



## Eastern Health

Eastern Health originally began a review of all ER/PR receptor tests conducted by our laboratory since 1997 when we discovered inconsistencies in a small number of results.

Our first priority was and continues to be to our patients.

More than 900 test samples were sent to Mount Sinai Laboratory. Collecting, sending, retesting and reviewing all these test samples has been an extensive process, but most tests have been reviewed and most patients have been notified. In the majority of cases the patient's treatment was confirmed appropriate.

As part of the review we have identified a small number of cases that require further follow-up. We are in the process of reviewing and addressing each of these cases individually.

Eastern Health is committed to disclosure and our clinical team members have communicated individually with all patients impacted by this review. However, patient confidentiality is an important principle in health care, not only in this province but across the country, so we do not discuss the details of individual cases publicly.

As to the statements of claim filed against the organization, every individual has the right to take whatever action they deem appropriate and we must allow the legal system to address the legal issues.

As a health care provider, we will stay focused on ensuring that our patients have every treatment opportunity that may be available to them and on addressing the systems issues that arise.

Eastern Health would like to assure the public that we take these matters seriously, that we have a team of clinical and administrative people working on this issue, and that we are dedicated to improving the system, learning from our experiences and ensuring quality care.

George Tilley  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Eastern Health

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### **Newfoundland Cancer Patient**

For many Canadians, a diagnosis of cancer is just the beginning of a fraught medical journey. Sometimes surgery is involved. Sometimes painful procedures involving drugs and radiation. No matter the prognosis, many take whatever treatment they believe will buy them more precious time with loved ones.

But what if you found out that the journey had been unnecessary, that you didn't have cancer after all, and that the tests that put you on that course were faulty or just plain wrong. Well, that's the shocking news some women in Newfoundland and Labrador have recently received.

First, some background. Between 1997 and 2004, tissue samples from about a thousand breast cancer patients were tested at a pathology lab in the province's largest hospital. There were some concerns over possible inaccurate results. So the Eastern Regional Integrated Health Authority, the board that oversees the hospital, began sending thousands of samples for retesting to Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

Well, the re-test results were alarming. Mount Sinai determined that between ten and twenty per cent of the original tests were inaccurate. And one of the most dramatic errors was discovered in Myrtle Lewis's file. Last month, the 59-year old from Conception Bay South was told the harrowing diagnosis she received seven years ago was, indeed, inaccurate. We heard her story.

Ches Crosbie is the St. John's lawyer who filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Myrtle Lewis and about a half dozen other women involved in breast cancer re-testing. He represents a number of Newfoundland and Labrador women who have had their breast tissue samples re-tested by Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. He was in our St. John's studio.

### **Newfoundland Cancer – Health Authority**

No one from the Eastern Regional Integrated Health Authority was available to speak to The Current this morning. Late last week, George Tilley -- the Authority's President and CEO -- issued the following statement about the situation.

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The above statement was issued by George Tilley -- the President and CEO of the Eastern Regional Integrated Health Authority, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### **Newfoundland Cancer – Overview**

As shocking as a misdiagnosis can be, my next guest says we should not be all that surprised by these kinds of mistakes are made.

Dr. Philip Hebert is a bio-ethicist and the chair of the Research Ethics Board at Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital. He joined us in our Toronto studio.