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To the Editor,

The release of Emerging Wisely 2021 on June 9th came closely on the heels of the Premier's release of Emerging Stronger. Both of these documents emerged later than hoped for. And both of the Emergings have disappointed and missed real opportunities.

On the pandemic front, we were given a gift. We were given early and abundant access to vaccines which stop the most serious effects of COVID 19 in their tracks. Yellowknifers recognized the gift and got vaccinated. As of June 16, 70% of us have been at least partially vaccinated. We have now protected our most vulnerable. We should be celebrating that. While the recent Yellowknife outbreaks may have been setbacks, their limited spread and the lack of hospitalizations shows us that the vaccines work.

And yet we're left with Emerging Wisely 2021 that sees restrictions and limitations on fully vaccinated people in place far longer than the territory to the left of us and even to the right of us. After the announcements from the Yukon and Nunavut on their re-opening plans, it boggles the mind how Emerging Wisely 2021 ever made it through the Premier's office.

Before vaccines, COVID 19 posed an existential threat to our health care system and our most vulnerable. Extraordinary measures were warranted, and they worked. We made it. Now, as the threat to our vulnerable populations has receded, extraordinary measures are no longer supportable. The new plan mentions personal responsibility and risk management, and yet there is none of that.

Most Yellowknifers have made a choice - to get vaccinated and avoid the worst of COVID. Some have chosen to roll the dice. Woe betide those who roll the dice. I wish them well. But for those of us who have chosen to follow the CPHO and the Premier's advice, it's time to return to normal. Keeping restrictions on the fully vaccinated is a missed opportunity to show that the CPHO is not just all stick and no carrot. When stacked up against our neighbours, Emerging Wisely 2021 will erode the trust and confidence that the government needs in order to deal with the next emergency.

Unfortunately, Emerging Stronger is a return to business as usual for our political leadership. Rebranded mandates, vague commitments to build big things and keep northerners and northern dollars up north and no real plan. So we pick up right where we left off. What Emerging Strongly really represents is a missed opportunity. With money apparently growing on trees in Ottawa, now is the time for the Premier to seize the moment and do something big. Be a nation builder – build that highway up the Mackenzie Valley, expand Taltson, turn the Slave Geological Province into Canada's post-oil economic engine.

Despite the disappointments wrought by the two Emergings, Yellowknife businesses continue to adapt and lead. Air Tindi and Det'on Cho Management LP deserve special mention for taking the lead with their vaccination incentive programs. The Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce has begun to roll out its members' vaccination incentive program, *Crush Covid Yellowknife*. If only we saw such leadership and problem-solving initiative from the Premier's office.

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