

For Immediate Release

July 31, 2008

Women's Health Care in Crisis

The women of Newfoundland and Labrador better hope for good health and effective birth control because if they get sick or have a baby, our health care system cannot necessarily provide them with proper care.

“It’s a scary time to be a woman in this province,” says Michelle Murdoch with the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. “It seems like every week, there’s a new story about the deterioration of women’s health care. I wonder where it’s going to end.”

As the Cameron Inquiry reveals serious flaws with breast cancer testing in the province, problems in other areas of women’s health care continue to surface. This summer, obstetrics units have begun rotating services due to personnel shortages. Meanwhile, midwifery legislation remains on the backburner. Earlier this month, Eastern Health began charging doctors for equipment involved in certain gynecological tests, which has prompted one doctor to say she may stop performing the tests as a result.

This week, news broke that the province’s only gynecological oncologists have submitted their resignations. The three doctors cited under-resourcing and lack of respect in the workplace as reasons for their resignations.

“Women’s health care is in crisis in our province,” says Murdoch, “and I have to wonder why the province is so complacent about that. It seems very odd to me that gynecological oncologists—the doctors who deal with cancer specific to women—aren’t getting their demands met like the other oncologists.”

The gynecological oncologists’ resignations will take effect October 7, 2008.

“If we lose them, this will have serious implications for women who have or will get gynecological cancer,” says Murdoch. “The Cameron Inquiry has shown us that under-resourcing can be fatal. This situation needs to be fixed before we lose more women to a health-care system that doesn’t value them.”

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