



**AVENS - A  
Community for  
Seniors**

*Owners of:*  
Aven Manor  
Long Term Care

Aven Cottages  
Dementia Care

Aven Court/Aven Ridge/  
Aven Pavilion  
Independent Housing

Baker Community Centre  
Wellness

Suite 1  
5710 – 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
YELLOWKNIFE, NT  
X1A 1G1  
Tel: (867) 920-2443  
Fax: (867) 873-9915  
Website:  
[www.avensseniors.com](http://www.avensseniors.com)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AVENS ADDRESSES DEFICIENCIES IN GNWT WILDFIRE EVACUATION REVIEW

**YELLOWKNIFE, NT (May 27, 2025)** – AVENS – A Community for Seniors acknowledges the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) *After Action Review* and agrees with its proposals to create a territory Emergency Social Services Plan and ensure better advance planning and co-ordination with NGO's. At the same time AVENS is also disappointed that the report fails to address several key issues, particularly one related to reimbursements of costs incurred in transporting and caring for our residents during the evacuation.

In August 2023 AVENS was forced to evacuate 57 vulnerable residents with virtually no assistance from the Government of the NWT. All AVENS residents, including some from Hay River and Fort Smith long term care facilities who were moved to AVENS only days before the Yellowknife evacuation, were selected by the GNWT for placement at AVENS which provides long term care services under contract with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA).

With less than 25% of its staff available to assist with the evacuation and ongoing care provision in Edmonton, AVENS was left to locate care sites and secure additional support so it could maintain full services for its residents during their four weeks in the Edmonton/Leduc area.

This was done with no government aid and resulted in AVENS incurring over \$1.3 million in new costs to transport, house and safely care for AVENS residents. Of this amount, just over \$900,000 was reimbursed to AVENS under the Government of Canada's Disaster Financial Assistance fund. The balance of \$400,000 in essential staffing costs remains unpaid. Currently the GNWT has refused reimbursement of this staffing cost and AVENS continues to carry this financial burden two years after the evacuation.

The report's findings do not address this shortfall, nor do they provide any guidelines for a suggested model to address remuneration of essential staff during an evacuation, particularly for an NGO providing contracted services to the GNWT.

As a not-for-profit partner of NTHSSA, our role is vital. Yet the report ignores the strain placed on our organization in the absence of any policy to compensate essential staff or operational expenses during emergencies.

*AVENS Vision: A future where seniors age well and have choices,  
where they are connected to a safe and caring community for life.*

Our commitment to vulnerable seniors remains unchanged; however, AVENS recognizes that continued inaction of payment by the GNWT could jeopardize the future of long-term care in the NWT.

For more info contact:

Colleen Wellborn, Board Chair, AVENS - A Community for Seniors

Tel 867-688-1582

Daryl Dolynny, President and CEO, AVENS – A Community for Seniors

Tel 867-445-2000

*AVENS – A Community for Seniors (previously YACCS) was incorporated under the Societies Act in April of 1983 by a group of citizens to lobby government and establish programs and services for seniors.*

*AVENS was established to meet the needs of the growing number of soon-to-be retired miners and prospectors (many of whom were bachelors) who would need support to live out their retirement years in Yellowknife.*

***SINCE INCEPTION, AVENS** has worked very hard to establish programs and services not only for Yellowknife seniors, but for seniors across the NWT.*

***TODAY, AVENS** board's vision is to address ageing challenges across the entire housing and care continuum. Our recent expansion envisions growth of residential living choices and delivery of a range of services across the full spectrum of care. Most importantly the board envisions a community where our residents can move seamlessly through levels of care without ever leaving the AVENS community.*

Please visit <https://www.avensseniors.com/wildfire-updates> for more information on our AVENS website

*AVENS Vision: A future where seniors age well and have choices,  
where they are connected to a safe and caring community for life.*