

**From:** Tansy Mundon  
**To:** ross wiseman, john abbott, moira hennessey, sharon vokey, elizabeth matthews, josephine  
cheeseman, rthompson@gov.nl.ca, brian crawley, don burrage  
**Date:** Sat, May 19, 2007 11:46 AM  
**Subject:** GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing  
Government briefed about concerns as early as two years ago  
STEPHANIE PORTER

Special to the Globe and Mail

May 19, 2007

ST. JOHN'S -- Responding to mounting pressure to explain years of faulty breast cancer testing and incomplete information disclosure, Newfoundland and Labrador's Health Minister says he will announce the details and scope of a review by next week.

That comes on the heels of an apology made earlier in the day by the head of the regional health authority, who took "full responsibility" for not making public the complete results of a review that showed 317 patients had received incorrect test results - information that may have prevented them from receiving potentially life-saving hormone therapy, though no link has been proven.

"I apologize for the confusion that has ensued over this issue," said George Tilley, president and CEO of the Eastern Health Authority. "It's great to be a Monday-morning quarterback now ... But I confess to you that I regret we didn't do that and I apologize for that."

Mr. Tilley also said Eastern Health had briefed three different provincial health ministers, the first as early as June, 2005, that there were concerns over the testing. As the results of the review came in, government had been briefed. By last November, they were in possession of all the information.

But the full story began emerging only this week, thanks to affidavits filed in a potential class-action lawsuit against the health authority and brought to light by the news media.

Health Minister Ross Wiseman said he, too, regrets not releasing the information earlier.

"When you get half-answers, you speculate on what the rest of the answers might be, and that fuels unnecessary anxiety," he said in an interview last night. "[We are] now getting some advice on how we will frame such a review and what form it will take.

"We will be making some decisions in the next few days."

Both opposition parties, pushed by vigorous news coverage and calls from concerned members of the public, are calling for nothing less than a full judicial inquiry - as soon as possible.

"We're talking life and safety issues where [up to] 100 people may have died," Liberal justice critic Kelvin Parsons said. "And we have a case of disclosure: what was disclosed, when it was disclosed, to whom it was disclosed or if it ever was disclosed is the major issue ... You can't just leave this sort of thing sitting."

NDP Leader Lorraine Michael said an inquiry is the only way to offer any peace to affected patients and families and "set benchmarks to see whether or not .. we really have a top-notch lab."

Ms. Michael, like many members of the public, only found out through debate in the legislature this week that dozens of patients in the original retesting group are now dead. She called the news a body blow, adding, "It really makes you wonder what else they're not telling."

**From:** Ross Wiseman  
**To:** Tansy Mundon  
**Date:** 5/19/2007 12:17:51 PM  
**Subject:** Re: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

Thank you

Sent via Blackberry  
 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Tansy Mundon  
**To:** Ross Wiseman <RossWiseman@gov.nl.ca>  
**Creation Date:** 5/19 12:16 pm  
**Subject:** Re: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

I would leave it. if she calls to do a follow up story we can correct her last "misinterpretation" of what you said

Sent via Blackberry  
 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ross Wiseman  
**To:** Tansy Mundon <TansyMundon@gov.nl.ca>  
**Creation Date:** 5/19 12:14 pm  
**Subject:** Re: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

What do you think? The comment is not quote but rather her interpretation plus if we call will it prompt the direct question of if I do regret

Sent via Blackberry  
 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Tansy Mundon  
**To:** Ross Wiseman <RossWiseman@gov.nl.ca>  
**Creation Date:** 5/19 12:08 pm  
**Subject:** Re: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

Do you want me to contact her?

Sent via Blackberry  
 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Ross Wiseman  
**To:** Tansy Mundon <TansyMundon@gov.nl.ca>  
**Creation Date:** 5/19 12:05 pm  
**Subject:** Re: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

The part about how I too regret is not accurate. In response to a question on if govt shoulders any

responsibility I indicated. Govt gives responsibility to the the authorities and take guidance from their advice but ultimately govt is responsible for the health system. In response to another question I did indicate that yes I agree all the info should have been released in Dec. However, all patients who had results changed were contacted

Sent via Blackberry  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

-----Original Message-----

From: Tansy Mundon  
To: Brian Crawley <BrianCrawley@gov.nl.ca>  
Elizabeth Matthews <ElizabethMatthews@gov.nl.ca>  
Josephine Cheeseman <JosephineCheeseman@gov.nl.ca>  
Robert Thompson <RThompson@gov.nl.ca>  
John Abbott <JohnAbbott@gov.nl.ca>  
Moir Hennessey <MHennessey@gov.nl.ca>  
Ross Wiseman <RossWiseman@gov.nl.ca>  
Sharon Vokey <SharonVokey@gov.nl.ca>  
Don Burrage <donburrage@gov.nl.ca>  
Creation Date: 5/19 11:46 am  
Subject: GLOBE story - Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing

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Ms. Michael, like many members of the public, only found out through debate in the legislature this week that dozens of patients in the original retesting group are now dead. She called the news a body blow, adding, "It really makes you wonder what else they're not telling."

At the heart of the story are the outcomes of seven years of estrogen and progesterone receptor testing, done at the laboratory at the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's, starting in 1997.

The tests, conducted on tissue samples from breast-cancer tumours, guide oncologists in determining the best therapy for the patient. A positive test result means the patient may respond to hormone therapies, such as the drug Tamoxifen. A negative test result means hormone therapy is not an option.

Mr. Tilley would "welcome" a judicial inquiry, acknowledging "there are so many concerns that people have raised, and I think it would clear the air." In the meantime, he said, hormone testing, halted in early 2005, resumed at the St. John's Health Sciences Centre on Feb. 1 of this year.

In an effort to allay lingering fears of current breast cancer patients, said Nash Denic, clinical chief of Eastern Health's Laboratory Medicine Program, many improvements to the system have been made, including a new automated system for part of the lengthy test procedure. Internal and external reviews have been completed, and all recommendations acted upon.

There are also fewer people involved, province-wide. Although the testing always took place in St. John's, pathologists at hospitals across the province interpreted results. Now, two pathologists in the central hospital have been dedicated to breast cancer diagnostics and reading the hormone test.

"We think we would have picked up on the issue ... if there is a smaller group monitoring the results and testings," Dr. Denic said.

Since February, a random 30 per cent of breast tissue samples have been sent to Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital for retesting. According to Dr. Denic, so far the hospital posts a 100 per cent concurrence rate.

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**From:** Ross Wiseman  
**To:** Tansy Mundon  
**Date:** Sat, May 19, 2007 12:51 pm  
**Subject:** Re: Media coverage - ER/PR

Thank you

Sent via Blackberry  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

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From: Tansy Mundon  
To: Brian Crawley <BrianCrawley@gov.nl.ca>  
Elizabeth Matthews <ElizabethMatthews@gov.nl.ca>  
Josephine Cheeseman <JosephineCheeseman@gov.nl.ca>  
Robert Thompson <RThompson@gov.nl.ca>  
John Abbott <JohnAbbott@gov.nl.ca>  
Karen Stone <KarenS@gov.nl.ca>  
Moir Hennessey <MHennessey@gov.nl.ca>  
Ross Wiseman <RossWiseman@gov.nl.ca>  
Don Burrage <donburrage@gov.nl.ca>  
Creation Date: 5/19 12:35 pm  
Subject: Media coverage - ER/PR

I've reviewed all media coverage since 12:30 pm yesterday when Eastern Health held a briefing for media. All media outlets covered the issue, including a live hit on CBC Newsworld. The focus of most of the articles was on Eastern Health's apology, acceptance by EH of the need to release information sooner, questions around the number of deaths and anxiety of patients due to information not being released sooner, and reference to Government's commitment to undertake a review of what happened. Most articles also referenced quality assurance practices in the lab.

However, two articles in particular - CBC TV's article by Chris O'Neill-Yates last evening and Globe and Mail article today by Stephanie Porter - had a different focus. Both articles focused more on Government - who knew what and when, and why information not disclosed by Government - and reference how opposition is calling for a judicial review. Chris O'Neill-Yates article, in particular, questions why government didn't investigate months ago when it found it just how many of those breast cancer tests were wrong, and defines what she thinks any review should address: "Any investigation the province does will have to answer several questions. Who knew what and when and why wasn't the public informed sooner?"

