



OANHSS

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF NON-PROFIT HOMES AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS

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November 12, 2009

The Ottawa Citizen
1101 Baxter Road
Box 5020
Ottawa, ON
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Letter to the Editor:

Re: Charges in long-term care home death uncertain (November 11)

The tragic death of Frank Moir brings to light, once again, an unacceptable reality that needs swift and concrete action: long term care homes in this province are being expected to care for residents with serious mental health issues and dementia that often result in aggressive and unpredictable behaviour, without adequate resources.

This is, by far, the greatest challenge homes are facing in caring for our elderly loved ones. And right now, there are no solutions in sight.

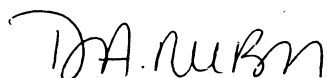
We acknowledge that there has been recent government attention on this issue – the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care’s Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions, which includes consumers, family members, providers and researchers, and an all-party committee formed by the legislature are both working on a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy for Ontario – and the reports that eventually come out of these initiatives will be valuable for long-term planning purposes.

What we need, however, and don’t have, are immediate responses that will prevent further incidents and give today’s residents in long term care homes the assurance that they are living in safe and secure environments.

We know what the deficiencies in the system are and what is needed to fix them: thorough assessments that properly identify behavioural issues, increased funding for higher staffing ratios that allow for specialized care and attention, wider availability of psychogeriatric support for homes, special units in homes for residents with the potential for aggressive behaviour and continued funding for staff training. We also need alternative settings to accommodate people with severe problems who cannot be appropriately cared for in long term care.

Our deepest sympathies go out to Mr. Moir's family and friends. We urge the government to make sure that his death leads to action to increase the safety of all residents, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DA. RUBIN". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "A" and a stylized "RUBIN".

Donna A. Rubin
Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors