

5 December 2019

Emergency and Community Services Committee
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON
L8P 4Y5

Re: *The Indispensable Survival Guide to Ontario's Long-Term Care System*

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Karen Cumming. I'm a freelance journalist, health promoter and teacher – formerly with CHCH-tv in Hamilton.

I'm writing to introduce you to a new book that I've written together with my sister – a book that I feel will benefit baby boomers and seniors not only in our community, but across the province of Ontario as well.

My hope (as a health promoter) is to make the City and the healthcare community in Hamilton aware of this resource so that it can help as many people as possible.

The book is called "The Indispensable Survival Guide to Ontario's Long-Term Care System", and it was inspired by our mother Verna's journey through long-term care earlier this year. After Mom passed away, I wrote a feature article for the Spectator which chronicled our journey through the system and the roller coaster ride that it was for our family. For your reference, here's a link to the story as it appeared in the Peterborough Examiner. (The Spec has a paywall up.)

<https://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/opinion-story/9347596-our-mom-s-long-term-care-journey-was-a-long-and-winding-road-that-was-exhausting-at-every-turn/>

As you are aware, the issue of long-term care is an incredibly timely one. I'd like to suggest that it is fast becoming one of the defining issues of our generation. I don't believe it to be a matter of opinion, but instead a matter of fact that our current system is flawed and in need of improvement. But that's

not why we wrote the book. We wrote it to help people navigate a system that is frustrating and exhausting at every turn.

Our book is a resource guide that is packed with practical tips, personal stories, links to specific web pages that are buried under layers of red tape on government websites, self-care advice and support. In short, it's the survival guide that our family never had.

I think people believe that when they get to this point in life with their elderly parent, someone in the LHIN will hand them a glossy brochure and take them under their wing to guide them in a meaningful way... they believe that everything's going to be okay. This was not our experience.

From the bottom of our hearts, we're here to tell people that they must take it upon themselves to be proactive and prepared. That's what this book is all about.

The guide will be available in digital and print formats for \$19.99 (Cndn) on Amazon.ca, Kindle, Kobo and Smashwords about 2 weeks from now... and shortly thereafter on chapters.indigo.ca. I also have an inventory of copies that I'll be making available during speaking engagements across the province.

For your information, here is the cover. (See below). If you click on the image, you should be able to read the text on the back cover without any problem.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me any time at 905-745-7575.

Many thanks for your time and attention, and for your help in promoting our key messages... there are two of them: "Be proactive and prepared"... and "You are not alone".

Sincerely,

Karen Cumming
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905-745-7575

Health Promoter, Journalist, Teacher

