



Government of Bermuda

Ministry of Social Development and Seniors

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

by

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Minister of Social Development and Seniors**

A National Senior's Strategy for Bermuda

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Mr. Speaker,

I rise this morning to share with my Honourable colleagues the collaborative work that has been planned by the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors and the Bermuda Health Council to develop a National Senior's Strategy for Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker,

A National Seniors Strategy is simply defined as 'A framework that outlines comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective actions for addressing the changing needs of Bermuda's ageing population'. This Honourable House may recall that the people of Bermuda were promised a National Seniors Strategy that would include a strategy for dementia and a prevention plan for senior abuse; two areas of great concern that our seniors face today.

Mr. Speaker,

Progress towards developing a sustainable National Seniors' Strategy has taken the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors longer than anticipated. It was critical to involve people in the development of the strategy who understood the unique landscape of our growing senior population in Bermuda.

Additionally, **Mr. Speaker**, several reports had been carved in the past specifying goals and action items to enhance the overall well-being of Bermuda's seniors, These included the draft 2018 National Ageing Well Strategy and the 2020 Ageing Well Committee Work Plan. Therefore, it was imperative not to reinvent the wheel or insert duplication of effort. Much of the foundational work needed to build upon for the development of a national senior's strategy had already been done. An updated structured implementation path of execution is now required.

Mr. Speaker,

It is within this context that the draft 2018 National Ageing Well Strategy will be used as the foundation to develop a National Seniors Strategy for Bermuda. The strategy maps out 9 pillars or goals to coordinate comprehensive strategic actions across the Government, the third sector and the community to meet the needs of Bermuda's ageing population.

These are:

- i. Comprehensive Planning and Accountability
- ii. Strategic Workforce Development and Education
- iii. Employment and Financial Security for Older Adults & Family Caregivers
- iv. Health Ageing
- v. Ageing at Home
- vi. Quality Long-Term Care
- vii. Accessible Transportation
- viii. Safety and Security for Older Adults
- ix. Intergenerational and Inclusive Communities.

Mr. Speaker,

A coordinated and collaborative approach must be undertaken by different Government Ministries and Departments to execute these 9 goals and address the needs of Bermuda's ageing population. Therefore, the broader structure of the National Senior Strategy will have two major components as follows:

- i. A cross-sector/government ageing framework that sets out a theoretical framework inclusive of pillars, best practices, initiatives currently underway and aspirations; and,
- ii. A three-year operational work plan for the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors comprising goals, objectives and action tasks that align with and support the National Seniors Strategy framework.

Mr. Speaker,

A National Seniors Strategy project team has been formed comprising officers employed in the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors and the Bermuda Health Council who have vast experience and subject matter expertise in the Health Care discipline. As a partner, the Health Council, a QUANGO of the Ministry of Health, is bringing expertise in understanding the impacts of ageing on population health and the social determinants of health that impact ageing well and a person's quality of life.

Mr. Speaker,

Let me take the opportunity now to share members of this team. They are:

- (Programme Lead) Keeona Belboda, Manager of Ageing & Disability Services in the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors. She has expertise in senior care and persons with disabilities;
- (Programme Lead) Eshe Coleman, Programme Manager of the Bermuda Health Council has expertise in health strategy and policy;
- Sarah D'Alessio, Programme Manager in Ageing & Disability Services with expertise in policy and research, senior case management and dementia;
- Elizabeth Kast of the Bermuda Health Council who is a Healthcare Specialist in healthcare policy analysis, population-based projections and quality improvement strategies;
- Wendy Dill of the Bermuda Health Council, a Healthcare Analyst and expert in legal and healthcare policy analysis, fraud and abuse;

- Fiona Douglas, Researcher in the Bermuda Health Council who has experience in stakeholder training and engagement, evaluation, research and strategic planning; and,
 - Ms. Ja-Mae Smith, of the Bermuda Health Council who is a specialist in long-term care and adult day care facilities will serve in the role of Programme Advisor.

Mr. Speaker,

The project team will be interfacing with other stakeholders in this area, Government Leadership, Programme Staff, Community Organizations, Seniors, Advisory Bodies and Other Subject Matter Experts. With the team's collaborative work approach, it is anticipated that the delivery of the National Seniors Strategy will take roughly six months.

Mr. Speaker,

A National Seniors Strategy Project Plan was designed in June this year which includes the framework supporting the development of a National Seniors Strategy. The Ministry of Social Development and Seniors and the Bermuda Health Council held a collaborative kick-off meeting last month in August to finalize the project plan. The core elements of the project plan cover a review of literature and past documents ensuring the capture of best practices; stakeholder consultation and interviews, facilitated discussions with entities associated with the ageing and wellness of our seniors, capture of information and feedback for analysis, and the delivery of strategic action and items for execution of the Strategy.

Mr. Speaker,

This is the start of exciting and meaningful work which lies ahead. Our ultimate vision is to create an environment that encourages and protects the ability of Bermuda's seniors to age with dignity; and one that provides support for families who devote their time and resources towards the care of their senior loved ones.

Mr. Speaker,

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to the National Seniors Strategy Project team who have expressed a hearty level of enthusiasm and

commitment to the development of Bermuda's first National Seniors Strategy. I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to all persons in our community who have expressed a special interest in seniors and those who provide goods and services specifically for seniors. We look forward to the synergistic work ahead with all key stakeholder agencies and groups whose vision also aligns with implementing and establishing the very best environment to meet the needs of Bermuda's ageing population and ensure they age gracefully.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker!