

(Blurb For Website)-CBSS

In the fiscal year 2016-17, and in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services, the NWT Seniors' Society contacted individuals affected by cancer in each community within the NWT to help inform a gap analysis regarding what individuals would find most useful in current and future community based support initiatives, and to use this information as well as a scan of the literature, to make recommendations for future programming.

Information was gathered over an 8-week period through a variety of means, with efforts leading to direct contact being established with, and information collected from, 80 individuals spanning all administrative districts in the NWT.

It was discovered at the time that outside of Yellowknife, Fort Good Hope, and Fort Smith no community based support services existed in the communities to help those affected by cancer. Healthcare professionals, family members, and concerned individuals and organizations in the community are stepping in to offer homecare, educational outreach, and general assistance to individuals along their cancer journey. This help is often governed and limited by family/community dynamics, time, and resources available. Participants expressed gratitude for these formal and informal services offered, but universally agreed that additional, sustainable, and relevant community based support services are needed and that a plan of action be put in motion to move service provision forward.

Since these discussions and work, the NWT Seniors' Society has continued to support and strengthen ties with individuals and groups providing community based support services for those affected by cancer. Regular contact has been established with existing programs and individuals to ensure channels of communication remain open to share news and best practices, as well as to provide funding for program initiatives where possible. Among other successes, this has included establishing regular contact with the Cancer Care Coordinator at Stanton Territorial Hospital, the NWT Breast Health/Breast Cancer Action group, as well as an initial (and on-going) round of funding support related to cancer support program administration in Fort Smith, Yellowknife, and Fort Good Hope.

The NWT Seniors' Society has also partnered with the Karuna Group in Hay River to help offer community based support services for those affected by cancer in the area. The Karuna Group offers a consistently well-attended monthly support service for those affected by cancer in the community. Since September 2017, the Karuna Group has run 7 successful meetings and is becoming a vital service for those affected by cancer in the area.

Most recently, the NWT Seniors' Society has begun work with key stakeholders in the Beaufort Delta region to explore ways of helping to support community based support services for those affected by cancer which are starting in some communities. This work is in the preliminary stages, and is ongoing.

Given the overall need of community based support services in communities for those affected by cancer, the NWT Seniors' Society would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations that have assisted us in our endeavours to date. It is our hope that we can all continue to work collaboratively on the development, implementation, and overall sustainability of these much needed programs and initiatives.