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For Immediate Release

PRESS CONFERENCE

Court challenge to be heard Thursday re. Ford Government's expansion & new 30-yr license for Southbridge's Orchard Villa, for-profit long-term care with reprehensible record

Toronto – On Thursday, a panel of judges at the Ontario Divisional court will hear a court challenge brought by the daughter of a deceased resident and the Ontario Health Coalition seeking a judicial review of the Ford government's decision to grant an 88-bed expansion and new 30-year license for the 233-bed long-term care home owned by Southbridge at Orchard Villa in Pickering. The Coalition and the families are asking the court to quash the license.

There will be a press conference on Wednesday morning in advance of the hearing as follows:

When: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 at 10 a.m. EDT

Where: A recording will be available on the Ontario Health Coalition [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Who: Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition
Cathy Parkes, one of the families of Orchard Villa
Steven Shrybman, lawyer

The documents and evidence filed with the court are available [here](#).

The advocates are asking the court to require the Ford government live up to their own long-term care legislation. Under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act \(2021\)](#), the government cannot issue licenses to long-term care home owners when their past conduct offers reasonable grounds to believe that the home will be operated in a manner that is prejudicial to the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

Two hundred and six of Orchard Villa's 233 residents contracted COVID-19 and more than 70 died. At 30 deaths per 100 residents, Orchard Villa has one of the worst pandemic death records in Ontario.

The [military exposed](#) horrific conditions at Orchard Villa including residents' mattresses set on the floor so they could not get up, lack of hygiene, and unsafe infection control and medication practices. They found the home was dirty with cockroaches and flies present, a rotten food smell, residents left in soiled "diapers", residents left without hydration, improper feeding, a resident with a likely fractured hip left without proper care, multiple resident falls without assessment. There was poor access to supplies. Not only were residents on bare mattresses without linens, but also scarce wound care supplies, oxygen generators without oxygen, and broken suction units.

The military's findings were not an aberration. Orchard Villa has a history of chronic non-compliance and continues to be cited for poor care in a [litany of inspection reports](#) that describe many of the same issues exposed by the military.

The Ford government has gone to extraordinary lengths to force through the approval of Orchard Villa's expansion, issuing [an MZO forcing through the project](#), overriding a [unanimous vote by Pickering City Council opposing the plan](#). The zoning order allows for an [even more massive expansion down the road](#)- up to three 15-storey buildings and a maximum of 832 long-term care beds and 670 units in a retirement home.

After the military report exposed horrific conditions in the long-term care homes to which they had been deployed including Orchard Villa, the Ford government [promised unequivocally that they would bring in stronger accountability and fundamental change](#), stating that “everything is on the table” including [potential criminal charges](#), justice for the families, [license revocations](#), fines and more. Despite this, the Ford government is issuing new 30-year licenses and expansions for thousands of long-term care beds to the same for-profit long-term care chain corporations responsible for the lion’s share of deaths in the pandemic and for longstanding records of terrible care and living conditions.

Far from being held accountable, Southbridge - one of the for-profit chains [with one of the very worst records](#) in the pandemic, as well as before and after – is among the [prime beneficiaries of the Ford government’s new licenses](#).