsible, disciplined decision-making that achieves continuous improvement for Yukoners.

These principles will ensure that fiscal responsibility is paired with a clear commitment to supporting the long-term wellbeing of Yukoners.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I have asked my department to prioritize:

- improving timely access to frontline health care services for Yukoners by launching a recruitment campaign directed at U.S. health professionals, advancing team-based care, supporting the establishment of new primary care clinics, and reducing wait times;
- advancing health care infrastructure priorities including expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital;
- expanding Long-Term Care and Home Care;
- increasing support for medical, nursing, and health care bursaries, and programs for Yukon students;
- working with Yukon First Nations on shared priorities for health system improvement;
- improving access to rural health care services;

- modernizing the Electronic Medical Records systems;
- implementing a new physician claims system;
- supporting the health and wellbeing of students by enhancing education and therapeutic supports for students and improving accessible supports and programming;
- reviewing the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and change its operating model;
- addressing barriers to information-sharing; and
- reviewing and updating the environmental health framework.

Together, these priorities will help to advance our government's overarching mandate to improve access to frontline health care services for Yukoners, keep communities safe, put students at the centre of our education system, and to create the conditions for the private sector and rural Yukon to flourish.

I look forward to working collaboratively with my Cabinet colleagues to reduce red tape, remove unnecessary regulations, and to break down organizational silos through the Department of Economic Development's Red Tape Reduction Framework.

By working together, we can ensure our resources and taxpayer dollars are going where they are needed most: to support Yukoners.

Sincerely,



Brad Cathers
Minister of Health and Social Services

Mandate Implementation Plan

Department: Department of Health and Social Services

Approved by: Minister Brad Cathers

Date: February 27, 2026

Overview

- The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to advancing the government's mandate by addressing the needs and concerns most frequently raised by Yukoners. These include access to primary care in communities and Whitehorse; availability of substance use treatment, aftercare and healing supports; outdated or insufficient infrastructure; and a desire to continuously improve our health care and social services system to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

Top Priorities

- **Improve timely access to frontline health care services for Yukoners:** we will advance actions to reduce the number of Yukoners without access to primary care, including:
 - **Launching a recruitment campaign to bring in U.S. health professionals** in connection with broader strategic engagement on health recruitment and identifying and addressing impediments to direct licensure.
 - **Advancing team-based care** through multiple clinic settings, including the development of a program that fosters team-based care in clinics owned by Yukon health professionals.
 - **Supporting the establishment of new primary care clinics** through a program that encourages investment in new clinic spaces.
 - **Reducing wait times** by engaging with health care professionals and the Yukon Hospital Corporation to identify opportunities and actions, including the creation of a focused surgery wait time action plan.
- **Advance health care infrastructure priorities including expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH):** this includes developing a plan to mitigate pressures until the WGH expansion is complete, and advancing priority actions related to bed pressure and access to services. The WGH expansion project will include a plan to expand surgical services capacity and add space for 40 or more hospital beds.
- **Expand Long-Term Care and Home Care:** the department will work with the Department of Highways and Public Works to expand Whistle Bend Place, and plan and build a new long-term care home in Watson Lake. We will also expand Home Care services to help elders and seniors live in their homes longer and reduce pressure on long-term care beds.
- **Increase support for medical, nursing, and health care bursaries, and programs for Yukon students:** the department will increase and expand health bursaries. We will also work with the Department of Education and Yukon University to develop more

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opportunities for pathways to health education, as well as expanding nursing education, and growing the Family Medicine Residency program for new doctors.

- **Work with Yukon First Nations on shared priorities for health system improvement:** the department will work with First Nations to advance shared priorities such as culturally safe care, community health and wellness plans, improving patient care by developing an electronic medical record system for health facilities in all communities, and efforts to improve health care access and outcomes.
- **Improve access to rural health care services:** including reducing gaps in service in communities.
- **Modernize the Electronic Medical Records systems:** to improve the efficiency of care delivery, reduce barriers to information-sharing, and support patient safety in the systems used by the department, hospitals and medical clinics.
- **Implement a new physician claims system:** to support efficient payments, audit capability, and the production of useful health data.
- **Support the health and wellbeing of students:** the department will work with the Department of Education to support the needs of students by:
 - **Enhancing education and therapeutic supports for students** by establishing options for the delivery of therapeutic spaces and programs, expanding programming and mental health supports, facilitating relationships, and streamlining services.
 - **Improving accessible supports and programming** by updating and aligning policies, reducing barriers, improving access to respite services and inclusionary support, and ensuring student access to needed medical devices.
- **Review the Whitehorse Emergency Shelter and its operating model:** the department will develop a plan to decentralize shelter services, implement prevention focused actions, expand second-stage addictions treatment options, and improve community safety.
- **Address barriers to information-sharing:** we will review the *Health Information Privacy and Management Act* (HIPMA) and regulations. We will work with medical clinics, Yukon Hospital Corporation, RCMP, and government departments to identify barriers to information sharing and to reduce the burden on frontline providers.
- **Review and update environmental health framework:** we will reduce the regulatory burden on local businesses and Yukoners while appropriately protecting public health. This will include working with local businesses such as food service operators and local food growers and producers to make it easier to offer local food in grocery stores, restaurants, and government facilities. It will also include improving and streamlining sewage disposal systems permitting. We will focus on right-sizing the regulatory and permitting regime to make it easier for local businesses, communities, schools, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, while ensuring appropriate health standards.