

30 June 2008

Caregiver Abuse of Resident Wrong – But No Systemic Problem with Aged Care

HealthCare Providers New Zealand Inc, the over-arching organisation representing providers of aged care in the country, said today it was extremely distressed to hear of the incident at Belhaven Rest Home.

“It is always distressing to hear about this type of abuse, but this appears to be a one-off incident,” said Mr Martin Taylor, CEO of HealthCare Providers.

“Members of our organisation must sign and follow an agreed code of conduct to protect and promote patients’ well being, and this is something we take very seriously.”

“HealthCare Providers are continuing to speak with the owners of Belhaven, and we will review the incident in line with our own rules and regulations for the proper provision of care for the elderly. We will also be waiting for the Ministry of Health to complete its investigation.

“Over 40,000 people are cared for in New Zealand’s 758 rest homes each and every year and the vast majority of these homes and the vast majority of our 35,000 caregivers provide safe high quality care under difficult circumstances” said Mr Taylor CEO.

Any judgments that this is a widespread problem are misplaced. The best research on elder abuse comes from Age Concern’s most recent report on 1 October 2007, which recorded 21 cases of elder abuse in rest homes in the year 2005-2006¹.

“We know we must continually combat against elder abuse in our community. One case of elder abuse is one case too many. However, the research clearly shows that there is no widespread problem with the quality of care in New Zealand”, said Mr Taylor.

ENDS

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¹ Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Challenges for the Future, published 1 October 2007. pg 42