

Non-Partisan Task Force

Reversal of Canadian Blood Services' decision to consolidate blood production services to Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Report to the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick

April 16, 2010

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Supporting documents

(Filed separately with the Office of the Clerk April 16, 2010. Available by request):

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Background

- In response to a nationwide public health crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s that saw the national blood supply contaminated with Hepatitis C and HIV, the Government of Canada established a Commission of Inquiry on the blood system. Known as the *Krever Inquiry*, the Commission's final report made 50 recommendations that were taken into account when creating the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between provinces and territories and the new national blood agency: Canadian Blood Services (CBS).
- CBS was created in 1998 under a federal/provincial/territorial MOU to operate at arm's length from government and to manage the blood supply system by providing a safe, secure, cost-effective, affordable and accessible supply of quality blood, blood products and their alternatives.
- New Brunswick, and other provinces/territories, contributes to the ongoing operational cost of CBS. Quebec has established its own blood system, Héma-Quebec, to work in partnership with CBS.
- In March 2008, provincial and territorial health ministers approved a \$118 million investment in the Canadian Blood Services' facilities redevelopment program.
- Currently in New Brunswick, CBS houses one permanent production and collection site which is located in Saint John. In addition to the permanent site, CBS has several mobile collections sites throughout New Brunswick.
- On March 31, 2009 CBS announced the consolidation of production services in Atlantic Canada as part of its national facilities re-development plan. This will result in the closure of the production facility located in Saint John, and the establishment of permanent collection centres in Moncton and Saint John. Expected job loss is at least 17 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This announcement stimulated a great deal of concern among NB citizens regarding the potential for decreased delivery of blood and blood products in a timely manner to NB hospital customers.
- On April 2, 2009 under the direction of New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham and David Alward, leader of the official opposition, a bi-partisan task force was formed. The mutually agreed upon mandate of the task force is "to have the decision to close the NB production facility, located in Saint John, NB reversed". The terms of reference for the committee are available by request.

Work to date

This section will outline the meeting date, the attendees, meeting content and meeting outcomes

Date: April 14, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Roberte O'Regan, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser.

Meeting content:

Development of terms of reference; presentations given by NB Dept. of Health officials to familiarize task force members with CBS, blood and blood products and CBS' facilities re-development plan (presentations available by request).

Outcomes:

The Department of Health will invite members of the medical, industrial and business communities to present their concerns with the proposed consolidation of services to the task force. The task force will then synthesize the information and present to CBS on behalf of NB residents.

Date: April 22, 2009 (part one)

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser.

Meeting content:

Preparation for the presentations by the medical community

- Review of RSVP list

Review of material presented by the Department of Health

- NB red cell/platelet outdate figures
- Legal opinion regarding the ownership of the land on which CBS building sits in Saint John
- Journal article *Evaluation of the CBS Red Blood Cell Shipping Container* (Available by request)
- Information regarding the new “multi-skilled worker” designation proposed by CBS

Outcomes:

Provision of information and preparation for remainder of evening

Date: April 22, 2009 (part two)

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser and members of the medical community

Meeting content:

Presentations were received from:

- Dr. Thomas Barry: Regional Chief of Staff for Regional Health Authority B
- Dr. James Flick: Director Hematology and Transfusion Medicine, Department of Laboratory Medicine, Saint John Regional Hospital
- Dr. Marek Godlewski: Clinical Department Head Laboratory Medicine, AHSC Saint John Regional Hospital
- Ms. Bernadette Muise: President, New Brunswick Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists
- Dr. René Lamontagne: VP Medical Affairs, Regional Health Authority A
- Dr. Margo Burnell: Medical Oncologist, Department of Oncology, Saint John Regional Hospital
- Dr. Edouard Hendriks: VP Medical Affairs, Regional Health Authority B
- Mr. Mike Davidson: representing the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

Outcomes:

The task force was provided insight into the concerns and questions that members of the medical community had not had the opportunity to pose to CBS officials.

