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# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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## Press Release

### Caregiver pleads guilty to felony In 2009 group home death

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The former caregiver indicted in the death of a mentally disabled woman under her supervision in a Milton group home pled guilty to felony Permitting Bodily Injury to a Disabled Person today (July 23, 2014) in Norfolk Superior Court.

Judge Kenneth J. Fishman sentenced Annie Kwankam, age 59, formerly of Brockton, to 5 years supervised probation, including the following conditions: (1) she shall have no direct care responsibilities for, or direct care contact with, any patient or resident of any organization or agency, including any facility or entity that provides services or care to individuals, whether she volunteers for or is employed by it; (2) she shall notify the probation department of any change or anticipated change in her employment; and (3) she shall report as direct by the probation department.

Kwankam was indicted by a Norfolk County Grand Jury in the September 7, 2009 death of Lauren Wolf, age 56, at a facility operated by the Vinfen Corporation and funded by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health in Milton.

No autopsy was performed on Lauren Wolf after her death. The District Attorney's Office was not informed of her September 7, 2009 death until the following month, substantially limiting the evidence available to the medical examiner assigned to review the death and to detectives conducting the investigation.

"This was indicted as a manslaughter in July of 2012. At the time we presented this case to the grand jury, the medical examiner assigned to review the evidence had opined that the cause of Lauren Wolf's death was choking on a piece of her steak dinner while Kwankam stood by and did nothing to assist her," said District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey.

That medical examiner passed away in 2012. A new medical examiner assigned to the case conducted an independent review of the evidence provided to the grand jury, and all of the evidence developed since that time, and was not prepared to confirm the assertion of choking – ruling the cause of death "undetermined."

"The change in available evidence certainly impacted the strength of the manslaughter case where a jury would have been asked to find guilt beyond a reasonable doubt," District Attorney Morrissey said.

As part of the agreed plea the manslaughter charge was withdrawn. "We recognize that securing a felony conviction, and conditions of probation barring Kwankam from providing care for the vulnerable, are important for the safety of the public," District Attorney Morrissey said. "It is not the outcome we envisioned at the indictment stage."

Release on indictment available here:

[Manslaughter indictment for 2009 death in Milton mental health residence](#)