



*Government of Bermuda*

**Ministry of Social Development and Seniors**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

by

**The Hon. Tinée Furbert, JP, MP**  
**Minister of Social Development and Seniors**

**A Pilot Programme for Dementia Care Services**

**Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup> 2023**

---

**Mr. Speaker,**

This morning I rise to share with my Honourable colleagues, the launch of a six-month Dementia Care Services Pilot Programme by the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors, to ensure persons living with dementia who are uninsured or underinsured have access to dementia care community support services.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As you know, Bermuda is experiencing an ageing population. Recognizing this, the Government promised to develop a National Seniors Strategy, with an emphasis on dementia care. **Mr. Speaker**, I will be providing this Honourable House in the upcoming weeks, an update on the work that has been done to develop a National Seniors Strategy. However, as it relates to the element of dementia care, the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors has already commenced the emphasis on dementia care with past initiatives that have been introduced and implemented to engage and educate the general public about Dementia Care in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As a reminder to my Honourable colleagues, in 2021 the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors designed and launched an educational campaign

focusing on dementia care. The aim was to inform and engage those families, caregivers, and the general public who had family members or encountered someone with dementia or who may have been at risk of developing dementia. The campaign included a six-month radio talk show to discuss topics such as tips for supporting persons with dementia, living safely with dementia, communication and when to seek help. The campaign also covered three panel discussions on:

1. What is Dementia? and, Caregiving and Controlling Frustrations;
2. Online Dementia Training Resources, Hiring In-Home Help, Community Care Options vs Day Care, Emotional Well-Being, Protection, and Welfare, Preventative and Advance Directives, and,
3. The Power of Essential Oils for Caregivers and Persons Living with Dementia.

Also, a social media educational campaign was implemented, as well as the distribution of Dementia Helpcards that were provided for people with dementia to carry with them for ease of asking for help or assistance when out in the community.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The public was also introduced to The Alzheimer's Society Learning Hub which offered Online Dementia Courses in the areas of:

1. Introduction to the dementia journey
2. Understanding dementia
3. Understanding the early stages of dementia
4. Engaging with people in the early stages of dementia
5. Responding to distressed behaviour
6. Creating dementia-friendly environments

**Mr. Speaker,**

These educational campaigns laid the foundation for alerting the broader public about dementia, identifying what it looks like and how each of us can participate in supporting our family members and friends who are experiencing dementia, or perhaps displaying signs of oncoming dementia.

**Mr. Speaker,**

According to the World Health Organization and Alzheimer's Disease International, "The number of people living with dementia worldwide is currently estimated at 35.6 million. This number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050." Based on the Bermuda 2010 Census of Population and Housing, only 200 persons reported senility and Alzheimers disease as a health condition they had. This was more prevalent in females (167) compared with males (33).

However, **Mr. Speaker,**

Seniors 65 years and older are projected to increase to 24.9% or roughly one-quarter of Bermuda's Population by the year 2026. Therefore, it is expected that the number of persons living with dementia in Bermuda will rise; and, the lack of community-based dementia care support services will heighten care crisis scenarios including caregiver burnout, hospitalization and emergency room visits, premature long-term care placement and senior abuse and neglect cases.

In fact, **Mr. Speaker,** in the recently released report by the Ministry of Health, "Bermuda Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Health", in 2021 dementia ranked first amongst 10 adult mental health conditions diagnosed in Bermuda with a total of roughly \$1.3 million paid for claimed services. This ranking of cost is reflective of the high demand for dementia care services in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me step back and share that dementia is a degenerative disease with no cure and limited available medical interventions. Based on data collected by the Action on Alzheimer's & Dementia Charity, roughly 3,000 Bermudians currently live with Dementia; and, 80% of dementia care is undertaken by family members who report high levels of caregiver stress and burnout. However, research has indicated the importance and value of key interventions, to facilitate improved well-being of persons with dementia and their carers in their homes. These two areas are critical to address due to their overall impact not only on the persons directly experiencing dementia but also on health and care systems.

**Mr. Speaker,**

It is within this context and in support of this Government's endeavour to continue the emphasis on dementia, that the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors embarked on designing a dementia care pilot programme that would help subsidize the cost of essential support services needed particularly for uninsured and underinsured persons living with dementia.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In August this year, the Ministry invited those organisations that currently specialize in community dementia care in Bermuda to submit proposals detailing a plan of services for the six-month pilot programme. Each proposal was to include a package of dementia care services that would lend to improving the quality of life for persons with dementia; and decrease caregiver stress through evidence-based interventions that facilitate ageing in place.

Proposals also had to fit within a financial threshold of \$48,000 and cover elements such as case management and direct intervention services for persons with dementia and their carers; tools that would be used for program delivery; proposed performance measures for programme outcomes; the estimated number of persons that could be served, and qualified staffing. In the end, it is expected that this pilot programme will provide the Government with specific data and information on the extent and level of demand for dementia care services in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,**

I am pleased to share that NorthStar Dementia Ltd. which already has an established evidence-based dementia care programme and has connections to the care ecosystem, commenced offering dementia care services in October 2023 for this six-month pilot programme. NorthStar Dementia Care will offer clients a range of assessment, care planning, caregiver education support and case management services. These services include preliminary consultation, comprehensive dementia assessment and intervention including crisis support during working hours, ongoing monitoring, and general case management services, pending the assessed need.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Dementia affects different persons in different ways. Therefore, service plans developed for clients will be dependent on their respective needs and complexity. An initial assessment will be provided to all clients while a comprehensive dementia assessment and care plan will be available for those in need, with follow-up monitoring services dependent on the assessed clients' needs. NorthStar Dementia Care is working very closely with the Ministry's Ageing and Disability Services section and together they propose that roughly 30 to 40 clients can be serviced during the six-month pilot programme, pending the level of care required.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Ageing and Disability Services clients will be prioritized as first referrals for the pilot programme. Other referrals could be sent directly to NorthStar Dementia from an individual, community or professionals. Data collection, monitoring and evaluation will be critical during the undertaking of the pilot programme which will speak to the demand for dementia services, the risks and needs of the pilot population and the level of compliance with best practice standards for dementia care and support experienced by clients.

**Mr. Speaker,**

After the completion of the pilot programme on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024, NorthStar Dementia Care will provide a detailed report with data and information that will feed into the National Seniors Strategy as an indication of the greater need for dementia care in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In closing, I would like to share as I have stated before, that caring for those living with dementia is a community effort, and we all need to do our part. Therefore, I encourage each person in Bermuda to support those in our community living with dementia and those who selflessly care for them. Caregiving is not an easy task, yet caregivers consistently give their all and we are grateful for our community efforts!

**Thank you, Mr. Speaker!**