



Statement

By

**Senator Ianthia Simmons - Wade, JP
Junior Minister for Health and for Cabinet**

AGEING WELL COMMITTEE

“Ageing in All Policies”

July 29, 2020

Madame President, my Senate colleagues and the listening audience, as the Chair of the Ageing Well Committee I will be highlighting legislation and policies that impact on the lives of our Bermuda's seniors.

Our Government has demonstrated great commitment to our seniors over the years. However I must commend the Premier for having the foresight to establish the Ageing Well Committee in 2017, whose mandate is to develop targeted policies working along with Government, the community and the third sector to address the ageing population and its impact on Bermuda. This Committee will continue to drive forward policies to insure seniors are always front and centre...“Aging in all policies”

Madame President, I must first declare my interest. I am a “pre-senior”, I have many friends, family and colleagues who are also “pre-seniors” and seniors. My vested interest in the success of this committee is that along with the many “pre-senior” and senior Bermudians, I will also soon benefit from these legislation and or policies...so will a few of my Senate colleagues.

Madame President, we are living longer and having fewer children, as I have stated previously in these Honourable Chambers, this will significantly

impact our island socially and economically. Life expectancy at birth is 78.3 years for male and 84.7 years for females. Government statisticians predict that the proportion of seniors will climb to 24.9% in 2026 to approximately 15,825. During the same time the number of seniors for every 100 people is expected to be 39.9%.

Madame President, Today I will highlight the some of the legislation and policies that have been enacted with our seniors in mind;

- 2020 - Parliamentary Election Amendment Act 2020 enables seniors who are “sick and shut in” the opportunity to exercise their right to vote in their private residences.
- 2020 - Instated a program through the Bermuda Housing Corporation to facilitate interest free home improvement loans off up to \$15,000 for families who need help to modifying their home or that of their senior loved ones
- 2020 - Dept of Social in insurance benefits increased by 1.2%. Instituted annual cost of living increases for social insurance pensions that will be linked to inflation
- 2019 - Public Service retirement age rose to 68 years which has preserved the right for person to retire at 65, but permits a post holder to work up to 68 years old without the permission to do so. This will allow persons who wish to work longer the opportunity to do so
- 2019 - An increase in War Veterans and spouses pensions from \$800 to \$1,000

- 2019 - Bermudian Charter of Rights and Responsibilities of the elderly and adults in need of long term care assistance The overall themes that drive the charter is dignity, rights and responsibilities As a society we are judged by how we treat our most vulnerable.
- 2019 - The National Pension Scheme (Occupational Pensions) Amendment Act 2019 Amendments allows members or former members on a defined contribution plan and members of a local retirement products to make a one-time withdrawal of up to 25% of their account balance,
- 2012 - Seniors who are experiencing financial hardship who own their own home or have interest in a home can apply for Financial assistance as a result of changes to the Financial Assistance Regulations 2004
- 2009 Future Care introduced as affordable government sponsored health insurance for seniors. This plan provides more coverage than the basic Government Health Insurance plan
- Personal home care benefit added to Future Care in 2017
- Expanded the home Health and Seniors Care Benefit under Future Care the health care system
- Introduction of local radiation Coverage to HIP and Future Care
- Human Rights `Amendment Act 2014 (recognizes age as a basis for discrimination in the provision of goods and services
- Amendments to the Residential Care and Nursing Home Act 1999
- 2017 Long Term Care Action Plan
- 2017 First proposed Ageing Plan

- Seniors Abuse Registry 2008 - Senior abuse includes physical sexual and psychological abuse, financial exploitation physical and psychological neglect when the alleged person has a duty of care,

Madame President, Collectively our senior's wealth of knowledge and experience equates to hundreds of thousands of years. They have educated, nurtured, protected, guided and cared for many generations including current and future leaders. "As a country, we have a moral and social responsibility to care for our seniors and ensure that they have access to affordable healthcare, a decent place to live and services that support them as they age." Seniors are an important segment of our community. We must always treat them with respect and dignity. The Ageing Well Committee is committed to encourage and support collaboration, coordination and action across all sectors of government and the community to address the opportunities and challenges of ageing. The Goal of our Government is to ensure that there is "Ageing in All Policies"

Thank you, **Madam President.**