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Independent Living Facility Operator Convicted of Abuse *City Attorney cracks down on dangerous, substandard facilities*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that the operator of a squalid independent living facility in Bay Terraces has been convicted of abuse of a dependent adult.

Long T. Tran, who operated two independent living facilities (also known as ILFs) in the city of San Diego and other ILFs in San Diego County, was accused of leaving at least one disabled resident in conditions so dire that he needed emergency medical care and hospitalization.

Tran pleaded guilty June 21, 2022, to one count of elder/dependent adult abuse and one count of violating a court order prohibiting him from operating an unlicensed care facility. He was sentenced immediately to 30 days in jail, with custody stayed pending the successful completion of one year of probation. His probation conditions prohibit him from operating an unlicensed community care facility. He is also prohibited from providing transportation or placement of anyone who needs care or assistance to any facility.

“Those who reside in independent living facilities are often just one step away from homelessness, and are unwilling to risk the little protection they have by complaining,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“They deserve to be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect -- not like yesterday’s garbage.”**

State law prohibits local governments from regulating or licensing ILFs, unlike facilities that provide care and supervision, such as nursing homes. ILF residents are supposed to be able to take care of their basic needs without care or supervision.

On June 17, 2020, paramedics found a 41-year-old paraplegic at Tran’s ILF at 6435 Jougard Street who required immediate hospitalization. The victim was covered in feces and afflicted with tunneling skin ulcers caused by severe bed sores. Fecal matter infected the man’s urinary catheter, which he told hospital

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staff had not been changed in three weeks. His catheter bag was completely full, and he had been in extreme pain for several days.

The following week another resident of Tran's facility was hospitalized with seizures.

Tran should never have been supervising either patient. In 2015, the state Attorney General sued Tran for multiple violations at a chain of care facilities he ran in San Diego County between 2008 and 2015. This action resulted in an injunction banning Tran from operating group-living facilities for elders and dependent adults who require care or supervision.

Despite that ban, at least nine residents at the Jouglaard Street facility needed care and supervision for routine activities, including transfers in and out of bed, bathing, medication management, and financial management.

City Attorney Elliott has prioritized addressing substandard living conditions for San Diego's most vulnerable residents, many of whom are elderly or disabled. In 2018, the City Attorney's Office launched a concerted crackdown on group living facilities where victims are denied their basic dignity, deprived of basic necessities, and exposed to filth, vermin, and bedbugs. A task force was created that includes the City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit (NAU), Code Enforcement Division, and San Diego Police Department, working together to address substandard properties. The task force was later expanded to include a criminal prosecutor specifically dedicated to investigating and prosecuting criminal abuses by predatory ILF operators.

Tran is the seventh ILF operator convicted of either elder/dependent adult abuse or providing unlicensed care since 2020, when Deputy City Attorney Joseph Raskin was assigned to the task force. In the past two years, reports of unlicensed care facilities in the county have fallen dramatically, from as many as a dozen per month to two or three a month.

Residents of closed or unlivable ILFs are provided relocation assistance by a Victim Services Coordinator, a position created by the City Attorney to ensure victims residing in substandard conditions find safe housing and are connected to critical social services.

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