

Attachment A: Email correspondence with Janet Vanderveen

1. ----- Forwarded message -----

From: Janet Vanderveen

Date: Fri, Jan 1, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Subject: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

To: Pam Kulas <[pkulas@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:pkulas@kawarthalakes.ca)<mailto:[pkulas@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:pkulas@kawarthalakes.ca)>>, <[laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org](mailto:laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org)<mailto:[laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org](mailto:laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org)>>, <[christine.elliott@pc.ola.org](mailto:christine.elliott@pc.ola.org)<mailto:[christine.elliott@pc.ola.org](mailto:christine.elliott@pc.ola.org)>>, <[torontotips@cbc.ca](mailto:torontotips@cbc.ca)<mailto:[torontotips@cbc.ca](mailto:torontotips@cbc.ca)>>, <[city@thestar.ca](mailto:city@thestar.ca)<mailto:[city@thestar.ca](mailto:city@thestar.ca)>>, <[tarmstrong-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:tarmstrong-qp@ndp.on.ca)<mailto:[tarmstrong-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:tarmstrong-qp@ndp.on.ca)>>, <[fgelinas-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:fgelinas-qp@ndp.on.ca)<mailto:[fgelinas-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:fgelinas-qp@ndp.on.ca)>>, <[merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca](mailto:merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca)<mailto:[merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca](mailto:merrilee.fullerton@ontario.ca)>>

Hello,

I ask that Pam Kulas forward this email to the CEO of Sienna Living, Nintin Jain as I was unable to locate his email. I have copied CBC News, the Toronto Star in this email and will be copying it into an online form to TVO.

██████████ is a resident at Victoria Manor in Lindsay, a home owned by the City of Kawartha Lakes and managed by Sienna Living. As my family and I plan and prepare for the possibility of an outbreak at Victoria Manor and assume a greater role as essential caregivers we reflect on the shameful situation of Long Term Care in Ontario. A for profit company Sienna is profiting and understaffing while families and friends are being asked to take the role of employees. Our family has cared for my terminally ill ██████████ at home, cared for my parents to the best of our ability the past six years and done so at personal cost to our health. We have experienced the inadequacies of the health care system in caring for elders extensively and in more ways than I care to list here. Now we are being asked to care for and feed ██████████ if there is a COVID outbreak, and we will do it to the best of our ability. Will ██████████ be compensated for the fees she pays in long term care if her family takes a care role?

What I would like those in receipt of this email to understand is that none of your posturing, excuses or finger pointing will alleviate my disappointment and frustration in a system that shows such little consideration for our elders. The system needs to change, companies profiting while elderly people suffer underserved is untenable. We are actively engaged in the care of ██████████, so many elders do not have that support and suffer needlessly in a grossly underfunded system that puts profit before people.

We have watched horrific stories unfold in long term care during this pandemic and will do what we can to prevent ██████████ becoming part of one of those horrific stories. If the health care system properly supported home care and had capacity for someone to go to hospital or return to Long Term Care if needed we would consider that alternative but we have experienced first hand grossly inadequate home care and a parent pushed out of hospital to die in Long Term Care less than two days later. The hospital later apologized for their poor judgement and lack of compassion.

Thank you for taking time to read and consider my email. Please consider taking action to change the sad state of eldercare in Ontario.

I look forward to your response and what action you will be taking.

Janet Vanderveen

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2. From: Janet Vanderveen  
Sent: January 1, 2021 11:35 AM  
To: Tracy Richardson<mailto:[trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca)>  
Subject: Fwd: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Hi Tracey,

I am forwarding an email I sent today after being informed that City of Kawartha Lakes staff have been forwarded my email. I wanted to make you aware of my concerns as my local representative in City government. The City of Kawartha Lakes owns Victoria Manor and provides funding so of course I should have thought to add City staff other than one of the management staff, Holly Speedie that I forwarded it to after sending.

As a family we are pleased to be able to support [REDACTED] in whatever way we can including caregiving in the case of an outbreak, but I find it outrageous that a profitable company like Sienna asks family to assume employee roles rather than go to the expense of providing adequate care. Yes, we are in exceptional circumstances but the inadequate care of our elders must be reckoned with, if not now, when? As a family we have provided care for elderly family members, we have also seen them suffer because of an inadequate health care system. We have had to repeatedly advocate at length and in absurd situations where health care providers tried to convince us dying elders were more healthy and capable than they were. This has not been our experience at Victoria Manor however I have found I have to advocate and follow up to ensure that [REDACTED] health concerns are adequately dealt with at Victoria Manor. This is a criticism of a system that is underfunded and understaffed resulting in staff not having time to adequately address individual needs. I have reached a tipping point and found through planning to fulfill the essential caregiver role in case of an outbreak, providing care and meals to [REDACTED] I can no longer be silent and tolerate the inadequacies in eldercare in Ontario.

Janet Vanderveen

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3. **Forwarded from:**

**From:** Tracy Richardson <[trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca)>

**Sent:** Sunday, January 3, 2021 4:53 PM

**To:** Rod Sutherland <[rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca)>

**Subject:** FW: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Hi Tracy,

Thank you for your kind response. My concerns have been forwarded to appropriate management staff at the City of Kawartha Lakes. I have had a conversation with Pam Kulas, Administrator of Victoria Manor. It may assist you to have some background information. I do not want to be an alarmist or become a news story but in my past advocacy experience I have found including media garners a more thorough response. I have reached a tipping point in my frustration with the lack of support for Long Term Care.

We live in a province where profit is held above adequate care. We have heard the news stories about outbreaks and the devastation they have wreaked in Long Term Care homes. Victoria Manor has been managed well to date but if there were a widespread outbreak I do not believe they have the capacity to address it well. As it is, I believe there is not enough time and attention given to individual needs, and that is not from a lack of care or concern at Victoria Manor, it comes down to inadequate funding for eldercare. [REDACTED] has had a rapid decline in health over the past two years, her capacity lessens and her need for care increased dramatically at a time when we could not visit her and assist with her care. She, as I am sure many others have, suffered and paid a high cost for their isolation during the first lockdown. [REDACTED] lost the ability to communicate well during the initial lockdown, now we do not understand most of what she says and if we stimulate her with song, happy news or a closed question on occasion we do get a response we can understand. She lost the ability to walk during the initial lockdown, her legs no longer support her and she is in a wheelchair. She now requires more observation and is at risk for aspirating food and fluids. She has had numerous falls this year, some of them out of her wheelchair. This leads us to believe if there is an outbreak in her unit and greater demands on staff we must be there to assist as much as possible and I have spent the last few weeks communicating with my family to garner support to help. It is challenging when the government only allows two essential care givers. It concerns me we will have to choose between burnout and her care.

For profit care in Ontario must end, it has failed us in countless ways. A lack of adequate response from our governments is failing us as well. It would be different if Sienna Living were not profiting as they provide inadequate funds for care, if frontline workers in Long Term Care were paid an adequate wage and given benefits, if there was adequate staffing to serve the needs of residents, if adjustments to care hours could change as needs for care grow. I could go on with this but I shall end here.

Thank you for taking time to read and consider my email.

Best regards, Janet

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4. **From:** Rod Sutherland  
**Sent:** Monday, January 4, 2021 10:35 AM  
**To:** Janet Vanderveen  
**Cc:** Tracy Richardson <trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca>; Doug Elmslie <delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca>  
**Subject:** RE: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Hello Ms. Vanderveen,

My name is Rod Sutherland and I am the Director of Human Services with the City of Kawartha Lakes, which includes Victoria Manor.

You may well be aware of this already but I'll give a bit of background on the overall management of the home. The City contracts with Sienna Senior Living (since 2011) for management services. Pam Kulas, the administrator of the home, is an employee of Sienna Senior Living, but reports to both Sienna and me as the direct City staff connection. Victoria Manor remains owned by the City and all other staff of the home, other than Pam, remain City employees and receive all associated wages and benefits under the respective Collective Agreements between their union and the City.

The day to day operations of the home are managed by Pam as the Administrator. The City maintains overall decision-making authority in the areas of the annual budget, organizational chart, and home structure. While the provincial funding formula determines the provincial funding for the home, it is the City that determines if additional municipal tax-supported funding will supplement the home. All funding and operating agreements for the home are the responsibility of the City, and are executed by the City with the province.

As the owner of the home, the City is also required under Ontario's Long Term Care Homes Act to have a Committee of Management, comprised of City Councillors, to oversee operations. Three City Councillors, currently Doug Elmslie, Kathleen Seymour-Fagan and Pat O'Reilly, fulfil that role. I've copied Councillor Elmslie on this email as well so he is aware of your concerns.

