

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 229-18(2): STRATEGY TO CREATE SAFE COMMUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS

June 15, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Has the government made a commitment to implement the five-year strategy and action plan to create safe communities for older adults? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be tabling the five-year strategy that was developed by the NWT Seniors' Society and the NWT network to prevent abuse of older adults later today. The department has been collaborating with the NWT Seniors Society and the network to support training for further frontline providers and screening assessment and support of older adults who undergo abuse.

We've made a commitment and now make a commitment again here today that we'll continue to work with the Seniors Society and participate with the Network in prevention of abuse of older adults on the actions that fall within our mandate. This, once again, is about partnership and working together and being part of the solution. We're committed to doing that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just for greater clarity, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that those priorities listed in the five-year strategy are, in fact, the priorities of the government? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The document I'm tabling today isn't a Government of the Northwest Territories document. It is actually a document of the Seniors Society, but we have participated with them, and we will certainly continue to work with them to support any initiatives to limit or reduce the amount of abuse of seniors. The individual actions are the actions identified within that report, which is not a government document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that answer. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Minister is planning a formal response to the document that he is tabling today. Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not planning a formal response to the document, but we do have a solid working relationship with the Seniors Society. We'll continue working with the Seniors Society. And, where appropriate and where it falls within our mandate, we're absolutely willing to move forward on different initiatives identified within the framework that we're tabling today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. One of the recommendations in this strategy that I want to highlight is to engage the government service officers, who are GNWT employees of course, in the communities as active champions in preventing the abuse of older adults. Is that an action that the Minister can commit to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, those positions work for or are, rather, employed by the Department of the Executive, but the Department of the Executive has been engaged with the Network, and the government services officers are their employees. The Health and Social Services Authority's frontline staff work with the community level with our government services officers and understand and appreciate their role in assisting elders in accessing programs and services. So, as part of implementing the screening tools, the Department of Health and Social Services will work with the executive as well as the territorial health authority to lay out a plan for engaging government services officers in training sessions so that they are prepared to identify different programs and services for elders in their communities and to work as champions for residents, including seniors and elders throughout the Northwest Territories.