

Oscar Howell

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Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2007 5:00 PM
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Cc: Executive Team Eastern Health May 2005
Subject: Continued ER/PR issues

Trustees;

In the House of Assembly yesterday the Premier released an internal memo (dated June 2003) to the media, from the pathologist who was overseeing our histochemistry lab to the Director of our Laboratory Medicine, in which the pathologist raised his concerns about ER/PR testing in 2003, two years prior to the time that a decision was made to retest. The existence of the memo was not made known to Bob Williams until the summer of 2005 (when we were discussing retesting) and of course Bob would have informed me after that.

CBC sought our response. We did a technical for the CBC media prior to a subsequent interview with Nash Denic and I this afternoon. At the technical briefing there were Oscar Howell, Nash Denic, current Clinical Chief of Laboratory Medicine, Don Cook, past Clinical Chief of Laboratory Medicine, myself and several CBC reporters.

The points that were made include:

- the 2003 memo was dealt with as a part of the ongoing lab quality control program;
- the issues of concern related to the staining component though the pathologist did use language that was critical of the service;
- the actual follow up measures at the time were operational in nature and included:
 - pulling the technologists together at a central location, ceasing the rotation of the technologists involved in this test to have them perform other related functions and finally bringing in a new piece of technology into the organization to further automate the process;
- other correspondence was shared with the media which showed that the issues were dealt with in a timely fashion and to the satisfaction of the pathologist, he subsequently stayed with us until 2006;

The questions of the media were many including:

- why was something not done about this in 2003. The answer was that the focus at that time was about tissue staining and there was no indication of a results concern, unlike in 2005 when there was an index case involving changed results which precipitated the review and subsequent retesting. We told them that the concerns and the memo were not shared at that time beyond the lab and the Surgical Pathology Review Committee (which consisted of pathologists, surgeons, and oncologists) a quality oversight committee.

They asked as to why it was not shared with Administration at the time, we responded that it would not come to our attention unless there were specific recommendations flowing from it. They also asked about why we didn't share that last week during the press conference and all I could say was that the press conference was about bringing clarity to the confusion as to why accumulated information from our subsequent retesting and not about the ongoing quality process in the lab.

It has been a discouraging day to say the least. The opposition party raised the question in the House today about whether I should stay on. I don't know how that question was

responded to in the House. The media asked me about it and I said this is a time for strong leadership and I needed to lead the organization through good times and difficult times.

In follow up to the request of the Board for us to strategize around seeking to clear up some of the confusion that has surrounded this, our Communications Director, Susan Bonnell met with Bristol Communications today. They are currently working on the content of an ad for this weekend's paper. Time is going to pre-empt the ability to give the Board an opportunity to provide input since it will need to go tomorrow. I apologize for that. I went on the basis that you would want us to get this out there asap. They are working on an overall strategy involving other short and long term measures.

George

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