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DIX COMMENTS ON RETIREMENT CONCEPTS' CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

VANCOUVER—Last night at a gala awards presentation, Ernst & Young awarded Retirement Concepts an Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the category of Business-to-Consumer Products and Services. New Democrat Health Critic Adrian Dix offered the following comment in response to that award:

"It is unfortunate that Retirement Concepts, operator of a seniors care home at the centre of allegations of elder neglect and abuse, has received a customer service award," said Dix.

"Clearly, the awards panel was unaware of the years of alleged neglect that took place at facilities such as Beacon Hill Villa. They didn't have the information they needed to make an informed decision, because that information wasn't made public.

"That mistake will probably cause some embarrassment to Ernst and Young and the prestigious award it presented. But think about what that the lack of information means for seniors and their families looking at long-term care options for their loved ones. These are important life decisions, more important than any award presentation, and British Columbians deserve transparency in the operation of largely publicly-funded care homes."

"Instead, the B.C. Liberal government has failed to provide accountability or support to seniors. In addition, they have lowered care standards through legislation such as Bill 29. It was Bill 29 that has allowed Retirement Concepts on three occasions to lay off all of its care staff at Nanaimo Seniors' Village."

Dix pointed out that a Retirement Concepts facility in Victoria was recently taken over by an administrator of Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) after the Opposition revealed allegations of neglect and abuse of patients.

Concerns have been raised at facilities operated by Retirement Concepts in Williams Lake and Nanaimo.