

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
QUESTION 330-19(2): Creating Safe Communities for Older Adults

June 11, 2020

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement, I mentioned that there is a strategic plan to create safer communities for older adults. This wasn't a government strategy, but government was at the table along with various stakeholders for the seniors community. Are the strategy's recommendations still on the government's radar? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DIANE THOM: Can the Member repeat the question? Thank you.

MS. GREEN: My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my statement today, I mentioned there is a strategic plan to create safer communities for older adults. This wasn't a government strategy, but government was at the table along with other stakeholders from the seniors community. My question for the Minister is: are the strategy's recommendations still on the government's radar?

HON. DIANE THOM: The NWT Network to Prevent Abuse in Older Adults that the Member is referring to is comprised of representatives from non-profit organizations, service providers, Indigenous groups, and GNWT departments. The Department of Health and Social Services provides funding to the NWT Seniors' Society to support the Network to Prevent Abuse in Older Adults, and also to promote public awareness around recognizing the abuse, preventing, support and programming.

With the funding we provided to them, the NWT Seniors' Society is making progress, so yes, we are doing the work on three strategic priorities. The public education, like the Member mentioned in her statement, public education, education and training, community responses that are all recognized in the strategy, and yes, we are continuing to do the work together.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. The strategy included three recommendations directed to government. The first is to implement a centralized data reporting system for all cases of abuse of older adults in the NWT. Is there such a data reporting system in place at this time?

HON. DIANE THOM: I am not aware. The Member did mention that this is their report and this is their progress, so I'm not sure if there is data that is related to that.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. This recommendation was aimed at government to set up a centralized data reporting system. Another of the recommendations was

to research the need for legislation which would protect older adults from abuse. Is this something that is anywhere on the government's radar?

HON. DIANE THOM: The GNWT is committed to supporting the ongoing work to protect seniors from abuse and providing, again, ongoing funding to support this network. We are committed to working actively as members of this NWT network so that we can continue to prevent the abuse of elders, and also looking to explore the renewal of this network strategy.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. The Minister said that there was a possibility that this strategy would be renewed. Now is certainly the time. It was a 2015 to 2020 strategy. Can the Minister tell us what steps she is planning to take with stakeholders to renew this focus on elder abuse? Thank you.

HON. DIANE THOM: In addition to the work that is specific to seniors, the department is also taking steps to address and reduce the family violence in general. The department has looked at the strategy. It is coming up for expiry, and I did mention that we are looking to work together, and that is something we will look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.