

Services for Seniors

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to support our Seniors to live in their own homes for as long as possible while ensuring adequate supports when they can no longer do so. I would like to provide an update on our continued efforts to make this commitment a reality.

As Members know, the government put in place a Strategic Framework, Our Elders Our Communities, which supports a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of our Seniors.

Current work related to the seven priorities in this Framework is ongoing and includes:

- Planning for future long-term care beds in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik;
- Planning for extended care beds in alignment with the timelines of the Stanton Renewal Project;
- Supporting Health and Social Service Authorities with training on the Supportive Pathways approach;
- Supporting Authority staff to attend Elders in Motion training;
- Collaborating with the Authorities on policies to support implementation of the new Continuing Care Standards;
- Planning to pilot tools developed with the NWT Seniors' Society to screen for elder abuse; and
- Collaborating with the NWT Seniors' Society to validate tools and the approach to support early integration of palliative care.

We are also making progress on the activities outlined in our Continuing Care Services Action Plan. Research and analysis for a Paid Family/Community Caregiver Option Pilot is currently underway in order to identify the needs of Seniors, adults with disabilities and

their caregivers. We want to empower our Seniors by allowing them to decide who they want to assist them with their unmet care needs. This type of program will be of particular importance in our smaller Indigenous communities where resources are limited, connection to family is strong and aging in place is favoured. The federal investment of \$890,000 to the program over the next four years will undoubtedly aid in its overall success.

Mr. Speaker, the Department is advancing work on the Yellowknife Adult Day Program. A thorough review of the AVENS Elder's Day program was conducted in 2017, which informed the need for adult day programming in Yellowknife. A Request for Proposal was issued earlier this winter. The Department is working closely with the Yellowknife Region of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority to reestablish adult day services for seniors in the City of Yellowknife.

A few months ago, we released the sixth edition of our Seniors' Information Handbook. This resource provides a comprehensive list of programs and services that Seniors and their caregivers can access to make informed decisions about their care. We distributed this handbook in a widespread mail-out across the territory and continue to receive requests for copies to this day. We are proud of this resource and thankful to all our partners who contributed to its completion.

I am also pleased that officials from government have begun working with the NWT Seniors Society to develop a report card on GNWT programs and services for Seniors. The report card is an opportunity to inventory and assess the effectiveness of GNWT programs and services either designed for or accessed by Seniors, determine how well they are meeting Seniors' needs and identify areas for potential improvement or better coordination. The first steps are to draft a terms of reference for the project, to start an inventory of all programs and services for Seniors across government, and to begin an assessment of the effectiveness of these programs and services in order to identify areas for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, knowing that the number of adults over the age of 70 will nearly triple by 2034, we are making significant strides to ensure our Elders can age safely in their homes with dignity while surrounded by family. This issue will remain at the forefront of GNWT priorities as we strive for our Best Care, Best Health, Better Future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.