The pandemic has had devastating effects, in particular in long term care homes as you've experienced firsthand. The role of family members in supporting the care of their loved one has always been significant. The need for the provincial restrictions for the 'essential care giver' role is based on protecting resident's physical health, but the impacts on overall well-being are evident as you mentioned with the isolation.

The broader system issues that you raise, including care levels, appropriate funding and staffing are getting increased attention as they should. These aren't all new issues with the pandemic however. They've been raised and advocated for many years through various associations, unions, municipalities and families. The renewed attention to systemic change that the province is indicating now is very welcome and could result in significant reform. The issues of staffing levels and wages, and minimum hours of care are key areas that have been noted to address. Efforts and advocacy to support and accelerate this change, whether by individuals such as yourself, by municipalities or other associations, will be key to its success.

The City has been and I believe will continue to support these efforts. The City is part of the 13-member Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (EOWC), representing 13 Counties and City's in Eastern Ontario. The EOWC, of which Mayor Andy Letham is currently Chair, is in the midst of a review of municipal long term care homes in the region to support recommendations and review by the province. As staff, I will continue to recommend support for system reform to the Committee of Management and City Council. I also encourage you to continue your advocacy, for [REDACTED] and for all residents.

If there is any support I can provide or if I can assist in any other way, please let me know. I am currently not working from the office most days but am available by email or telephone.

Regards,  
Rod

Rod Sutherland  
Director  
Human Services Department, City of Kawartha Lakes  
705-324-9870 ext. 3206

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5. From: Janet Vanderveen  
**Sent:** Monday, January 4, 2021 1:11 PM  
**To:** Rod Sutherland <[rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca)>  
**Cc:** Tracy Richardson <[trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca)>; Doug Elmslie <[delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca)>  
**Subject:** Re: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Dear Mr Sutherland,

Thank you for your informative response. As you may imagine I am trying to piece together the various roles of those involved in the management of Victoria Manor and where best to apply pressure to avoid the burnout that will surely come to myself and my sister as essential caregivers should [REDACTED] unit have a COVID outbreak. I am experiencing burnout just trying to prepare for it and that brought me to writing my email. This task of sorting and follow up is worsening the side effects I am experiencing caused by cancer treatment.

I am aware that the sad state of eldercare in Ontario has existed for some time. The tragedy that my grandparents experiences of Long Term Care in the 1980s parallels [REDACTED] current experience of Long Term Care at this time is something I have reflected on for some time. I have been an advocate and actively participated in [REDACTED] treatment and the years following while I dealt with my own health concerns and the only experience in adequate care, without struggle, that we have received was through the CCAC GAIN program.

You mention that the City "determines if additional municipal tax-supported funding will supplement the home". Two Councillors have been copied on this email and I would appreciate hearing what actions they will take. How can I best advocate for increased funding from the City and in turn the province to provide adequate care in Victoria Manor and other Long Term Care homes? I have forwarded my original email to CARP and to the Independent Long Term Care COVID 19 Commission.

What I am looking for immediately is a better plan in place if an outbreak were to occur so there is not a greater cost to the health care system and a greater personal cost for those burdened with trying to provide adequate care in a system that provides neither funds nor resources to do so adequately. No doubt the stress and inability to provide adequate care is already an issue for management, staff, essential caregivers and their families and friends. If you can provide any insight

into what could bring about a better approach to an outbreak response I am interested. Can I access current emergency plans that are in place in case of an outbreak at Victoria Manor? Who do I consult for that information?

To date I have been pleased with the responsiveness of Pam Kulas and she is working with me and other staff to address a number of concerns around [REDACTED] care over the past year. The last month has been particularly challenging to get some health issues for [REDACTED] resolved and this has made me realize we will have to be with her for every meal and throughout the day during an outbreak when staff will have even more demands. [REDACTED] takes 45 minutes or more to eat a meal and is at risk for aspiration. I cannot drive because of my own health issues caused by cancer treatment and we live half an hour away from her. In planning in case of an outbreak we realized I will have to go for the day through the week and my sister who works full time, and lives in Aurora, would have to be with her throughout the day on weekends. We need six essential caregivers for her to prevent burnout and if a prolonged outbreak were to occur we would need more. This situation is unacceptable.

Thank you for the advocacy and work that you and other City staff have done to bring attention to the points I am concerned about.

I am sure you deal with many concerns beyond my imagining during this unique and challenging time.

