

**Joyce Penney**

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**From:** George Tilley  
**Sent:** Friday, May 25, 2007 3:18 PM  
**To:** Alice Collins (alicec@mun.ca); Barb Roebathan (broebath@morgan.ucs.mun.ca); Charlotte Fitzpatrick (cftzptrck@hotmail.com); David Duffett (Business Fax); David Hiscock (davidh@personainternet.com); Earl Elliott (midway.elliott@nf.sympatico.ca); Ed Drover (Ed.Drover@freedom55financial.com); Frank Davis (fdavis@nfd.net); George Tilley (george.tilley@easternhealth.ca); Hubert McGrath (h-r.mcgrath@nf.sympatico.ca); Joan Dawe (jddawe@nf.sympatico.ca); Joyce Penney (joyce.penney@easternhealth.ca); Lewis Cole (pearl.lew@nf.sympatico.ca); Majorie Gibbons (marjorie.gibbons@nf.sympatico.ca); Paul Colbert (pcolbert63@hotmail.com); Primrose Bishop (primrose.bishop@nf.sympatico.ca); Regina Bailey (rbailey@persona.ca); Rowena Bryans (rbryans@persona.ca); Wayne Bolt (waynebolt@nf.sympatico.ca); William Boyd (wboyd@wob.nf.ca)  
**Cc:** Executive Team Eastern Health May 2005; Susan Bonnell  
**Subject:** FW: Scanned image from AR-M550N  
**Attachments:** AR-M550N\_20070525\_145917.pdf



AR-M550N\_200705  
 25\_145917.pdf (...)

Trustees;

Further to our conversation at the Board meeting this week, I am attaching a letter to the Editor of the Globe and Mail that was sent today in response to the story in yesterday's edition. I apologize for not getting it to you for input, but Government wanted to see it before it was sent and we had a tight deadline to send it off.

We hope that it is seen by those who read the original article and certainly by the author.

Susan Bonnell, the Director of Corporate Communications Department is assessing other opportunities to get out there, being sensitive to the situation at hand.

George

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

**From:** corp-team@noreply.easternhealth.ca [mailto:corp-team@noreply.easternhealth.ca]  
**Sent:** May 25, 2007 2:59 PM  
**To:** George Tilley

Subject: Scanned image from AR-M550N

DEVICE NAME:  
DEVICE MODEL: SHARP AR-M550N  
LOCATION:

FILE FORMAT: PDF MMR(G4)  
RESOLUTION: 300dpi x 300dpi

Attached file is scanned image in PDF format.  
This file can be read by Adobe Acrobat Reader.  
The reader can be downloaded from the following URL:

<http://www.adobe.com/>



# Eastern Health

May 25, 2007

Dear Editor:

I read with dismay Andre Picard's "Patients suffer when labs get it wrong" and feel compelled to correct a number of key points in this column.

Mr. Picard jumps to numerous erroneous conclusions, including assigning an error rate for estrogen-receptor testing for an eight year period, but the most concerning point to me is his assertion that we told breast cancer patients and the public nothing. This is not accurate.

A core team of health care providers were brought together to make personal contact with every single patient whose original tissue we were sending to Mount Sinai for estrogen receptor retesting. We also did numerous media interviews and posted information on our website and placed advertisements in the local newspapers. Furthermore as the test results were returning to us we made sure that every individual had their personal information, whether there was a change from their original test result or not.

All patients who saw a change from the original test result were reviewed by an expert panel including oncologists, surgeons and pathologists. From their review 117 of the patients whose results had changed were recommended for a treatment change. In December 2006 when we released this information publicly we spoke to this figure. There was never any deliberate attempt to hide the results of the review. We chose to focus on what we believed to be the most critical piece of information.

When legal action was initiated, it was not unexpected by me or any of the professionals closely involved in this process. Clearly we have to be accountable for our efforts. Patients and their families have every right to take such action. We respect the judicial system and we have acted in keeping with that, allowing the legal matters to be tried fairly in a court of law and not in media.

I would agree with Mr. Picard when he says that the general public places great faith in laboratory testing. Although I am not a pathologist, one thing I have learned in last two years is that the science of this test – immunohistochemistry – is an evolving field with new advancements and understanding every year.

Eastern Health believes in and practices full patient disclosure practices. And we are committed to the cause of patient safety. In 2005 when we first became aware of a potential problem with ER-PR, we immediately began a review of the situation, we suspended our own service, we sought an external laboratory service on an interim basis and we made what I consider to be a very bold decision namely to repeat these tests for patients going back as far as 1997 and advise the patients of what we were doing.

The reason why we undertook such an extensive review was that we believed that if even one patient could benefit from such a decision, we wanted to ensure that every patient had that opportunity.

And the very fact that we have done this retrospective, despite the anticipated reaction that would follow – something that, to my knowledge no other organization in the country has done – speaks to how far we are prepared to go in supporting our commitment to providing the best care possible to our patients.

George Tilley  
President and CEO  
Eastern Health