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December 12, 2016

Mr. Paul Dubé  
Ontario Ombudsman  
483 Bay Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON  
M5G 2C9

Dear Mr. Dubé,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups, which is the representative group of injured workers across the province. The workers who we represent have been mistreated and abandoned by a WSIB that is more interested in its own bottom line than in caring for injured workers. Many of us have suffered serious, long-term injuries that require ongoing support. We are the very people the compensation system was designed to protect.

Unfortunately, the WSIB sees us not as human beings who need healthcare, rehabilitation, and income security, but rather as costs and liabilities that need to be managed and minimized.

In the past year, at least two systemic complaints have been submitted to you, asking for you to undertake investigations into the Board's unfair practices and policies. To date, both of these complaints have gone unanswered.

The first one, entitled *Prescription Overruled*, gets at the heart of how injured workers – particularly those with more serious and complex injuries – are being mistreated. When our doctors are systematically ignored, then the WSIB can justify any rejection or denial. If this is allowed to continue with impunity, then the integrity of the system itself should be called into question.

We know that dozens of injured workers contacted your office to share their stories about how their doctors were ignored. You may not be aware that it is very difficult for many injured workers to tell their stories with others, as it is often painful for them to share what they have lived through. In this instance, we did not share our stories with you as a mere formality, or so that they could be filed away on a shelf. We shared our stories because they are direct evidence of a systemic problem that needs immediate action. We shared our stories because we need change, and we are calling on you to help make that change happen.

The same question goes for the second complaint, about chronic mental stress in the workplace. The legislation and policy around chronic mental stress has been found to be contrary to the

Charter of Rights & Freedoms. This means the government and WSIB are violating our Charter rights. And yet nobody is doing anything about it.

These are not trivial matters. People's lives and livelihoods are at stake. Many injured workers have lost everything – family, friends, income, physical and mental health – because of the systemic problems we have brought to your office.

We are aware of your mandate as the provincial watchdog to investigate systemic issues that result in the mistreatment of Ontarians, and we believe strongly in this mandate. We need you to step in and stand up for those of us who are being abused by a callous system. We need you to launch an investigation into these matters. If you cannot do this at the moment, then we would ask you to explain to us what more you need in order to make a decision.

Sincerely,

Willy Noiles  
President, Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups