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June 26, 2017

Premier Kathleen Wynne
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne:

RE: Demand for Public Inquiry into Wettlaufer Murders and Long-Term Care

On October 25, 2016, Ontarians awoke to the news that Elizabeth Wettlaufer, a nurse in several Ontario long-term care homes, had been charged with the first-degree murder of eight elderly long-term care residents. The first thing in everyone's mind was "how could something like this happen"?

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly and CARP, on behalf of the concerned citizens of Ontario, demand that your government establish a Public Inquiry to examine the specifics of this case and the systemic failures that permitted these heinous crimes to occur and to go completely unnoticed until Ms Wettlaufer confessed to staff while undergoing treatment at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Despite Ontario's clear policy of zero-tolerance of abuse and neglect of long-term care home residents, it was only Ms Wettlaufer's confession, without which these murders would have gone unnoticed and unresolved, that finally brought these matters to the attention of law enforcement agencies and charges were eventually laid.

Ms Wettlaufer has now pled guilty to all eight counts of first-degree murder, as well as four counts of attempted murder and two counts of aggravated assault. This plea confirms her criminal actions, but has done nothing to ease the minds of Ontarians concerned about themselves and their loved ones who might now or in the future receive care in Ontario's long-term homes.

It is imperative that the Public Inquiry have a broad scope, which would inquire into, among other things:

- the actions of the long-term care home and its staff;
- the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and its inspection process;
- the College of Nurses and its ability to investigate and discipline its members;
- the Office of the Chief Coroner and its death reporting and review system;
- the Government's funding and governance of long-term care;
- the duty of third parties to report; and
- all other related matters.

In Ontario there are over 76,000 residents residing in approximately 629 long-term care homes. Of those residents, 90% have some level of cognitive impairment, and one in three have severe cognitive impairments. In view of this, many long-term care residents are unable to advocate on their own behalf, and their absolute reliance on long-term care homes for around-the-clock care makes them unique and among the most vulnerable citizens of this province. The complexity of residents' illnesses, their total reliance on staff, ageist attitudes, and systemic failures has culminated in a long-term care system in which someone like Ms Wettlaufer can, and did, murder again and again without fear of getting caught.

We therefore demand that your Government immediately announce a Public Inquiry to protect all vulnerable residents in this province's long-term care homes.

Yours truly,

ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY

CARP



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