

Time to unspool nursing home red tape

Re The difficult journey to a nursing home, Column, Nov. 4

It is great to hear that the Change Foundation is looking into the bureaucracy surrounding seniors and long-term care.

The dreadful amount of red tape involved in finding placement for our parents was a tragedy for them and our whole family.

Hopefully the foundation's report will lead to changes that spare oth-

ers from the same nightmare.

My father went to a nursing home after a stay in hospital and rehab. Nine months later, after hip surgery, my mother also had to go into long-term care. She ended up in a different facility.

We applied through Community Care Access Centre for our parents to be reunited and were told they would be put on a priority list. We waited nearly two years, running

between the two residences several times a week, and trying to get them together for visits — not an easy task, as both were in wheelchairs. Sadly, they were never reunited.

My mother died two days after we learned that my father was going to be offered a room in her nursing home.

They were in their nineties and had been married for 60 years.

Lesley Cameron, Toronto

Patients unaware of rights

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Unfortunately, in reviewing the "process," from hospital to long-term care, Carol Goar has reinforced some of the key elements about which people are misinformed. For example, when a patient is waiting for admission to one of their chosen homes, the maximum amount that can be charged by the hospital by law is \$53.07 a day, although many people with low incomes are entitled to a reduction in this fee. While we advise clients that lengthy hospital stays may not be in their best interests, patients or their decision-makers do not have to choose homes from a "short list" where there is, or will soon be, an available bed.

Many hospitals have such "first available bed policies," which result in the "penalties" discussed in the article. However, most of these policies are contrary to the legislation governing the placement system. Unfortunately, patients and families are often unaware of the law and their rights because most of the information comes from the hospital. To counter this problem, we have published a paper entitled "First Available Bed Policies and Discharge to a Long-Term Care Home from Hospital" which is available at www.ancelaw.ca.

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