

Ontario Launches Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System

Recommendations to Improve the Safety and Well-being of Seniors

August 1, 2017 9:00 A.M.

Ontario has appointed the Honourable Justice Eileen Gillese, an experienced judge of the Ontario Court of Appeal, to lead an independent public inquiry into the policies, procedures and oversight of long-term care homes.

In particular, Justice Gillese has been asked to inquire into the circumstances and systemic issues which may have contributed to the assault and death of residents who were under the care of Elizabeth Wettlaufer, a former registered nurse in long-term care homes in southwestern Ontario. The inquiry will help get answers to make sure a tragedy like this never happens again.

As part of her broad mandate, Justice Gillese will review the accountability measures in place to ensure they meet the objectives of the Long-Term Care Homes Act, and provide recommendations to improve the safety and well-being of residents.

The appointment of the commissioner takes effect today. A final report, including all recommendations, will be delivered to the Attorney General by July 31, 2019 and will be made available to the public.

Ontario's oversight system in long-term care specifically focuses on the safety and security of residents. Appointing Justice Gillese to lead the public inquiry into the oversight of long-term care homes is one of the many steps Ontario is taking to protect the safety and well-being of residents and ensure homes across the province are meeting the highest standards of care.

QUOTES

" What happened to the victims and their families in southwestern Ontario was a tragedy. This inquiry will help provide answers to those affected and ensure something like this never happens again. Our parents and grandparents deserve to live in comfort, with access to the best care possible and we want to assure the public that Ontario's 78,000 long-term care residents are safe in their homes. Justice Gillese's recommendations will help ensure that loved ones in long-term care homes continue to be safe and secure."

- Yasir Naqvi
Attorney General

" I want to reaffirm my deepest sympathies to the families affected by this tragic situation. The safety, quality of care and quality of life of Ontario's long-term care residents continues to be our government's priority. This inquiry will bring critical answers that will allow our government to further ensure the safety and security of long-term care residents."

- Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

" I am honoured to have been chosen to head this very important Inquiry dealing with matters that affect the lives of all those in long-term care homes in Ontario. My team and I will do our utmost to determine how these events could occur and to make recommendations so that the tragedies of the past are not repeated in the future."

- Eileen Gillese
Commissioner of the Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System

QUICK FACTS

- Justice Gillese has been a sitting judge with the Ontario Court of Appeal since 2002. Previously she served as a trial judge of the Superior Court of Justice and was the Dean and Professor at Western University's Faculty of Law.
- The Gillese Inquiry will have a broader scope than the police investigation or prosecution – it will not only look at what occurred, but also look for any underlying issues that need to be addressed and make recommendations to ensure that the objectives of the Long-Term Care Homes Act are met.
- Justice Gillese has served as the chair of a number of organizations, including the Pension Commission of Ontario, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario and the Financial Services Tribunal of Ontario.
- Elizabeth Wettlaufer pled guilty to, and was convicted of, eight counts of first degree murder, four counts of attempted murder and two counts of aggravated assault. She has been sentenced to life in prison for these offences, which she committed while working as a registered nurse in southwestern Ontario.

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