This information was then to be reviewed by the Department of Health and used to create questions to be asked of CBS officials.

Date: April 30, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser, Ms. Jean Bustard (Department of Health) and members of the industrial community

Meeting content:

Presentations were received from:

- Mr. Bob Manning: Board Chair, Enterprise Saint John
- Mr. Richard LeBlanc: Executive Director, Enterprise New Brunswick

Outcomes:

This information was to be reviewed by the Department of Health and used to create questions to be asked of CBS officials.

Date: May 14, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser

Meeting content:

Review of previous meetings.

Proposed key ideas and arguments for moving forward.

Review of documentation to support key arguments.

- Information obtained from the medical community was collated by the Department of Health and presented under the following four categories:
 - Transparency and Trust
 - Safety and Risk
 - Logistical and Funding Concerns
 - Business, Industry, Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability

Review of legal opinion regarding the requirement of CBS to provide services in both official languages

Preparation for face-to-face meeting with CBS officials

Outcomes:

Plan to present the collated information to the participants of the April 22 and 30th, 2009 meetings by teleconference and organize for face-to-face meeting with CBS officials.

Date: May 26, 2009 (via teleconference)

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser and:

Dr. Thomas Barry

Dr. David Marr

Dr. René Lamontagne

Dr. Ludger Blier

Ms. Anne Robinson

Ms. Bernadette Muise

Dr. Sean Dolan

Mr. Bob Manning

Dr. Dennis Furlong

Mr. Mike Davison

Mr. Eric Beaulieu (Department of Health, Director of Financial Services)

Meeting content:

The group reviewed the concerns and questions to be posed of CBS officials at face-to-face meeting

Outcomes:

Individuals committed to which questions they would be presenting to the officials

Decision was made that task force members would facilitate the meeting and engage CBS in conversation but that medical and business community experts would present material as subject matter experts

Date: June 12, 2009

Attendees:

NB Dept. of Health

- Ms. Pamela Mitchell, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Mr. Eric Beaulieu, Director of Financial Services, NB Dept. of Health
- Ms. Katherine Poser, Provincial CBS Liaison Committee Member

Meeting content:

Questions prepared by the Department of Health and agreed upon by task force members and posed to Héma-Québec staff (available by request)

Outcomes:

Information obtained was reported back to the task force

Date: June 15 & 16, 2009

Attendees:

Non-Partisan Task Force

- Hon. Stuart Jamieson, Minister of Tourism and Parks, MLA Saint John-Fundy (co-chair of task force)
- Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, MLA Rothesay (co-chair of task force)
- Hon. Donald Arseneault, Minister Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
- Mr. Claude Landry, MLA Tracadie-Sheila
- Mrs. Joan Kingston, Government Affairs, Office of the Premier

NB Dept. of Health

- Mr. Donald Ferguson, Deputy Minister
- Ms. Pamela Mitchell, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Mr. Eric Beaulieu, Chief Financial Officer
- Ms. Lori Clarke, Laboratory Consultant
- Ms. Katherine Poser, Provincial CBS Liaison Committee Member

Stakeholders

- Mr. John Babineau, CUPE
- Dr. Tom Barry, Chief of Staff RHA B
- Dr. Margo Burnell, Clinical Department Head, Oncology and Chair of Health Care, New Brunswick Medical Society, Saint John Regional Hospital (SJRH)
- Dr. Terrance Comeau, Director Stem Cell Transplantation, SJRH
- Mr. Mike Davidson, CUPE National Representative
- Dr. Sean Dolan, Hematologist, SJRH
- Dr. James Flick, Director, Hematology and Transfusion Medicine, Dept. of Laboratory Medicine, SJRH
- Dr. René Lamontagne, VP Medical Affairs, RHA A
- Dr. John MacKay, Retired Medical Director, CBS Saint John
- Mr. Bob Manning, Chair, Enterprise Saint John
- Mrs. Bernadette Muise, President NB Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists
- Dr. Marc Pelletier, Clinical Dept Head, Cardiac Surgery New Brunswick Heart Center, SJRH
- Mrs. Anne Robinson, NB Blood Services Advisory Committee
- Mrs. Ruth Whelpley, CUPE

