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May 27, 2020

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister
315-A West Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Hon. Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health
278 Confederation Bldg.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Hajdu,

As Members of Parliament representing five communities with long term care homes that have been devastated by COVID-19, we are particularly horrified at the events and details described by the Canadian Armed Forces personnel providing care at these homes.

The abusive allegations described in Orchard Villa in Pickering, Altamont Care Community in Scarborough, Eatonville Care Centre in Etobicoke, Hawthorne Place in North York and Holland Christian Homes Grace Manor in Brampton should alarm every single Ontarian and Canadian.

The stories and examples of abuse described by the soldiers stationed at these homes are simply unacceptable. For weeks, workers and families at these facilities have been sounding the alarm about the treatment of residents at these homes. As we rightly focus on the disturbing stories and details, we must remember that behind these examples and numbers are human beings and our fellow citizens. They were mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. They deserve better.

We have followed the developments and news coming out of these long-term care homes as more and more of our residents became ill and passed away. We have grieved for their families and friends, mourned the senseless loss of life in our communities and have advocated that steps be taken immediately to protect the residents in the short-term and reform our long-term care system for the long-term.

It is in this vein, that as Members of Parliament, we are writing to urge the Government of Canada to take the following actions:

- 1. Call on the Government of Ontario (in which jurisdiction over long term care homes resides) to immediately establish a full public inquiry led by independent experts with representation from staff, families of survivors and current residents to:**
 - a. Identify the failings of the long-term care system in Ontario;**
 - b. Determine the reasons for those failings; and**
 - c. Make specific recommendations as to the steps that must be taken to ensure that the seniors in our long-term care homes receive the quality of care that they deserve.**

On May 19, 2020, the Ontario government announced they will establish a government commission to review the long-term care system in Ontario whose work would be begin in September 2020. It is clear now, more than ever, that a government commission is inadequate and that a fully public inquiry must be established.

We believe that a public inquiry is needed because it is the only way to ensure that:

- The inquiry is independent and thorough. We believe that the currently planned commission, operating through the same government and department it will be tasked with reviewing, would not provide the balanced and independent investigation that a formal public enquiry can.
- The investigation is led by experts qualified to identify the problems that need to be addressed, their root causes and the solutions required to address them.
- The inquiry's findings and recommendations are transparent to all Ontarians.

Many of the staff at long-term care homes, along with the family and friends of those who have passed away are demanding a full and independent public inquiry.

A full public inquiry is a critical step in ensuring that a tragedy like this can never happen again and that seniors in Ontario get the care that they deserve.

2. Work in partnership with provincial governments across Canada and make the necessary legislative and regulatory changes to establish and implement enforceable national standards for long-term care homes across Canada.

The significant number of deaths in long-term care homes related to Covid-19 is not unique to our constituencies. It is a tragedy taking place across Canada as approximately 80% of all Covid-19 related deaths across our country have occurred in long-term care homes. This has revealed that there are shortcomings in the quality of care in long-term care homes across our country.

It is for this reason that we believe that standards must be set nationally to ensure that long-term homes provide the level of care that our seniors deserve.

We believe that these steps must be taken urgently both because of the seriousness of the matter in the long-term but also because as we speak, Covid-19 continues to devastate the health and lives of seniors in long-term care homes. There is also a high probability that Canada will experience a second wave of Covid-19 which could cost more lives. These steps must be taken urgently to protect the health and lives of our seniors.

We appreciate that provinces and territories regulate long term care homes, however we ask you to take these steps because seniors in long-term care homes and their families deserve to know that reprehensible practices like those documented by our Canadian Forces members will never happen again and that our seniors from coast to coast to coast, will receive the quality of care that they deserve.

Yours Sincerely,

Gary Anandasangere
MP, Scarborough-Rouge Park

Yvan Baker
MP, Etobicoke Centre

Jennifer O'Connell
MP, Pickering-Uxbridge

Hon. Judy Sgro
MP, Humber River-Black Creek

Sonia Sidhu
MP, Brampton South