



**Health and Wellness
Office of the Minister**

PO Box 488, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2R8 • Telephone 902 424-3377 Fax 902 424-0559 • www.gov.ns.ca

FEB 2 0 2015

Ms. Susan Eng
VP Advocacy
CARP
30 Jefferson Ave.
Toronto, ON M6K 1Y4

Dear Ms. Eng:

Thank you for your letter dated January 13, 2015, requesting that all levels of government take immediate steps to establish fire sprinklers in all nursing homes built before 1997. I agree that the fire at Residence du Havre Nursing Home in L'Isle-Verte, Quebec was tragic.

As you may be aware, the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) monitors licensed nursing homes to ensure that they are in compliance with the *Homes for Special Care (HSC) Act* and Regulations. Inspections are conducted at least annually, with a subsequent follow up visit to monitor compliance with requirements, etc. A requirement of the HSC Regulations is that homes are also inspected and approved by the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). OFM also conducts inspections to monitor compliance with their legislation as well.

In Nova Scotia, legislation is in place regarding proper fire safety, evacuation plans and staff training. The *Homes for Special Care Act*, section 27(1) requires all licensed homes to have an emergency plan. Section 27(4) further requires home to exercise these plans. Section 27(6) speaks specifically to the fact that all staff need to be thoroughly instructed in evacuation procedures, extinguishers, etc. In addition, Building and Fire Codes are updated at a national level every five years with the next set of codes coming out at the end of this year. The OFM will be adopting these codes sometime in June 2016.

Since 1976 provincial nursing homes have been required to have an automatic sprinkler system. Nursing Homes constructed prior to 1976, the province has taken steps to retro-fit these homes with sprinklers. In response to the fire in Quebec, OFM and DHW have done joint inspections of these facilities to identify any fire and life safety measures that could be implemented to mitigate risks.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leo A. Glavine".

Leo A. Glavine
Minister