CBS

- Dr. Graham Sher, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Ian Mumford, Chief Operating Officer
- Mr. Jean-Paul Bedard, Vice President of Public Affairs
- Ms. Diane Korim, Executive Director, National Redevelopment Program
- Mr. Ron Vezina, Director of Media Relations and External Communications
- Ms. Lindy McIntyre, Director Government Relations
- Ms. Joanne Ring, Director, HR Operations, NCC, Atlantic Canada and Head Office
- Ms. Amanda Cullen, Communications Specialist
- Ms. Dorothy Harris, Hospital Liaison Specialist

Meeting content:

Questions prepared by the Department of Health and agreed upon by the task force and presenting stakeholders were posed of CBS officials (available by request).

CBS provided a written report (available by request).

A transcript of this meeting is available by request.

Outcomes:

- The task force and stakeholders expressed concern with the lack of preparedness and the condescending tone of CBS officials.
- CBS promised the provision of answers to all questions posed by the meeting participants prior to June 30, 2009.
 - this material was received by the task force and stakeholders
 - upon review of the material the task force and stakeholders did not feel that the CBS position to consolidate production services was justified and their concerns and opinions remained firm

Date: June 25, 2009: CBS' Board of Directors meeting, Ottawa, Ontario

Attendees:

Dr. Thomas Barry on behalf of the NB medical community
Mr. Mike Davidson on behalf of CUPE NB
Ms. Katherine Poser on behalf of the non-partisan task force

Meeting content:

The three attendees from NB provided presentations to the CBS' Board of Directors outlining the main concerns of their stakeholder groups (available by request).

Ian Mumford (Chief Operating Officer of CBS) advised that he, Graham Sher, Jean-Paul Bédard and a few others met with the task force in June, 2009. He advised that many concerns came out of this meeting, and noted that CBS is committed to answering all questions and providing all the information requested by the task force.

Ian Mumford advised that the key point made to the task force was that CBS does not yet have all the answers, but that they are working through the questions and concerns around intentions for moving the facility.

Graham Sher added that he advised the task force and the New Brunswick stakeholders that he would not permit any change that would negatively impact patient care or the safety of the blood system in any way.

The Board had numerous questions around the New Brunswick issue and the effect it would have on blood donations. This issue will continue to be closely monitored by the Board to ensure all stakeholders' concerns are addressed.

Verna Skanes (Board Chair) thanked Dr. Barry for his presentation. She noted that Graham Sher has advised the Board that a planning process to ensure all the medical needs for New Brunswick will be made.

Verna Skanes thanked Mr. Davidson for his material and noted the Board will review it.

Verna Skanes noted that the Board as a whole fully endorsed the re-development plan in the Atlantic Provinces. She noted the Members have been made aware of every step and have supported it all the way.

Minutes from this meeting are available by request.

Outcomes:

Letters of acknowledgement were sent to all three presenters.

There has been no further communication with the Board of Directors.

Date: August 18, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Lori Clarke, Ms. Katherine Poser

Meeting content:

- Concept of pathogen reduction technology was discussed
- Potential options available
- Review of the concerns presented by the stakeholders and the responses provided by CBS
- Dr. Barry has requested a review of the CBS business case from an outside source (feasibility was discussed)
- Review of meeting with Board of Directors
- Review of Justice Krever's recommendations
- Review of potential for any legal position to ensure decision is reversed

Outcomes:

- Plan to send Department of Health officials to Héma-Quebec for a preliminary discussion regarding the potential for partnership with them
- Department of Health officials will request a Health Technology Assessment of pathogen reduction technology
- A news release will be issued indicating that:
 - All of the information received has been reviewed
 - The medical community continue to have unresolved issues
 - CUPE members continue to have unresolved issues
 - The task force still has questions
 - The task force is still not convinced this is the right move
 - The task force will continue to work towards reversal of the decision until the medical community is satisfied that the safety of the system will remain at current or improved levels

