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City Attorney Prosecutes Abuser of Dependent Adults *Continues crackdown on dangerous independent living facilities*

San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott announced today that her Office has filed criminal charges against an independent living facility operator for willful cruelty of a dependent adult, theft, and other crimes.

Long T. Tran, who operates three independent living facilities in San Diego, faces 23 criminal charges that include:

- abuse of a dependent adult causing injury
- abuse of a dependent adult by theft/embezzlement
- defying a court order barring the defendant from operating unlicensed community care facilities by placing and retaining dependent adults and elders who require care or supervision

On June 17, 2020, paramedics found a 41-year old paraplegic at Tran's Bay Terraces independent living facility (ILF) at 6435 Jougland 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 victim's urinary catheter, which the victim later told hospital staff had not been changed in three weeks. His catheter bag was completely full. His medical records show he was in severe pain (10 on a scale of 10, with 10 being the most extreme) for several days.

The following week, on June 25, another resident of Tran's facility was hospitalized with seizures. Despite confirming to licensing authorities on June 30th that the resident would not return to Tran's ILF, Tran cashed the resident's July rent check a week later, stealing \$800 in Social Security Disability benefits.

"This blatant disregard for human suffering is incomprehensible, especially during a pandemic," San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"Rescuing these victims and holding accountable the people who profit from abusing and exploiting our most vulnerable citizens is precisely why we've prioritized cracking down on dangerous independent living facilities."**

ILFs are not licensed, inspected, or regulated by the state, unlike facilities that provide care and supervision, such as nursing homes. Investigators in the City Attorney's Office built the criminal case by conducting extensive site visits despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tran is accused of removing the first victim from a licensed nursing home on June 4, 2020 and transporting him to his Jougland Street ILF, claiming that Tran's relative would serve as a full-time caretaker. Tran later admitted that this relative was abusing crystal methamphetamine.

Tran should never have been supervising either of his victims. In 2015, California Attorney General Kamala Harris sued Tran for multiple violations at a chain of care facilities he ran in San Diego County from 2008-2015. This action resulted in an injunction banning Tran from operating group-living facilities for elders and dependent adults who require care or supervision, which both of Tran's victims did.

Despite that ban, at least nine residents at Jougard Street needed care and supervision for routine activities, including transfers in and out of bed, bathing, medication management, and financial management. Ignoring the needs of the residents, Tran moved them into ILFs so he could receive "referral fees."

Additionally, Tran was found to be illegally operating another unlicensed care facility at 5283 Redwood Street in Oak Park, that housed a disabled veteran who used a wheelchair and required daily assistance with eating, bathing, and dressing.

The City Attorney's complaint was filed on behalf of the People of the State of California by the Independent Living Facilities Vulnerable Victim Program team in the Criminal and Community Justice Division of the San Diego City Attorney's Office.

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott has prioritized addressing substandard living conditions for San Diego's most vulnerable residents, many of whom are elderly or disabled. In 2018, Elliott's Office launched a concerted crackdown on group living facilities where victims are often denied their basic dignity, deprived of basic necessities, and exposed to filth, vermin, and bedbugs. Residents 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. Where the operators of these facilities abuse vulnerable victims and unlawfully operate without required licensing and supervision, the City Attorney has created a dedicated prosecution team, the ILF Vulnerable Victim Program, to bring these predatory perpetrators to justice.

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