

24-20(1)

The Honourable Lesa Semmler
Minister of Health and Social Services

Northwest Territories Medical Students Rejected for Residencies

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by the Member for Yellowknife Centre on October 31, 2025, regarding Northwest Territories Medical Students Rejected for Residencies.

The Member asked how many Northwest Territories resident medical students have applied to complete their medical residencies in the Northwest Territories in the past five years?

Between 2020 and 2025, there were six applicants from the Northwest Territories who applied to the NWT Family Medicine Residency Program also commonly referred to as the NWT residency program.

The Member asked how many were accepted/accommodated, and how many were rejected?

Of the six applicants, one was successfully matched with the NWT residency program through the Canadian Resident Matching Service process, which is the official application and matching service for medical training in Canada. Each year the NWT residency program selection committee interviews an average of 120 applicants for the two available positions.

Of the five NWT applicants who were not matched with the NWT residency program through the Canadian Resident Matching Service process, four were accepted into Family Medicine Residency Programs at other sites outside the NWT, and one was accepted into a specialty residency, which is not family medicine, outside of the NWT. The NWT does not offer specialty residencies.

The Member asked what are the medical fields/areas of practice or specialties able to be undertaken as a residency in the Northwest Territories?

The Northwest Territories has partnered with the University of Alberta's Department of Family Medicine to serve as the Yellowknife training site for its Rural Family Medicine Residency stream. This is the only medical field or area of practice available for residency in the NWT.

The Member asked what steps the Department is taking to ensure that Northwest Territories resident medical students are supported in completing their medical training, including residency placements within the territory?

More than sixty medical electives are completed in the Northwest Territories each year, providing medical students and residents throughout Canada with the opportunity to come to the NWT for an elective. Many NWT resident medical students and medical residents take advantage of these opportunities, and some return for multiple electives during their training. Priority is given to NWT residents seeking an elective.

For residency training, all medical residency programs and applying medical students, regardless of specialty, participate in the national Canadian Resident Matching Service process each year. Canadian Resident Matching Service uses an algorithm to match applicants to residency programs. Programs interview candidates and submit a list of preferred applicants to Canadian Resident Matching Service, while applicants submit their own list of preferred programs. Canadian Resident Matching Service then applies its algorithm to match applicants with programs.

When creating our program's list, we place a high value on applicants with ties to the NWT, with Indigenous backgrounds, and with demonstrated commitment to culturally safe practices for Indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.