Date: October 8, 2009

Attendees:

NB Dept. of Health:

Mr. Eric Beaulieu, Director of Financial Services, NB Dept. of Health
Ms. Katherine Poser, provincial/territorial Blood Liaison, NB Dept of Health

Héma-Québec:

Dr. Francine Décary, President and CEO Héma-Québec
Mr. Guy LaFrenière, VP Finance and Administration Héma-Québec
Ms. Manon Pepin, Communications Héma-Québec

Meeting content:

Questions were prepared and asked of Héma-Québec staff (available by request) ahead of time.

A presentation was received that covered all areas of Héma-Québec business (available by request).

Detailed figures regarding the Héma-Québec business were provided to Mr. Beaulieu. They are too extensive for inclusion in this document. They can be made available upon request.

Dr. Décary explained that at this point any communications regarding the possibilities of working with New Brunswick would have to be carried out between governments.

Outcomes:

Information was reported back to task force

Date: October 29, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Katherine Poser, Mr. Eric Beaulieu

Meeting content:

Information obtained at Héma-Québec (HQ) meeting was reported back to the task force.

Points of interest were:

- Whether or not Héma-Québec can meet same level of service and safety that CBS currently provides
- That there was no guarantee made by HQ that the Saint John facility would remain open should NB partner with HQ
- Reinforced idea that if NB were interested in exploring partnership further that the discussion would have to occur between governments
- HQ explained that while there are other small areas in the United States that operate their own independently blood production facilities, their suggestion would be to partner with an existing program and then branch out independently
- HQ does express similar strategic directions as CBS
- HQ has recently implemented “no-fault” legislation related to blood services that would require exploration if the partnership were to proceed

Outcomes:

The Department of Health’s officials will continue to explore option of NB having independent blood production and distribution facility using the financial figures supplied by HQ and with feedback from the medical community.

The task force will prepare a letter to send to CBS and the Board of Directors to ensure that CBS is clear that the information provided to date is not sufficient and that until the medical community is satisfied with the proposed changes to service delivery, the task force will continue working with them to have their decision to consolidate reversed.

Date: October 30, 2009

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Katherine Poser

Meeting content:

Minister Stuart Jamieson explained that he had advised CBS of the continued discontent of the task force and the medical community.

Margaret Ann Blaney suggested that the task force write a letter to the CBS Board of Directors expressing the concern that the task force has with the manner in which the task force and the medical community have been treated by CBS staff. The feeling is that the CBS staff has been patronizing and has a predetermined agenda that will not be changed.

Margaret Ann Blaney expressed that Dr. Graham Sher, the CEO for CBS, has truly abdicated his responsibility and the consolidation of production, lack of public consultation and the condescension demonstrated by Dr. Sher goes against the recommendations made in the Krever commission report.

The task force would like to impress upon CBS that while NB contributes approximately only 3% to the overall CBS budget, that we should be treated as a full partner at the table and they do not feel that this has occurred.

Minister Donald Arseneault questioned whether or not there could be any federal government involvement in the negotiations.

Outcomes:

The Department of Health will explore whether or not federal government involvement is appropriate in the negotiations.

The task force and Department of Health officials will continue to support the information sharing between CBS and the medical community of NB.

The task force will ask that the medical community provide suggestions to the task force and government of possible resolutions to the issue.

Date: January 19, 2010

Attendees:

- Medical Advisory Committees from both of NB's Regional Health Authorities
- Professor Donald Arseneau; facilitator (retired from University of Moncton)
- Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, MLA, Co-Chair Task Force
- Ms. Roberte O'Regan, Executive Director Hospital Services, NB Department of Health
- Ms. Katherine Poser, NB provincial/territorial Blood Liaison Committee Member, Department of Health
- Ms. Anne Robinson, Member of NB Blood Systems Advisory Group

CBS

- Dr. Graham Sher – Chief Executive Officer
- Dr. Ian Mumford – Chief Operating Officer
- Mr. John-Paul Bedard – VP, Public Affairs
- Dr. Dana Devine – VP, Medical, Scientific and Research Affairs
- Mr. David Howe – Executive Director of Production

Meeting content:

The morning meeting was in absentia of the CBS staff. The medical community was asked to present their concerns relative to the proposed consolidation of services (names of those who provided presentations available by request).

