

# Andrea Horwath



Leader of the Official Opposition  
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Director under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*

Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Capital Planning Branch  
1075 Bay Street, 11th Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 2B1

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

RE: Southbridge Pickering Application for a new 30-year license (Project #21-026)

The government has posted a proposal from Southbridge Care Homes Inc., a for-profit long-term care operator, for development of new Long-Term Care beds and the issuance of a new licence with a term of up to 30 years at their Orchard Villa facility. For the many family members whose loved ones suffered and died over the last year at Orchard Villa, the idea that the operators would be granted a new 30 year license is disturbing. Simply put, it must not be approved.

The Orchard Villa facility gained national attention last year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The government's own long-term care commission highlighted the failure of this home to protect residents in their Final Report, describing what hospital staff found when they arrived at the home to provide assistance:

*The appropriate signage was not present. Staff had a poor understanding of the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE); the team leader described "very shocking visuals of multiple masks, multiple gowns, gloves being worn sort of at all times, sort of everything one should not do with PPE.".. Staffing was so low that those on duty could not keep the home clean. Garbage was everywhere and nothing seemed to have been wiped down. (p 152)*

The Red Cross and the Canadian Armed forces were also required to intervene. In reports that later made national news the CAF personnel described:

- Residents being left in beds in soiled diapers.
- Staff failing to sit residents up to feed and give them medication and one choking incident that appeared to have contributed to a resident's death.
- "Unsafe nursing medication administration errors."
- Staff putting belongings of residents out of their reach.
- A likely fractured hip not addressed by staff.
- Some residents sleeping on bare mattresses because of a lack of supplies.
- A lack of training for new staff. "Nursing staff unsure where or how to document status changes, how to change medications, where order sets are located; where supplies are located."

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These reports were tragic and shocking to some, but many family members of residents told media that they were not surprised by these revelations. Before the pandemic Orchard Villa had a Level 3 compliance history, the second-worst possible category, which the ministry categorizes as "actual harm/risk." In her report on Pandemic Response and Readiness in Long-Term Care Ontario's Auditor General noted that Orchard Villa has reported respiratory outbreaks every year since 2016 – with seven reported in 2017 alone (p45). Orchard Villa and Southbridge Care are currently facing four separate lawsuits related to negligence. Durham Police are currently reviewing reports from Orchard Villa and refuse to rule out a criminal investigation.

Section 98 of the Long-Term Care Act states that a corporation "is only eligible to be issued a licence for a long-term care home if, in the Director's opinion... the past conduct relating to the operation of a long-term care home or any other matter or business of the following affords reasonable grounds to believe that the home will not be operated in a manner that is prejudicial to the health, safety or welfare of its residents" Orchard Villa has not met this standard.

Moreover, as the government's own Long-Term Care Commission has noted, "Care should be the sole focus of the entities responsible for long-term care homes... It is difficult to see how one can build a culture of excellence in care when care is only a means to profit on the infrastructure and hoteling". Southbridge Care Homes Inc, as noted, is a for-profit corporation whose primary goal is not care. As the government's own Commission has made clear: this needs to change.

At this moment in Ontario's history, it is not acceptable for the operator of this home to maintain their current license, much less receive an additional one for even more beds under their control. After clearly failing to responsibly care for Ontario's seniors, a license extension for this private corporation would be a reward instead of justice following what every Ontarian saw transpiring at their facility.

Sincerely,

Andrea Horwath  
Leader, Ontario's Official Opposition

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