

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
QUESTION 51-19(2): ADULT DAY PROGRAM FOR SENIORS IN YELLOWKNIFE
February 11, 2020

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement, helping seniors to age in place is a priority for this Assembly, but we need to improve supports for them to make this priority a reality. One area that needs work is helping Yellowknife seniors to get out of the House and socialize, whatever their physical and cognitive abilities. The Department of Health and Social Services surveyed seniors about the kinds of activities that they would like to take part in. Today, I have questions for the Minister about the results. First of all, what did seniors say they need in order to participate in social activities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Yellowknife Centre. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The results indicated that older adults in Yellowknife are active and want to remain physically and socially active. All the age groups identified transportation, affordability of activities, and a lack of information about social activities as a barrier to social engagement. By far, the biggest concern was transportation: city bus not being available when activities are scheduled, routines are not close enough to home, and numerous challenges with the Yellowknife Accessible Transit Services. In addition, those 75 years and older identified lack of accessibility within buildings and lack of supports in physical and mental health needs as barriers to social engagement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: That is good information from the Minister. Can the Minister give us a sense of what kind of response rate they got to the survey and particularly from those who are over 80 and those who may have cognitive limitations?

HON. DIANE THOM: We did not ask individuals whether they had cognitive limitation, so we do not have that data. The age group set up for the survey allowed us to capture information for individuals 75 to 85 years old and 85-plus years of age. Forty-five individuals 75 years and older responded to the survey; that was 10 percent of the survey respondents. Forty people were 75 to 84 years of age, and eight people were 85 years and older.

MS. GREEN: I am a little concerned about how the needs of people with cognitive issues were taken into account in this survey. How were they engaged in this survey?

HON. DIANE THOM: At this time, I don't know the data on the limitations, but it is something we can look into and get back to the Member. **MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that the Minister knows that the primary barrier to people being involved in social inclusion is transportation, what are her next steps to bridge this gap? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: The department will use the information to develop programming that will put in place support for older adults in Yellowknife, and that includes transportation. We are in the early stages of designing the program, and we are working with the steering committee to complete it by the end of March 2020. The health authority will go through an expression of interest process to find an organization to deliver programming, and we are aiming to have this completed in early April so that we can start to begin the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.