

**Susan Bonnell**

---

**From:** Susan Bonnell  
**Sent:** Friday, January 04, 2008 4:16 PM  
**To:** 'Cathy Dornan'  
**Subject:** FW: Should this go onthe website?

Opinion?

VOCM Backtalk very neg – Louise is part of a big coverup. Etc. Simms said to one caller “Glad to see you are on my side.”

**Susan Bonnell**

*Director, Strategic Communications*  
709-777-1426 (1338)

---

**From:** Susan Bonnell  
**Sent:** Friday, January 04, 2008 4:14 PM  
**To:** Pat Pilgrim  
**Subject:** Should this go onthe website?

**A Message to the Public**  
**January 4, 2008**

Eastern Health has been asked by the Commission of Inquiry into Hormone Receptor Testing make public two peer review reports prepared in 2006 on laboratory services at the Health Centre.

These reports were prepared to assist the organization in ensuring that the laboratory's immunohistochemistry service – which conducts estrogen and progesterone receptor (ERPR) is providing top quality service to the province.

For the last fifteen years in Newfoundland and Labrador, peer reviews have been protected by Evidence Act. This means that all peer reviews and the opinions expressed in them are from disclosure in any court of law, including public inquiries.

In 2006, the province introduced new legislation – the Public Inquiries Act – which states that inquiries override all other existing legislation. However, it also indicates that where there is a between existing legislation and this new legislation, groups have the right to ask the Supreme for a ruling to settle any conflicts. This is why Eastern Health has petitioned the Supreme Court ruling on whether or not peer reviews will continue to be protected from public disclosure.

Eastern Health is supported in this by the other health organizations in the province as well as doctors, nurses and other professionals who rely on peer review in their everyday practice.

**What is Peer Review?**

When an unexpected incident happens in the health care system, professionals ask, "Are we providing the best possible care, or are there ways we can improve the service we provide?"

One way that professionals can determine whether or not we are meeting and exceeding is through peer review. Basically, professionals ask their peers – individuals not involved in the specific case and with recognized expertise in the area – to review how they handled a the processes and procedures used to provide the service.

These experts take an independent look at the situation, talk with the professionals involved, make recommendations based on their expert opinions.

**What is the Value of Peer Review?**

Peer review is extremely important to the health care system, not only here in this province but nationally and internationally as well.

During a peer review professionals feel free to come forward and express their opinions and criticisms openly with the priority on improving the system, not finding individual fault or responsibility.

**Eastern Health and the Commission of Inquiry**

Eastern Health welcomes the Commission of Inquiry as is participating fully in all requests of Commission. We have provided Commission's Counsel with all our documents related to testing and retesting. They have also spoken with all the staff and physicians that they have speak with in preparation for the public portion of the inquiry.

We have also provided the lawyers working with the Commission copies of both peer reviews their perusal. We have nothing to hide from the Commissioner and her officials and are holding nothing back from them.

The Commissioner has asked to make the peer reviews public.

The reviews were conducted with the understanding that they would be protected under the Evidence Act. In fact, the Evidence Act also protects the identity of the reviewers and their recommendations. However, we have asked the reviewers to allow us firstly to release the publicly, which we originally did in 2006, and secondly to release their names and credentials, they have also granted us permission to do.

We have nothing to hide from the public or from the Commissioner on the issue of ERPR.

The reason why we are petitioning the Supreme Court on whether or not the peer reviews can made public is simply to determine whether or not the courts will uphold the protection of peer review, as outlined in the Evidence Act.

Whatever the courts decide, we will abide by it.