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JAN - 7 2010

Ms. Kim S. Carter
Provincial Ombudsperson
756 Fort St
PO Box Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9A5

Dear Ms. Carter:

We have received your report (Public Report No. 46) entitled *The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 1)*. Thank you for the considerable work your office put into the report.

We have taken steps in a number of areas over the past two years which we believe contribute to the implementation of your recommendations. We will continue to work with health authorities, clients, families and other stakeholders to improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of information on home and community care services, and to improve the quality of life for seniors who live in residential care facilities.

After reading this report we are concerned by a few very dramatic anecdotal quality care complaints that are cited. As no details of these alleged incidents have been provided to the Ministries, it is impossible for government to determine the facts regarding these claims, when they may have occurred, and whether health authorities have taken adequate steps to address them. We understand that individuals may have submitted these comments to your online survey anonymously.

Your report notes that some residents and families may have not have come forward to lodge concerns either because they were unaware of their rights in residential care, or because they were concerned they wouldn't be heard or that their concerns would not be addressed, as there was no legislative initiative to outline their rights.

The spirit and intent of the Resident's Bill of Rights, which passed in this Fall Session was to ensure clients and their families know their rights and the means by which to resolve issues in a respectful and thorough manner. Now that the Bill has the force of law, residents and their families should know they do have the legislative backing to feel comfortable in lodging any concerns.

In that spirit, we request that you contact those individuals who made anecdotal complaints and request that they refer their complaints to the Patient Care Quality Office of their regional health authority so that the allegations can be thoroughly investigated and addressed.

Government is committed to promoting the health and well-being of vulnerable persons in care, and will follow up with each health authority to ensure that any substantiated complaints are addressed. We will also ensure that individual complainants are contacted with the results of the investigation, and are aware of options for informing both the health authority and the Ministries if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

I understand some complainants may not wish to come forward; however, if people are aware of credible examples of inappropriate treatment of our seniors, they have an ethical obligation to come forward and inform the authorities so that we can ensure all seniors are receiving the care they deserve.

We very much appreciate your ongoing work and cooperation in helping improve seniors' care in the province.

Sincerely,



Kevin Falcon
Minister
Ministry of Health Services



Ida Chong
Minister
Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport