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OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE CAN HELP RESOLVE LONG-TERM CARE COMPLAINTS

VICTORIA – Ombudsman Kim Carter wants people who feel that health authorities or the Ministry of Health have not properly addressed their concerns about the treatment of seniors in long-term care facilities to know they can bring their complaints to her office.

“It’s important that people know they can come to us if they feel a health authority has not dealt with their problem adequately or fairly. Often when we’re able to resolve one person’s complaint, it can lead to policy changes that improve things for many others in similar situations,” Ms. Carter said.

Ms. Carter said that she’s noted the high level of public concern about the treatment of seniors in long-term care homes, and wants to ensure that people are aware of all the options they have for addressing problems.

“While many residents and their families know they can bring problems to the attention of licensing staff in the health authorities, some may not be aware that my office can also respond to these complaints, and may be able to find resolutions. We have investigated in the past, and are currently investigating, complaints about the care of seniors, including how they are treated while living in long-term care facilities.”

The Ombudsman’s office can conduct impartial and confidential investigations to determine whether a public agency is treating the people it serves fairly, and in most cases is able to achieve satisfactory resolutions of complaints. When necessary, the Ombudsman can also make findings and recommend solutions to complex, systemic problems to the legislative assembly. The public bodies over which the Ombudsman has jurisdiction include: provincial ministries, health authorities, Crown corporations, colleges and universities, boards of education and municipalities. The Ombudsman’s office dealt with approximately 7,000 complaints and enquiries in 2007.

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