



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
BY THE HONOURABLE KIM N. WILSON, JP, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH
Protection of Persons in Care
Friday November 16 2018

Mr Speaker, I rise today to provide for this Honourable House and the listening public highlights and updates on the actions the Ministry of Health is taking to ensure the health, safety and well-being of persons in care.

Mr Speaker, this government is committed to ensuring the persons in care, including seniors and persons with disabilities, are protected from harm. The Ministry, through Ageing and Disability Services, has taken strides in 2018 to improve how we operate to fulfil our protection and support roles. We have also moved forward key initiatives that help in the prevention, detection and addressing of abuse in care homes.

On average each month ADS receives 3 complaints of seniors abuse and 3 complaints regarding care homes. We have been working hard to not only improve our response to these complaints but also to ensure preventative methods are in place. You may have heard of the 2 recent cases before the courts regarding allegations of care home staff harming residents. Ageing and Disability Services, was on top of these incidents and worked with the care homes, police and families to ensure protection and appropriate remedial actions occurred.

Mr Speaker, prevention is always better than reaction in such circumstances. A key preventative step the Ministry took was the creation of service standards for registered care homes. Building on the legislative changes in 2017 that strengthened the regulation of care homes, a Code of Practice was published and applies to the 21 regulated care homes with nearly 400 residents.

Mr Speaker, the 2018 Code of Practice, found on gov.bm, is the first set of comprehensive standards to enhance quality of life and care and includes a new Bill of Rights for Persons in Care. We are still in the implementation phase of the Code and have completed

the first round of inspections to see where homes stand and what is needed to improve.

Central to the success of the Code, improved care and protection, is education and training. A new role was introduced this fall in ADS of an Education Officer. The Education Officer will provide and organize training for care home staff on the Code and priority areas identified in need of improvement.

Protecting people in care, **Mr Speaker**, includes those living in their own homes in the community that need support. Ageing and Disability Services is strengthening our support systems to improve case management and abuse investigation services.

By January 2019, ADS will have two new case managers bringing the total up to 4 with a range of responsibilities from basic client support to crises intervention. In addition, to help manage this case load and ensure consistent access to case management services and supports to their clients, ADS will be introducing walk in hours.

Mr. Speaker, effective December 1st 2018, walk-in and intake hours will begin to improve client access and office efficiency. From 10am to 1pm clients will be assured that a Case Manager will be onsite and able to see them during this period, and if they arrive or call outside of this time they will be contacted by the office at the earliest opportunity.

Other operational improvements for the office include:

- The introduction of a new software program to improve case management and collect data to assist with future long term care system design and development. To go live in February 2019.
- Improved communication and coordination with the Bermuda Police Services for abuse investigations.

Mr Speaker, Ageing and Disability Services has been busy over the last year and I want to acknowledge their hard work and also thank the public for their patience with our efforts to improve our ability to protect and support our clients and the community. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the care homes, caregivers, community organizations, families and friends who all play an essential part in ensuring persons with disabilities and seniors are

respected and treated with dignity in our community. We must continue to work together to reach our vision of healthy people in healthy communities.

Thank you, **Mr Speaker.**