



Refreshed Norman Wells Community Wellness Plan
by the Norman Wells Land Corporation
2017

Introduction

The Norman Wells Community Wellness Plan (“NWCWP”) is a partnership between the Norman Wells Land Corporation and, the Government of Northwest Territories’ Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS); along with local community stakeholders in Norman Wells. The goal of the NWCWP is to increase the participation of community stakeholders in the development and delivery of wellness related programs and services. Therefore, the NWCWP strives to have a holistic approach that involves youths, local leaders and community stakeholders. As part of the refreshing the NWCWP for Norman Wells, stakeholders were engaged in the month of October 2017.

Stakeholders of the engagement sessions provided feedback on the existing wellness programs and services in the community. Further, stakeholders discussed methods on how to improve on existing wellness programs and services and approaches to establishing new wellness programs and services that will be utilized by the community at-large. All stakeholders were tasked with answering four (4) questions: 1) Where are we now in terms of community wellness, 2) Where or how we can improve, 3) Where do we want to be in the future, and 4) How do we plan to get there.

The notion of ‘Wellness’

It is important to note that the concept and definition of “wellness” within the Community of Norman Wells is subjective to differences of personal and professional experience; therefore, the impact of the plan will be determined by the readers and decision-makers accordingly. That said, majority of the stakeholders throughout the engagement sessions focused on coordinating/collaborating and social wellness within the community, as well as active and healthy living, nutrition and mental wellness, and Aboriginal culture and language preservation.

Where Are We Now in Terms of Community Wellness?

The general consensus among stakeholders is that there are a variety of physical activities they can participate in, and more importantly, they enjoy doing so. In terms of non-physical activities, stakeholders have stated that there are minimal varieties that they can engage

themselves in on a regular basis as existing programs does not meet their schedule or interest. As well, stakeholders stated that it is essential to have consistency regarding the programs that are made available to them as most recall of programs that would only last a few months before being cut either due to funding or lack of attendance.

Furthermore, stakeholders have expressed that there are no programs and services that are available for youths after nine (9) PM or for those that are above the age of eighteen (18). Given such limitations, stakeholders have expressed regardless of the attractiveness of programs and activities that are being offered in the community, the fundamental needs for having a vibrant and healthy community in terms of social programs and services will not be achieved unless programs and services are made available that of both within their schedules and interests.

Community stakeholders believes that, as of current, are not being engaged sufficiently enough to actively participate in government funded programs; which have often resulted in government programs not being fully utilized. That is, of the existing funding programs available from departments that promotes activities such as “on the land”, and life skills development, only a few organizations apply for the funds and most only apply once, which makes it very difficult to retain active participation from youths.

Where or How We Can Improve?

Community members of Norman Wells believe that currently every department and local organizations are delivering its own programs and service, which in some cases have duplicate of outcomes and results. As such, stakeholders believe that a community scale project should take place that encompasses all departments and organizations that will be delivered in multiple years. Stakeholders further believe that this approach should enable greater funding capacity that may enable larger number of stakeholders to take part in, which will therefore increase the overall impact on the well-being of the community. Additionally, during the discussion it was noted that organizations often compete for the same audience or funds, therefore an option to resolve such needless competition is to have one organization or

department to manage and implement the project with funds from multiple sources and then work with different groups on the delivery of the project.

Some stakeholders hold the opinion that the community have some choices for overall wellness in terms of physical activity; and that the community does have a limited variety of choices for individuals to "get active". For example, community members can walk on the trails around the town, join the 24-hour fitness centre, swim in the pool, skate or play hockey on the ice.

Further, as a community, there are groups who organize physical activities, such as the Bear Run, Diva Drills, softball, yoga and many others. Stakeholders further suggests that the town's facilities are well maintained, and they are accessible to the residents. However though, a lack of coordination and collaboration between groups within the community, and sharing of resources and information limits the range of programs and services each group can offer. For example, if one group wants to offer a healthy initiative program, but since there are only two grocery stores in Norman Wells, it is difficult to ensure a viable long-term program due to cost of groceries.

Where do We Want to Be in the Future?

Most stakeholders believe that given the size of Norman Wells, there is a fair amount of healthy choices and activities for residents. Again, one major improvement that can be made by local groups and organizations is to coordinate and share resources in creating more sustainable programs and services. As for future programs and services, stakeholders would like to have more collaborative programs and services, as most believe it is essential to establishing a vibrant community.

Overall, community members hold the opinion that there is great variety of individual activities for both youths, adults and elders in the community, but there is a need to start focusing more on long-term planning and getting everyone engaged in activities.

Community stakeholders, on an overall basis, believe that there is a need to build partnerships between various departments and local organizations to develop and implement social programs and services within the community. However, historically, most partnerships last less

than two years. That said governments and stakeholders must be willing to put forth the financial backing to make these improvements. More importantly, stakeholders believe that having a vibrant and healthy community is a shared responsibility, not only the responsibility of one or two groups.

How do We Plan to Get There?

Community stakeholders, with all considerations given, believes that the information gather is only a sample of community members. And there is perhaps additional information needed to achieve a true holistic approach in developing a Community Wellness Plan that are viable and achievable, that will deliver the expected results and have impacts to everyone in the community.

Furthermore, it is within the opinion of stakeholders that any wellness programs and/or services should focus on multi-year deliver, with no less than three (3) years to ensure that the impacts of such programs and/or services are measurable for its intended results and outcomes. Historically, individual organizations and departments would often initiate a program for a single fiscal year, and would then cease to continue said program by its funders, for whatever reason. That said, social programs often require extensive time for community members to utilize and to provide the desired results and outcomes.

As such, the Wellness Program should focus on the following:

- Collaboration and coordination between community groups
- Contribute “Wellness” resources to other community groups, when possible
- Promotion of Aboriginal culture and language
- Health promotion, especially toward youths
- Healthy eating and nutrition education
- Early literacy and learning, and early childhood development activities
- Physical health and activity promotion
- Disease prevention, management and support
- Injury and prevention

- Capacity building and continuing education
- Cultural and Elder support
- Mental wellness promotion
- Addictions, suicide and abuse prevention
- Early intervention activities and support to prevent and reduce substance abuse

Stakeholders fundamentally believe that they cannot and should not preference one category over another. It will require a mixture and combination of the above categories to be delivered and implemented together, as the term “holistic” suggests, to achieve a vibrant and healthy community.