

Bed Sore

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Prepared by the Elder Advocates of Alberta Society

"Rise in the presence of the aged, and honour the face of the old man. . ."
-Leviticus 19:32

Elder Advocates Of Alberta



On March 29, 1994, we took the picture of this bed sore at the Dickensfield Long Term Care Centre, which graphically portrays an open lesion. This advanced, stage 4, bed sore about 3" in diameter is located on the lower back of a resident. The lesion allowed one to view the body cavity; the spine was exposed and visible. The stench of necrotic flesh was unbelievable. The elderly person was severely emaciated, weight approximately 70 lbs. She resembled a starving Biafran. Her physician Dr. M. Bleviss, who has been making regular entries in her nursing chart, (the last entry 12 days earlier), said that he was not aware of her wasted condition or of her advanced bed sore.

We made many oral complaints to people in government and had numerous meetings concerning this lesion. A formal, written complaint was made to the Edmonton Police Service who, though they did some investigation at the centre, ultimately informed us that if this had been a dog exhibiting such serious excoriation, dehydration and malnutrition, charges would have been laid under the "Animal Protection Act". The SPCA would not tolerate such gross cruelty and neglect.

This elder had suffered almost total neglect.

April 28, 1994, we met with senior officials of the *Capital Care Group Incorporated*, such as the Medical Director, Dr. Chris Lord, the CEO and Chairman of the Board, Campbell Miller, QC and then President Ms. Sheila Weatherill, Vice President Susan Paul, Frank Schoenberger, Board member and others

May 6, 1994, *Palliative Care Conference* Camrose, Vivien Lai, *Senior Long Term Care Specialist* – spoke. Later we met her and recounted the incident and showed her the paragraph – she was not interested – “Go to the *Health Facilities Review Committee*”. We stressed the need for palliative care for the dying elderly of our province.

On May 12, 2004, we held a meeting with Dr. L. Ohlhauser of the *College of Physicians and Surgeons* concerning this matter. We discussed the *preferred list of physicians* who visit nursing homes and who make entries in the nursing files of elderly but who fail to visit the elderly for whom they make charges to *Alberta Health*.

A complaint was filed with the *Alberta Human Rights Commission* under the *Individual's Rights Protection Act* on May 17, 1994 which was investigated for over a year.

An article, which emanated from Austin, Texas, “Nursing Home Fines Facing Globe-trotter”, (Edmonton Journal May 31 1997, A4), “*State Regulators said they found patients living in dangerous conditions, with too few nurses and other staff*”. Furthermore, “*Patients had advanced bed sores and some had lost a lot of weight*”. In Texas, Linda Finch, the nursing home owner is fighting millions of dollars in violations and will stand trial in September.

The New York Times, December 4, 2000, The United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit in Denver recently upheld a penalty of \$1,300 a day against a Utah Nursing Home, the *South Valley Care Centre* that had allowed patients to develop bedsores or pressure sores. The court said that they had *caused harm* to their *patients*.

However, in Alberta, there have been no fines, no one will stand trial, and there has been deafening silence.

Our collective conscience needs to be stirred!