

# **Aging in place and aging well in Yukon**

*What We Heard About Aging in Place*

*and the 2018 Health Status Report – Focus on Seniors*

## **Listening to Yukoners – the Aging in Place engagement**

Our government has been engaging Yukoners since late 2017 on what aging in place means to them. There have been sessions in communities across the territory, along with two large gatherings in Whitehorse. We also met with many NGOs and community groups and spoke with people one on one. Throughout the engagement, we heard from more than 1,200 Yukoners.

## **What we heard about aging in place**

We are pleased to now release the What We Heard report from this engagement. The report highlights the thoughts and opinions of what aging in place means to Yukoners. When we looked at the results of the public engagement, four main themes emerged. These themes are now being considered as four pillars to guide our ongoing work helping Yukoners age well.

The themes include:

1. Programs, Services and Infrastructure – Yukoners are looking for a broader range of supports and services that will keep them active and involved in their community, maintain their independence and support them with navigation of services when they need them.
2. Housing – Yukoners indicated that they wanted more housing options that offer supports.
3. Transportation – Yukoners indicated transportation outside of Whitehorse is a challenge for many.
4. Living Full and Meaningful Lives – various areas of support were identified including accessibility, activities, recognition of the important role that seniors and Elders have in our communities and the contributions they make.

## **Understanding the current situation – the 2018 Health Status Report**

The 2018 Health Status Report was released by Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley, on March 28, 2019. The report provides an overview of the health of Yukoners, including statistics on life expectancy, mortality, chronic disease prevalence, mental health and life satisfaction.

The 2018 report also offers an in-depth look at seniors' health and well-being in Yukon. In it, the Chief Medical Officer of Health provides 13 recommendations that would help seniors in the territory maintain their health, lifestyle and independence. The findings of the Health Status Report aligned with what we heard from Yukoners in the engagement.

## **Working together – the Aging in Place Action Plan**

Yukoners are clear they want to live full, meaningful lives while maintaining their independence. To that end, both reports provide a broad range of opportunities.

Our next step to address these opportunities and continue to drive change in the development of the Aging in Place Action Plan. Both reports will be central in the creation of the Action Plan and in the strategic direction for Health and Social Services to help Yukoners age well in their own homes and communities. Along with the reports, further discussions with key stakeholders will guide the development of the plan.

## **Caring for Yukoners – our ongoing work to support aging in place**

- Action is already being taken to address the aging in place pillars and the Chief Medical Officer of Health's recommendations. This work will continue as we develop the Action Plan.
- Some highlights of our current actions include:
- Ten respite and re-ablement beds at Thomson Centre were created to help relieve bed pressures and help regain strength and independence. As of April 1, we have supported 18 people through the program.
- The relocation of the Community Day Program to Whistle Bend Place has allowed us to expand
- the program to accommodate more people.
- The number of people we support through the Meals on Wheels program is up 13 per cent so far this year compared to last.
- An additional investment in Home Care has allowed us to take action and increase supports for Yukoners by approximately 30 per cent from last fiscal year. Through the Home First philosophy, we are working to support individuals in their own homes.
- In 2019–20, we have proposed the development of a rapid response nursing initiative within Home Care.
- Our government is developing a traditional food program at Whistle Bend Place.
- We are in the process of developing the Wind River House at Whistle Bend Place. This will be a community hospice house, offering support to Yukoners with life-limiting illnesses, which will open in the winter of 2019–20.
- We are proud to fund NGOs such as Hospice Yukon and Line of Life as they continue to directly impact Yukoners' lives.
- In collaboration with the Yukon Housing Corporation we are working to see an independent supported living facility for seniors or those needing personal supports.

What We Heard About Aging in Place is available online at:  
[www.yukoncmoh.ca/files/health\\_status\\_report\\_2018.pdf](http://www.yukoncmoh.ca/files/health_status_report_2018.pdf)

The 2018 Health Status Report – Focus on seniors is available online at:  
[www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/aipwhatweheard.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/aipwhatweheard.pdf)