



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Backlog and Delays in Critical-incident and Complaint Inspections of Long-term-care Homes: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Ministry) fell behind on its critical-incident and complaint inspections at Ontario's 630 long-term-care homes, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2015 Annual Report* today.

"While the Ministry completed comprehensive inspections of the province's 630 homes in early 2015, and is committed to performing them once a year, much more needs to be done to keep residents safe," Lysyk said following tabling of the Report today.

Long-term-care homes provide accommodation and care to nearly 78,000 adults, most of whom are over 65 years old and unable to live independently and/or require round-the-clock nursing care. Homes received \$3.6 billion in funding from the province last year.

In addition to carrying out comprehensive inspections, the Ministry is responsible to inspect homes in response to "critical incidents" (abuse, neglect or improper care of residents, for example) and of to inspect homes that have been the subject of complaints. It also performs follow-up inspections of previously identified problems at homes.

The backlog of critical-incident and complaint inspections doubled between December 2013 and March 2015, to 2,800 from 1,300. Such delays can place residents at risk.

Other significant findings in the Report include:

- High-risk complaints and critical incidents that should have triggered immediate inspections often took three days or more. Medium-risk complaints, such as verbal or physical abuse of residents leading to minor harm, often took longer than the Ministry's own 30-day target to investigate.
- The Ministry is not effectively monitoring compliance orders that require follow-up. About 380 compliance orders, or two-thirds of those due to be fixed by 2014, had not been followed up by the Ministry within its own informal 30-day target to ensure the deficiencies had been addressed.
- The Ministry does not do enough to address repeated non-compliance in certain homes. For example, homes in one region did not comply with almost 40% of the compliance orders by the Ministry in 2014, while homes in another region did not comply with about 17% of orders. Seventy-eight homes failed to comply with 142 orders.
- Homes get inconsistent deadlines to fix issues identified by inspectors. In 2014, for example, inspectors in one region gave homes an average of 34 days to comply with certain orders about key risk areas (carrying out a resident's plan of care, for example, or protecting residents from abuse and neglect), while inspectors in another region gave homes an average of 77 days to comply with similar orders.

- The Ministry should provide the public with better information about homes, including their quality-of-care performance, to allow people to make informed choices about homes.
- Although the Ministry is meeting its goal of giving each home a comprehensive inspection once a year, it did not prioritize these inspections to ensure it examines higher-risk homes first.
- About 30% of homes had no automatic sprinkler systems as of March 31, 2013. The current law does not require these homes to have automatic sprinkler systems until 2025.

-30-

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For more information and to view the full report, please visit www.auditor.on.ca