

ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS: For immediate release
**Ontario Ombudsman to investigate whether public is adequately protected
 in non-emergency medical transfers**
 Concerns raised about patient safety, lack of infection control, poor training

TORONTO (Tuesday, January 11) – Ontario Ombudsman André Marin today announced he is launching an investigation into whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Transportation are ensuring that adequate measures are in place to protect the public amidst serious concerns raised about non-emergency medical transportation services.

Medical transportation services are private companies that transfer hundreds of thousands of non-critical patients between Ontario hospitals and other locations every year. The vehicles – which are not ambulances, although they often resemble them – are not regulated.

“We have received dozens of complaints from upset patients, their families, and from whistleblowers within the medical transportation industry who feel that patient safety is being compromised and that the government’s response to these issues has been inadequate,” Mr. Marin said. “Anyone who has had experience with these services is invited to call our office.” Concerns raised so far include allegations of patients being injured, unsafe vehicles, a lack of infection controls, insufficiently trained staff and the lack of official regulation or oversight.

The investigation, to be conducted by the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT), will be completed in 90 days, Mr. Marin said. Anyone who has information relevant to this investigation is asked to call 1-800-263-1830 during business hours or complete an online complaint form at www.ombudsman.on.ca.

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