

Oakville roofer charged with fraud

Halton Regional Police are reminding residents to be cautious when hiring home improvement contractors in the wake of charges laid against an Oakville roofer.

In April, police began an investigation following three complaints of deposits paid for roofing work which was never started. Attempts to contact Randy's Roofing were also unsuccessful.

Three separate complaints from

Oakville and Burlington were received by police with a total of \$8,000 having been paid out.

Randolph William Barton, 39, of Tennyson Drive is charged with three counts of fraud under \$5,000. He is scheduled to appear in Burlington Court on Aug. 19.

Police provide these tips for hiring contractors:

- Check for a permanent place of business address and a telephone

number.

- Look for a company with a proven track record that readily offers customers referrals and a list of completed projects.

- Insist on a written proposal and examine it for specific completion dates and payment procedures.

- Never pay the entire amount up front - reputable companies generally ask for one-third or less of the total payment.



Barrie Erskine • Oakville Beaver

The Lifecare Centre on Lyon's Lane will be closed next month and its remaining residents moved to more modern long-term care facilities.

Province says Lifecare residents get top priority for new long-term care beds

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closure last week. "We want to have a gradual process that meets the needs of the residents."

The past year has been a contentious one for Lifecare and was especially hard on the families of loved ones shuffled in and out of the facility:

In August 2002 the province assumed control of Lifecare, explaining at the time that the 206-bed long-term care facility, occupied by 144 residents, was taken over due to "concerns related to resident care and safety." Ernst and Young was then appointed interim receiver for the bankrupt Royal Crest chain of 17 long-term care and retirement homes.

The decision to take over the facility was made following the Ministry's inspections and reviews relating to the facility that were carried out over several months. The province explained the problems dealt with such issues as patient care - medical charts not updated regularly and improper levels of medications, for example - not with the building itself. Extencare Canada Inc. was named interim administrator in order to "ensure the safety and care of all residents."

In April of this year - in the midst of an ice storm - 88 Lifecare residents were transferred to Brantwood Long-Term Care facility in Burlington and Mississauga Lifecare Centre under Ontario's Emergency Plans Act.

The reason was that the Ministry selected Lifecare as a location where patients in acute care beds at GTA hospitals have been transferred in order to increase capacity in the event of widespread Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) infection.

Oakville Lifecare staff, residents and their families were supposed to receive a Ministry letter dated April 2 informing them of the planned move. The letter - which many Lifecare families did not receive - also stated that the facility was to be used as a centralized location where potential SARS contacts could be isolated and observed if required - facts which later proved erroneous. A mere two days later, the residents were transferred out and two of them died.

At a meeting with families held in April, Ministry Program Manager Monita O'Connor explained that there was "tremendous pressure" to gear up for a possible SARS outbreak by making acute care beds in hospitals available. The Lifecare transfer, she said, was decided only days before it occurred.

Despite the haste, new residents were not moved in until more than a week later. Among them was the 80-year old mother of Oakville's Mona Cedolia, who was transferred to Lifecare from Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH).

According to Cedolia, the care at Lifecare has been so bad she's glad the place is closing. However, given the facility's track record and despite a verbal assurance by the province that residents will have one of their top three choices of new long-term care facilities, Cedolia remains apprehensive.

Her mother has suffered from Parkinson's Disease for 12 years and ended up at OTMH before her transfer to Lifecare because she fell. Parkinson's patients require specialized care and Cedolia believes her mother has not received the level of assistance necessary while at the facility. She doesn't blame Lifecare's overworked staff, however, who she believes are trying to make the best of limited resources and very little time.

"The caregivers want to be kind, but they can't do their job," said Cedolia, who worries about another disruptive transfer to a site that may or may not meet her mother's needs.

Cholakov said Lifecare residents were placed on waiting lists on July 11 for long-term care facilities that will be much better equipped to handle their needs. Cholakov explained that two Halton sites with a total of 301 beds are slated to open later this summer while the 128-bed site adjacent to OTMH is set for this fall.

"Closing (Lifecare) will have a small impact on long-term care beds in Halton," she added.

Cedolia worries that if these centres

"Safeguarding your care, comfort and choice in selecting a permanent placement are our primary goals."

• Tim Burns,

Long-Term Care Facilities Branch Director in letter to Lifecare residents

aren't ready by Aug. 22, her mother and others will be shuffled to another substandard facility, a move they are ill-prepared to undergo. In that case, Cedolia said a "more humane approach" would be to keep Lifecare open - despite its shortcomings - until the proper beds are up and running.

This is especially important, she continued, if the Ministry is considering another temporary transfer out of town, where she and other family members would have far less convenient access to her mother. Given the shoddy care her mother has received so far, says Cedolia, a third-party presence is vital to ensure adequate care.

Those living in long-term

care homes reside in either private, semi-private or ward accommodations and because her mother cannot pay the higher provincial premiums, Cedolia fears she'll be relegated to the wards of older, substandard facilities while others enjoy the amenities of new, mainly for-profit homes now being built.

In a July 8 letter to residents, Tim Burns, Director of the Ministry's Long-Term Care Facilities Branch, explained that his staff will work closely with the families to "ensure that this placement meets your needs."

Burns' letter also includes the names and numbers for Lifecare's interim administrator, the Halton Community Care Access Centre Director of Client Services and the Ministry's Compliance Advisor for the region.

"Safeguarding your care, comfort and choice in selecting a permanent placement are our primary goals," wrote Burns.

At press time, Cedolia still had no definitive answer where her mother will be going.

"A new city, a new home, a new family at Queens Avenue"

By Andrea Lepore
Special Features Writer

After raising a family and managing a home on her own after her husband passed away, Norma Piccinini found it difficult to manage.

A native of Sudbury, it was after one of her daughters, who lives in Oakville, suggested she take a look at Queens Avenue that she knew she had to make the transition to a retirement residence.

"I had a home in Sudbury and I just couldn't cope anymore, so I sold it. I have macular degeneration (deterioration of the central portion of the retina), which limits what my eyes can do," says Norma. "My whole family agreed it was the best place for me - and it's also nice because I live closer to my daughters."

Norma has her own apartment with a kitchen, dining room and bedroom, which enables her to enjoy her independence, while at the same time sampling all that Queens Avenue has to offer. There's always plenty to do and many friends to make.

Norma has made several friends, who she says she now considers family, during her day to day activities, which include: playing cribbage, taking part in day trips, watching movies and reading.

She also can't talk enough about the wonderful staff at Queens Avenue. Kind, caring and always there to help, Norma says the staff does an excellent job of keeping the



managed, well maintained and very clean.

Norma highly recommends Queens Avenue to those entertaining thoughts of moving into a retirement residence.

"Although it's a real change in life, you have to come here with an open mind. You make a lot of friends and get to know everybody...I couldn't have asked for anything better," she says.

Queens Avenue Retirement Residence has eight floors and all the amenities of home for an independent and personal lifestyle. Spacious studio suites and one bedroom and two bedroom apartments are available, ranging in sizes from 370 to 775 square feet. All are equipped with full kitchens, a

sitting area, full bathrooms with walk-in seated showers, and 24-hour medic alert monitoring. The facility is secure with automatic keyless building door entries and all entries are locked and monitored by closed circuit television.

Enhanced Care packages are available for individual care requirements, at an extra cost.

For more information regarding occupancy, visit them at 1056 Queens Avenue, or call 905-815-0862.

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