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YUKON AND YMA JOIN FORCES TO RESOLVE ORPHAN PATIENT ISSUES

WHITEHORSE - The Yukon government and the Yukon Medical Association (YMA) are working together to find solutions for the number of Yukon residents without a family physician.

“I feel for the families and individuals who do not have a regular family physician to call on when they need a doctor,” Health and Social Services Minister Peter Jenkins said. “It must be a very disquieting feeling to know that if you do have a health problem, there is no one to turn to.”

Jenkins said the department was fielding calls on a regular basis from individuals trying to find a medical practice accepting new patients.

“We are in the unfortunate situation right now that all the medical practices are closed and individuals who need a doctor are either using the drop-in clinics, the emergency room at the hospital, or not getting medical care.” Jenkins added.

Jenkins stated a partnership with the YMA may help find a solution that is workable. The last agreement with the YMA included additional payments to physicians taking on ‘orphan’ patients. The problem arises when physicians don’t have any more time in their schedules, he maintained.

YMA President Dr. Wayne MacNicol says physicians are also concerned about the number of Yukon residents without a family doctor.

“We are healers. We don’t want to see anyone going without medical assistance, but it is impossible to stretch further than we are already stretched,” MacNicol said.

The two parties are meeting on a regular basis to discuss possible options and solutions. One such solution would be the establishment of a health clinic staffed by nurse practitioners and physicians, on a 24-hour basis. Both Jenkins and MacNicol agree that concept is still a way off but that it remains a viable option.

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