

**Summer Communications Strategy
Department of Health and Community Services**

Public Environment

After remaining fairly low on the radar in terms of provincial issues, health care has recently resurfaced as an area of high public interest in light of recent health care issues, namely Estrogen/Progesterone breast cancer testing (ER/PR) and the suspension of radiologists in Burin and Gander, and going reviews of radiology reports. The result appears to be some loss of confidence in the health care system and, in particular, in Eastern Health.

With respect to ER/PR, there is an ongoing Judicial Commission of Inquiry into ER/PR being undertaken by Justice Margaret Cameron, scheduled to conclude in July 2008. At the same time, an Access to Information request by the media is scheduled to be released next week which requests briefing notes provided to the current and previous two health ministers. Additionally, a class action suit will go forward in the coming weeks, representing a number of women affected by ER/PR testing. All of these issues will no doubt keep this issue in the public domain in the coming months.

Target Audiences/Key Stakeholders

- Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly those in rural communities
- Regional Health Authorities
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association
- Health care professionals –NLMA, AAHP, ARNNL, NLASW
- Canadian Cancer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Seniors, and those interested in seniors issues
- Unions – CUPE, NAPE
- Professional Associations – Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers, etc.
- General public
- MHAs
- Media
- Opposition

Key Messages:

- Government is committed to improving health and community-based services through strategic investments in health care infrastructure, public health and wellness, and supports to care for residents in their communities.
- We have assessed health care priorities in all regions of the province and have made strategic decisions within our available resources to best meet the health needs of all people throughout the province.
- We have increased the overall budget for health care in each of the last three budgets, with a current budget of \$2.2 billion.
- We are committed to responding to the health care needs of the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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