All the best to you and your colleagues,

Janet Vanderveen

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6. **From:** Janet Vanderveen

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 6, 2021 7:05 AM

**To:** Rod Sutherland <rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca>

**Cc:** Tracy Richardson <trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca>; Doug Elmslie <delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca>; mtully@mykawartha.com; editor@kawarthanow.com; info@thepromoter.ca

**Subject:** Re: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Good morning,

Mr Elmslie in my correspondence about Victoria Manor and the potential catastrophe of a COVID outbreak at the home I have not had a response from you but I ask that you consider the following when you deliberate your recommendations at the Committee of Management meeting for Victoria Manor on January 18,

The Toronto Star is calling Long Term Care a humanitarian crisis,

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2020/12/30/enough-is-enough-we-demand-change-to-the-inhumane-tragedy-playing-out-in-ontarios-long-term-care-homes.html>

A recent CBC story highlighted many of the issues around Long Term Care that I have discussed with Victoria Manor administration and City of Kawartha Lakes staff,

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1840788035517>

I appreciate the offer of having the concerns that I have emailed read at the Committee meeting. I am interested to know what your thoughts are, how will you support the residents and staff at Victoria Manor when you make your budgetary recommendations to Council? What will you do to prevent what happened in other Ontario homes from happening at Victoria Manor? Will a report on what transpires at the meeting be publicly available?

As a side note as of January 4 Essential Care givers for Victoria Manor will require a COVID test every five days in order to see their loved ones seven days a week. Ross Memorial Hospital offers testing Monday to Friday only. If Victoria Manor were to have a COVID outbreak we would be unable to assist [REDACTED] seven days a week as we intend to unless we are able to go to other areas to have testing done and that is if they have the capacity. This is not a good choice to make during a lockdown.

I realize that the government of Ontario is to blame for the current Long Term Care crisis. I realize City staff have advocated at length for Long Term Care support from the Ontario government. I realize the staff and management of Victoria Manor are doing their best in an untenable situation. I ask that you and your Management Committee do your best to support Victoria Manor residents, staff and the families and friends of residents, and make budgetary recommendations that will support Victoria Manor at this crucial time.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Janet Vanderveen

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7. **From:** Doug Elmslie <delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 6, 2021 12:44 PM  
**To:** Janet Vanderveen  
**Cc:** Rod Sutherland <rsutherland@kawarthalakes.ca>; Tracy Richardson <trichardson@kawarthalakes.ca>; Doug Elmslie <delmslie@kawarthalakes.ca>; mtully@mykawartha.com; editor@kawarthanow.com; info@thepromoter.ca  
**Subject:** Re: Essential Caregivers in Long Term Care

Thank you for your e-mails, I have been keeping abreast of your correspondence and the responses from Rod Sutherland. As Director of Human Services he is in the best position to address your questions and concerns and respond to you, so I chose not to weigh in and muddy the waters. I will respond to some of the questions you have directed to me, and may have to get back to you on others.

As you correctly point out testing issues have been resolved, so that relieves one worry. Your correspondence will be addressed in Open Session so a record will be available, my delay in responding to you, was because we had to check whether the e-mails and responses needed to be looked at in Closed Session.

Council has always supported Victoria Manor at a higher level than the Provincial funding provided. Right back to 2012 when the decision was made to outsource the management of the Manor, because, quite frankly, the municipality couldn't keep staff, or administrators, and generally were not experts at running a long term care home. That decision has cost money, but is one of the best decisions we could have made, and Council continues to be supportive. In addition the Municipality has added money to the food envelope, which allows fresh fruit and vegetables all year round, and also provides a higher more nutritious quality of food. When the Manor required capital upgrades, council voted to loan the Manor the money, almost one million dollars, at last year's budget meeting that loan was forgiven in it's entirety. Also as a result of a Provincial Arbitrators ruling, Victoria Manor is the only long term care home in the Province that is required to have two RN's on every shift, the additional cost of doing this is entirely borne by the Municipality. I am confident that Council will continue to support Victoria Manor and it's needs to the best of our ability, in order to keep it a safe and well managed facility.

I don't think anyone can guarantee that we will never have a case of Covid in Victoria Manor, but I know our staff is working diligently to make sure that doesn't occur, and will continue to do so. The Board in it's governance role, is very supportive of staff and their recommendations, and will continue to do so, even after this pandemic ceases to be an issue.

I believe I have responded to all your items, other than the comments on the Provincial Government, and I choose to say nothing on that subject.

Best Regards

Doug Elmslie

Chair Victoria Manor, Board of Management

Councillor Ward 3

City of Kawartha Lakes