

## MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

### ELDERS' CIRCLE ADULT DAY PROGRAM

October 3, 2017

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife has a rapidly growing population of seniors, and they have a growing list of needs so they can remain in their own homes for as long as possible. One of those needs is a day program that provides for their social and emotional well-being, and gives their caregivers respite.

Starting in January 2011, Avens provided a day program to meet those needs called Elders' Circle. It operated until last fall when it closed. Staff said the closure was temporary, pending an evaluation of the program's safety and quality. The Yellowknife Association for Community Living stepped in to fill the gap until the end of March when they were told the program at Avens would reopen.

Mr. Speaker, here we are a year later, and the Elders' Circle day program is still closed. When I asked about the future of the program last week at the Avens annual general meeting, I was told the organization has no plans to relaunch the program. The Avens' board vice-president said they cannot afford to restart the program. The organization is already challenged to provide its core services, namely independent housing and long-term care, and there is no money to provide a day program as well.

Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue in the spring session, the Minister said he was waiting for the review of the Elders' Circle program and the continuing care plan to be completed before he could make any commitments. The Minister tabled the continuing care plan last week. It does mention adult programming in the context of providing space in new seniors' housing. It also talks about expanding day programs throughout the territory with local municipalities. It is unclear how either of these options apply in Yellowknife. In the meantime, the department has completed a review of the Elders' circle program at Avens but has not yet made it public.

Where does that leave seniors and their caregivers who use the Elders' Circle? Nowhere, Mr. Speaker. Whether the day program is offered by Avens or by Yellowknife Association for Community Living or another community partner, the bottom line is that Yellowknife needs an adult day program and we need it now. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi.