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Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2007 5:02 PM
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Subject: Fw: Fwd: Litigation more of a concern for government thanpatients* health, charges
Opposition
Attachments: Fwd: Litigation more of a concern for government thanpatients* health, charges Opposition



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Litigation more of a concern for government than patients' health, charges Opposition

Dwight Ball, MHA for the District of Humber Valley and Opposition Critic for Health and Community Services, says the minister's admission that his department placed litigation concerns before patients health, already compromised by faulty testing, is regrettable and unacceptable.

The Minister of Health and Community Services was questioned by Ball in the House of Assembly on the significantly high rate of error that has occurred in test results for a hormone receptor that would identify the course of treatment for breast cancer patients. It was exposed that close to 50 per cent of those testing positive for this disease had been provided false information that prevented them from receiving the appropriate life-saving treatment. In a media scrum following Question Period, the minister further revealed that government knew for months the high numbers of women affected, but was advised not to reveal them because of litigation risks. Of the close to 1000 women who were retested, 317 were given wrong results, with 117 of these requiring alternate treatment.

"I find it a very unfortunate that the minister of health would be more concerned about litigation than he would be about the health concerns of patients," says Ball. "It certainly raises concerns about this government's commitment to openness and accountability and to the patients who are facing these health concerns.

"We as an Opposition have always challenged this government's so-called commitment to openness and accountability. If this government is willing to conceal this sort of critical information from the public, it begs the question as to what type of other information is being cloaked and hidden by this administration.

"As it stands now, this testing tragedy has been further marred by the reprehensible actions of this government. Not only have individuals and families had their lives compromised and disrupted by this faulty testing scandal and the level of public trust in the health care jeopardized, confidence in this government's moral accountability to public health and safety may have reached an all-time low."

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