



Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

Return to 2005 News Releases

## News Release

### Office of the Official Opposition

#### **Opposition pleased government agrees to call for judicial inquiry**

May 22, 2007

Kelvin Parsons, MHA for the District of Burgeo-LaPoile and Opposition Critic for Justice, says a judicial inquiry announced today by government into the flawed breast cancer screening results was an inevitable move, but one that came after much pressure from the Opposition and the general public.

Government revealed that it would undertake a Judicial Commission of Inquiry on testing results for breast cancer patients in the province. Cabinet will appoint a commission, establish the terms of reference and allocate the funding to carry out this examination. The Opposition had strongly challenged the government for three days last week on the action and inactions of the Eastern Health Authority as well as the department of Health and Community Services relating to this entire affair, including calling for a judicial probe to uncover what went wrong and why information was withheld.

"I am pleased that the government relented on this issue and that this process will move towards what will hopefully be complete disclosure of all the facts and time lines associated with this travesty," says Parsons. "If it were not for affidavits filed in court cases from the media and pressure from the Opposition and the general public, I fear government would have tried to sweep this under the rug."

The Minister of Health Ross Wiseman was also grilled today in the Legislature by the Opposition House Leader on the conflict of interest aspect of being part of a cabinet process setting out the terms of reference. Parsons pointed out that moments after the minister failed to commit to excluding himself and his colleagues, the former ministers of Health, from cabinet on this issue, Minister Wiseman indicated in a media scrum following Question Period that he had no difficulty in doing just that.

"Again, the government has crumbled and now agrees to what they realize is a

prudent and appropriate move. Progress on this matter should be unbiased and not hampered by a conflict of interest involving those three ministers. This is also the same minister who placed litigation risks ahead of disclosing critical health information to the patients and to public.

"This judicial inquiry is not only a monumental move to help restore confidence in the health care system, but will hopefully bring some degree of emotional healing to those directly affected by this break-down in our health care system. Parsons also reiterated why there is a need for an effective Opposition in the House of Assembly. " This government has shown itself not to be open and accountable and only when their feet are held to the fire do they crumble and do the right thing."

**Media Contact:**  
Kim Ploughman  
Caucus Communications  
Office of the Official Opposition  
709-729-6427