Presentations were provided by multiple members of the medical community.

The afternoon meeting was attended by the CBS staff. A presentation and handout material was provided (available by request).

Outcomes:

The Chairs of the Medical Advisory Committees, Dr. Thomas Barry and Dr. France Desrosiers, prepared a joint report that was submitted to the task force. The options and conclusion presented in this report were:

- **Option A:** Status quo. That is, the production centre will be maintained in Saint John with enhancement of services to ensure the production of fresh platelets and introduction of up to date technology. The report stated that at the present time many of our platelets are somewhat aged in their five day life, and that we are receiving back from Halifax and

Toronto three- to four-day-old platelets because in June 2008 half of our blood production was taken away to create Buffy Coat pooled platelets.

- **Option B:** If CBS is determined to have a central location, then obviously Moncton would be more central within the Maritimes and well able to serve all three provinces. Storage facility would be required in Saint John and recommended for Northern New Brunswick.
- **Option C:** Platelet apheresis will remain in Saint John with the appropriate new technology being introduced when available. This would also include a new collection facility in Saint John and in Moncton. This would also include:
 - New storage facilities in Saint John and in Moncton, as well as a new, necessary storage facility in Northern New Brunswick.
 - Inherent in this option is that the Canadian Blood Services' processing facility closed in Saint John, that an independent committee with expert knowledgeable in blood products, and users review the process on a short and on a long term basis to ensure that we are meeting national clinical standards with blood products provided by CBS.
 - A dispute mechanism be put in place with CBS, should we find our services are reduced or not up to standards
 - New Brunswick will have a representative on the Board of CBS

Conclusion:

After much discussion it was concluded that *Option A* is our first choice, with status quo maintained with the production centre remaining in Saint John and an enhancement to ensure adequate fresh platelets to serve the patients of New Brunswick and new appropriate technology when available.

Option B would be an acceptable second choice with a new full production facility in Moncton.

Option C would be as described above the very least that we would accept if Canadian Blood Services decides to ignore our concerns and proceed with its restructuring plan.

Date: March 19, 2010

Attendees:

Minister Stuart Jamieson, Mrs. Margaret Ann Blaney, Minister Donald Arseneault, Mr. Claude Landry, Mrs. Joan Kingston, Mr. Don Ferguson, Mrs. Pamela Mitchell, Ms. Katherine Poser

Meeting content:

The task force reviewed all correspondence that had been received and prepared responses for same.

Discussion surrounding recently received recommendations from the Regional Medical Advisory Committees.

Outcomes:

The task force is in support of the preferred option put forth by the medical community.

A report to the Legislative Assembly will be prepared and tabled as soon as possible.

Suggested Option for Future

As a result of its comprehensive process, the task force suggests the following for the future:

1. That the current service delivery model (including collection, production and distribution) for blood services to the province of New Brunswick be provided by CBS.
2. In addition to the status quo, enhancements must be made to ensure the production and distribution of fresh platelets to New Brunswick hospitals.
3. That the Buffy Coat technology be implemented in New Brunswick along with maintaining apheresis platelet production.
4. Any introduction of a technological nature must and will be implemented in the Province of New Brunswick.
5. That a storage facility for the Northern part of New Brunswick be implemented.
6. That a dispute mechanism be put in place with CBS when the New Brunswick Medical communities find the service delivery suboptimal.
7. Should CBS be unwilling to meet all of the above mentioned needs of New Brunswickers, other methods of service delivery must be explored. This will include the exploration of a partnership with Héma-Quebec or the development of an independent blood system.