



January 26, 2015

COURIER

The Honourable Dustin Duncan
Minister of Health
Government of Saskatchewan
Room 204 Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK S4S 0B3

Dear Minister:

On November 20, 2014, you asked us to review the care provided to a former resident at the Santa Maria Senior Citizens Home (Santa Maria) in light of the concerns raised by her family about the adequacy of care at Santa Maria. On November 27, 2014, I wrote you to accept your request and to advise that my Office would conduct an investigation into this matter.

Our investigation is well underway. We have had initial interviews with family, and with officials from the Ministry of Health, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, and Santa Maria. Everyone interviewed has been cooperative. Interviews will continue and will include union officials who represent employees at long-term care facilities in Saskatchewan. Our goal is to gather relevant information about the issues specifically affecting the care being provided at Santa Maria, and about issues impacting the quality of long-term care in general. This will contribute to an investigation report that is thorough, thoughtful and well balanced.

Since November 20, 2014, we have received approximately 35 other complaints about long-term care facilities in the province. While it is not appropriate for us to publicly discuss the specifics of any of these complaints at this time, I can advise you that they come from all over the province, and from region-run, non-profit and for profit long-term care facilities. We have received complaints not only from families of residents, but also from employees working in long-term care facilities. In general, the issues being raised are about poor quality of care, low staff-to-resident ratios, a poor organizational culture within facilities, lack of communications with families and residents, and a long-term care system lacking in accountability. We are assessing

each complaint on an individual basis. Some have raised issues that require our immediate attention, and we have been working with the complainants to resolve them. Others have raised issues that we will be able to address as part this investigation.

Based on our preliminary assessment, we intend to address the following issues:

1. Does Saskatchewan's long-term care delivery model set out clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for the Ministry of Health, the health regions and long-term care facilities?
2. How do the Ministry of Health, the health regions, and long-term care facilities ensure that appropriate standards of care are being met at long-term care facilities?
3. What factors impact the quality and delivery of care at long-term care facilities?
4. Are there effective processes in place for addressing the concerns of residents and their families?

Our goal is to assess these issues and the concerns that residents and families are experiencing with long-term care, and to make appropriate recommendations to address them.

As for timelines, this investigation is a priority for my Office. Our aim is to complete it this spring, but we recognize that other factors may come into play as our work progresses, so will continue to evaluate the timing as needed.

Given the public interest in this matter, we intend to make this letter public.

Yours truly,



Mary McFadyen
Ombudsman

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c Mr. Cam Broten, Leader of the Opposition