

December 21, 2012
File: 08-87841

Ms. Rita McDonnell
18863 69th Avenue
SURREY BC V4N 5K1

Dear Ms. McDonnell:

I am writing to you about the complaint you made to our office in 2009 about the Fraser Health Authority. I apologize for the length of time taken to respond. As you know we kept your file with our Office open pending the outcome of the Ombudsperson's systemic investigation into seniors' care. Enclosed is a copy of the overview of the Ombudsperson's report.

When you contacted our Office you provided us with detailed information about your father's experience in the final years of his life.

Your complaint was about the care that your father, Gary Davis, received while in residential care funded by the health authority and in hospital. I understand that your father passed away in July, 2009. Please accept my sympathies for your loss. I will attempt to outline the events related to the concerns you shared with us:

- Your father resided at Murrayville Manor in Langley. In April 2006, staff from the facility transferred your father to Langley Memorial Hospital due to issues noted with his leg. He was unattended in the hospital and fell causing an injury which required surgery.
- While your father remained in Langley Memorial Hospital you discovered that he had developed a bed sore on his back.
- In October 2006, your father was transferred to Maple Hill, a residential care facility on the hospital site. Soon after being transferred he went into septic shock, was transferred to emergency and the bedsore was operated on.
- Later that month, your father was transferred to Cedar Hill, another facility on the hospital site. While he was there, you had a number of concerns about his condition including the health of his legs. You were informed that his legs may require amputation.
- In March 2007, your father's legs were amputated. Around this time your father also complained that he been handled roughly by a nurse at Cedar Hill.
- In April 2007, your father was in Abbotsford Hospital, Langley Memorial Hospital and Royal Columbia Hospital to address bleeding issues.
- In May 2007, your father returned to Maple Hill. You attempted to address your concerns about your father's bed sore and the nurse's rough treatment, with the residential manager. You had difficulty receiving an adequate response from the manager and you wrote to the Minister of Health and the CEO for Fraser Health. You also expressed concern about the health authority's charges for your father's care. The CEO referred your concerns to the Executive Director of Acute Care for Langley Memorial Hospital.

- In December 2007, you met with the Executive Director, residential manager and the regional director for residential care. The meeting resulted in an agreement regarding further follow-up to your concerns and how future concerns would be addressed.
- In February 2009, you wrote to Fraser Health's Patient Care Quality Office (PCQO) requesting financial compensation for pain, suffering and future costs of care. Fraser Health declined to provide financial compensation.
- You requested that the Patient Care Quality Review Board (PCQRB) review the PCQO's response to your concerns. In July 2009, the PCQRB issued a report on its review of your complaint. The report made recommendations regarding the Fraser Health policies for identifying a primary care physician in residential care settings and communication when a patient is transferred between facilities. With regard to concerns about the care decisions that were made in your father's case, the PCQRB referred you to the College of Registered Nurses of BC.
- On July 30, 2009, your father passed away from pneumonia. You informed us that his condition was worsened due to a lack of air conditioning during a heat wave.

You were concerned about the adequacy and appropriateness of the care provided to your father, and the communication between the health authority and yourself regarding his care and treatment. You were also concerned with the number of times your father was transferred between locations without the benefit of continuous care by one physician which you believed caused his care to suffer.

As my colleague, Harry Vogt, informed you in June 2010, while we did not investigate your complaint we chose to keep our file regarding your complaint open to help inform our systemic investigation into senior's care. We completed this investigation in February 2012 and released *The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 2)*. This report covers a broad set of issues related to seniors' care including home support, assisted living, and residential care services. It contains a total of 143 factual findings and 176 recommendations to improve seniors care.

Some of the recommendations may be of particular interest to you. Volume two of the report is dedicated to residential care facilities, and contains recommendations specific to improving standards of care. For example, we recommended that the Ministry of Health, after consultation with stakeholders, establish specific and objectively measurable regulatory standards that apply to key aspects of care in all residential care facilities, including bathing frequency, help with going to the bathroom and call-bell response times.

We also made observations about the difficulty of enforcing and monitoring the current standards, and have included recommendations to help ensure that standards of care are effectively enforced by the Ministry of Health and the regional health authorities.

In addition, we recommended that the Ministry of Health require all operators of residential care facilities to:

- investigate all complaints they receive
- complete investigations within 10 business days of receiving a complaint
- inform complainants in writing of the outcome of their complaint
- inform complainants what they can do if they are not satisfied with the operator's response
- keep detailed and specific records of complaints and how they were handled

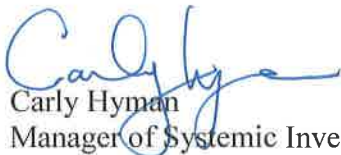
- review the complaints they have received every quarter to determine whether there are areas where improvements can be made

Furthermore, we recommended that the Ministry of Health establish a program to provide support for seniors and their families to navigate the home and community care system and bring forward concerns and complaints, by January 2013.

Throughout this investigation we received a tremendous amount of input and information from the public. The *Best of Care* reports would not have been possible without the involvement of individuals like you who contacted our office to make their voices heard. Throughout our systemic investigation your file with us was kept open and used to help draft recommendations aimed at improving care services to seniors. Now that the reports have been released, your file with us will be closed.

I would like to thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. If you have any questions about this letter please contact me directly at 250 387-0184 or call Enquiry B.C. at 1-800- 663-7867 and ask to be transferred to my phone number.

Yours sincerely,



Carly Hyman
Manager of Systemic Investigations