



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

AGEING WELL COMMITTEE

HEALTHY AGEING

22 July 2020

Madame President, my Senate colleagues and the listening audience, as the Chair of the Ageing Well Committee I will present Statements on the progress of the Committee and or substantive information on the nine goals. Today I will provide information on Goal #4 Healthy Ageing

I take this opportunity to reiterate the AWC's Vision Statement and Purpose

Vision Statement

1. Our vision is for Bermuda to be a society for all ages that celebrates and prepares responsibly for the ageing process
2. We aspire toward a life span of optimal health, fulfillment, well-being, independence, interdependence, care participation and dignity
3. We envision a Bermuda that recognizes embraces and supports ageing adults in all aspects of economic, social, cultural, community and family life.

The purpose of the Ageing Well Committee is three fold:

- To provide a shared vision of Bermuda's future that meets the needs of individuals and an ageing population
- To create a framework of strategic planning to achieve the goals founded on internationally and locally accepted principles
- To encourage and support collaboration, coordination and actions across all sectors of government and the community to address opportunities and challenges of ageing

Madame President, The members of the Ageing Well Committee are from the public and private sector and collectively bring a wealth of experience and extensive knowledge of seniors and ageing. I take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment in ensuring the long term success of Ageing Well in Bermuda Strategy. The AWC members are:

Chair Senator Ianthia Simmons-Wade

MP Tinee Furbert

Permanent Secretary Marva O'Brien

Charles Brown - Manager of the Policy Section at the Cabinet Office

Lynn Wade - retired from the Ministry of Health

Sharon Swan - retired from Westmeath as Nursing Administrator

Karen McCottry - retired from Ministry of Health Age & Disability Services (ADS)

Jamae Smith - Bermuda Health Council - Program Manager for ADS

Stephen Gift - Ministry of Finance, Assistant Financial Secretary

Dr. Stanley James - Owner Premier Heath and Wellness Centre

Madame President,

GOAL 4 - HEALTHY AGEING

We believe that people must be supported to maintain, manage or improve their health and well being as they age, irrespective of income or health status.

“Healthy ageing is a lifelong process of optimizing opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical , social and mental wellness, independence , quality of life and enhancing successful life- course transitions” Health Canada.

Madame President, Each of us is ageing day by day. Bermuda like other countries is experiencing an ageing population. How we plan and prepare for this demographic shift will greatly influence Bermuda's socioeconomic success.

There are a range of theories that seek to explain the later stages of life, common to these theories and statements are the concept of independence, autonomy, purposeful and meaningful existence and the opportunity to contribute and participate. To fulfill these aspirations people need to maintain adequate physical and mental health. The promotion of healthy ageing focuses on socio cultural and physical factors.

Like other people around the world, Bermudians are living much longer than previous generations. As the population ages, we will see a correspondence to chronic diseases. The majority of our seniors have at least one chronic disease. Women and men age in different ways, with women outnumbering men in the oldest age category 80 years plus. The increased focus of our health care system on health care promotion and disease prevention will allow our seniors to maintain optimal health and quality of life. Old age need not be burdensome to individuals and society.

Madame President, Investing and supporting our seniors to Healthy Ageing is an evidence based approach to improving overall personal health and well being. There is a need for more action on five key areas, based on the impact on seniors' health.

Physical activity /maintaining a healthy lifestyle

Madame President, The benefits of regular physical activity for seniors are both physical and social. This also improves one's mental health. Even light physical activity is important in maintaining mobility. Statistics reflect that those seniors that remain more active and exercise on a regular basis are healthier than those who do not. There is a direct association with regular physical activity and the greater odds of staying healthy and overtime recovering from poor health.

Social Connectedness

Madame President, The social, mental and emotional determinants to health significantly relate to seniors' well being and functional status. Seniors who are isolated will tend not to eat well. Loneliness has psycho physiological consequences, including risk taking, poor sleep, cognitive decline and cardiac disease, which impact on morbidity and mortality. Participating in social engagements can reduce issues of isolation and loneliness. Social connectedness significantly impacts on a seniors' sense of well being. Retirement, declining health, reduced mobility, sensory losses, and loss of loved ones make seniors vulnerable for a decline in social networking and support. There is an increased risk of poor health and loneliness as a result of social isolation. Persons who have close family relationships and a strong sense of community belonging tend to be healthier and happier.

Healthy Eating

Madame President, as we age we require fewer calories, but our bodies still need the proper nutrient to promote, maintain and protect good health. There is a propensity for some seniors to be overweight as a result of a poor diet and lack of exercise. Excessive weight increases the odds of chronic diseases. There is also a major problem with malnutrition with seniors that often goes unnoticed. This can be a result of poor oral health, finances, loneliness and or chronic illness. Too often seniors especially those living alone suffer from malnutrition which is only detected when they become unwell or are hospitalized. Healthy eating, especially fruits and vegetables, provide nutrients and energy to sustain seniors as they age.

Falls Prevention

The major cause of injuries for seniors is unintentional falls. The resulting effect threatens their independence, health status and functional ability. Most seniors that fall never fully recover. Unfortunately seniors tend to only take advantage of the available fall programs after having experienced a fall. Even if not injured, a fall often results in a fear of falling and reducing or eliminating any physical activities. This results in reduced mobility and additional health issues.

Tobacco Control

Madame President, The use of tobacco and exposure to second hand smoke is associated with the development and progression of many chronic diseases. Seniors with asthma and heart disease are significantly impacted by second hand smoke. Quitting smoking, even at a late age can enhance one's quality of life; reduce the risk of disease, the progression of a disease and or death.

Madame President, If left unaddressed the ageing of our population will have social, political and economic impacts that will far out way the cost of addressing healthy ageing. Supporting and encouraging healthy ageing makes the healthcare system more sustainable. Healthy Ageing can delay and minimize the severity of chronic diseases in later life therefore saving health costs, reduce hospitalization and also reducing the need for long term care.

Madame President, The Ageing Well Committee is creating a framework of strategic planning to achieve Healthy Ageing. Action items have been identified in areas of healthcare, services, health insurance, psycho geriatric services, rehabilitative services, geriatric models of care, end of life care and chronic disease management. Government Stake holders and non Government Stakeholders, have been identified based on these specific action items, in order to encourage, support collaboration, coordination and actions across government and the community.

Madame President, The AWC is extremely encouraged by the interest and support from the community as whole, including Opposition Members. Healthy Ageing needs to be embraced by each of us to improve and preserve our health and physical, social and mental wellness, independence and quality of life.

The goal of our Government is to ensure that there is "Ageing in All Policies".

"Getting older is inevitable, Ageing is optional".

Thank you **Madame President**