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Construction of a Dementia Facility in Yellowknife

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to wish a Happy Valentine's Day to my wife Amanda, and to my constituents.

On January 6, Mr. Speaker, I lost my grandmother, Mary Donovan, to a disease that is not entirely new to my family. It's a condition that affects one in every 13 people in Canada over the age of 65. That disease is Alzheimer's. I say it's not entirely new because just last year my uncle, Edward Johnson, died of Alzheimer's, and four years before that another uncle, his brother, Robert Johnson, also died from Alzheimer's disease.

This disease has hit my family full on and I'm very scared that my parents, my brothers or other family members may also be at risk of being afflicted with this horrendous disease. Fortunately, for my grandmother and my uncles, they were able to get the care and the services that they required at a dedicated facility in New Brunswick. The ability to get help and care for the disease was so very, very important to their families who loved them dearly.

This dreaded affliction is a progressive, degenerative disease that affects the brain and eventually all aspects of a person's life – from mental abilities, emotions and moods, to behaviour and physical abilities. If my grandmother and my uncles were residents of our territory, they would not have received the same level of care or service that Alzheimer's and dementia patients require. That, Mr. Speaker, is the sad truth.

In the Northwest Territories, sufferers are housed in hospitals and other facilities that do not meet their needs. Our residents deserve to have a facility like the proposed dementia facility currently being undertaken by the Yellowknife Association for Concerned Citizens for Seniors. This much needed care facility is long overdue, Mr. Speaker.

Today I will stand again in this House and encourage this government to do whatever it can to move the plans forward to build a dementia facility here in Yellowknife. There is obvious need for this facility, as it will specifically cater to those affected with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The facility will also give much needed relief to the caregivers who are in desperate, desperate need of respite programs during the day. Please, Mr. Speaker, I

implore the government today to again move this project forward and get it built sooner rather than later. Mahsi.

---Applause