I have emailed most of the transcripts to you directly and will provide a package of articles on Tuesday morning. In the meantime, I will continue to monitor coverage over the weekend. In the meantime, I've pasted headlines below.

Tansy

Media Coverage — ER/PR

Canadian Press, Friday, May 18, 2007  
Health authority apologizes for cancer-test confusion

CBC - Newsworld, Friday, May 18, 2007 12:30PM Item # 01- Live coverage  
NEWS CONFERENCE: Right now we want to take you live to St. John's Newfoundland.



CBC Radio St. John's, Friday, May 18, 2007 05:01PM Item # 06  
EASTERN HEALTH HOLDS NEWS CONFERENCE TO APOLOGIZE

CBC Radio St. John's, Friday, May 18, 2007 05:02PM Item # 07  
WILLIAMS DOES DAMAGE CONTROL ON INACCURATE TESTS: Premier Danny Williams is doing some damage control of his own today.

CBC - TV News, Fri, 18 May 2007 06:00PM Item # 01  
TILLEY APOLOGIZES TO BREAST CANCER PATIENTS AND FAMILIES: The head of Eastern Health apologized today for inaccurate breast cancer testing.

CBC - TV News, Friday, May 18, 2007 06:03PM Item # 02  
POLITICIANS KNEW ABOUT PROBLEM MONTHS AGO: Chris O'Neill-Yates has found out when the politicians found out about the problem.

CBC - TV News, Friday, May 18, 2007 06:23PM Item # 17  
HUDSON REACTS TO EASTERN HEALTH APOLOGY: Jonathon spoke with Cancer Patient Juanita Hudson with the latest apology by Eastern Health and her experience with the hormone receptor tests.

CBC - TV News, Friday, May 18, 2007 06:32PM Item # 18  
TILLEY EXPLAINS APOLOGY: "George Tilley" is president and CEO of Eastern Health and he joins Debbie to discuss the organization's apology today.

CBC Radio St. John's, Friday, May 18, 2007 05:19PM Item # 08  
TILLEY APOLOGIZES ON BEHALF OF EASTERN HEALTH: "George Tilley", the CEO of Eastern Health apologized today for the way his organization handled the information about incurrent hormone receptor tests.

VOCM Radio St. John's, Friday, May 18, 2007 01:33PM Item # 02  
THE VOICE: Should Eastern Health compensate women or their survivors impacted by the breast CANCER screening controversy.

VOCM Back Talk - Host Preamble, Friday, May 18, 2007 02:07PM Item # 03  
EASTERN HEALTH NEWS CONFERENCE: Host Preamble- There was an Eastern Health press conference on TV today

VOCM Radio Back Talk St. John's, Friday, May 18, 2007 02:19PM Item # 09  
HORMONE RECEPTOR TEST ISSUE: "Lorraine" is calling comment on the hormone receptor tests with women with breast CANCER

NTV - Evening News, Friday, May 18, 2007 06:01PM Item # 02  
TILLEY SHOWS REGRET: The president and CEO of Eastern Health apologized today and said he regrets the decision not to disclose the total number of breast cancer patients affected by a flawed hormone test.

NTV - Evening News, Friday, May 18, 2007 06:32PM Item # 15  
TILLEY IN NTV STUDIOS: The head of Eastern Health, George Tilley, was in the NTV studios today.

Globe and Mail, May 19, 2007  
Newfoundland to review faulty cancer testing- Government briefed about concerns as early as two years ago

The Telegram, Editorial, May 19, 2007  
Put people first

**From:** Tansy Mundon  
**To:** Ross Wiseman, John Abbott, Moira Hennessey, Elizabeth Matthews, Josephine Cheeseman, Brian Crawley, rthompson@gov.nl.ca, Don Burrage, Karen Stone  
**Date:** Sat, May 19, 2007 12:36 PM  
**Subject:** Media coverage - ER/PR

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