

August 14, 2000

Hon. Elizabeth Witmer
Minister of Health
10th Floor, Hepburn Block,
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Ms Witmer

We are writing with respect to your letter to Liberal Health Critic Lyn McLeod advising of your intention to introduce new Long Term Care legislation during the fall session. In this same letter you also write: "I also want to assure you that there will be consultations prior to any changes being implemented."

We are concerned that the kind of "consultations" you have in mind are not the broad public consultations that we have been urging for the past two years. We have written to you on several occasions about this and have met with the MOH. Further, we are already dismayed by your process. Despite our long-standing interest and communication with the Ministry, we have received no notice of your fall date. We wonder how many other key stakeholders are in the dark about your intentions and whether you have even taken the time to notify the media.

We had received assurances from former Long-Term Care Minister Cam Jackson in May 10, 1999 with respect to Long Term Care regulations that were then being contemplated: "I can assure you that before any such comprehensive regulation is approved, it will be subject to the type of wide circulation you suggest."

Because the new Long-Term Care legislation is even more wide-sweeping than the regulations, it is crucial for public consultation to take place. We understand this legislation will deal with Home Care and Facility-based care. It is vitally important to the health and well-being of all Ontarians, now and in the future. The public, advocacy groups such as ours, providers, patients and many others have a compelling interest, experience and substantial stake in the outcome of this legislation. Because this is so, your government will not be able to write legislation that works in the interest of Ontarians without full and open public consultations, with timelines that allow for thoughtful input from these many stakeholders.

Please advise us of your consultation process as soon as possible so that we may begin to plan for these and alert our member groups to them.

Yours very truly,

Lynne Simmons, Natalie Mehra,

Provincial Administrative
Coordinator Committee