

Media Release

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Judge's decision clears the way for SARS lawsuit on behalf of Ontario registered nurses

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TORONTO – Ontario nurses are hailing a judge's decision today that grants the family of registered nurse Tecla Lin the right to sue the province of Ontario for negligence in her death from SARS.

The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) is suing the Ontario government on behalf of the Lin family and 52 other nurses for negligence in the handling of the SARS outbreak, arguing officials failed to provide adequate and timely information alerting nurses on how to protect themselves.

Lin, 58, an ONA member who worked at West Park Hospital and the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, died in July 2003.

"Today's decision means we can proceed in our own lawsuit on behalf of our members who were affected during the SARS tragedy," said ONA President Linda Haslam-Stroud, RN.

"The Ontario government must be held accountable for failing to protect the lives of its citizens and registered nurses caring for patients on the front-lines. They are the ones that hold this health care system together. If they fall, the system is in danger of collapsing, as we saw during the SARS outbreak."

ONA is the union representing 51,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals working in hospitals, long-term care facilities, public health, community health agencies and industry across Ontario.

Also affected by the concurrent decision of Superior Court Justice Cullity is the family of another nurse who died from SARS, Nelia Laroza. The Laroza family has launched a separate lawsuit, also alleging negligence by the Ontario government. Laroza, 51, also an ONA member, worked at North York General Hospital. She died in June 2003.

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