

Attention News Editors:

Pediatric Forensic Pathology Inquiry now under way; Commissioner to make public statement on June 18, 2007

TORONTO, June 11 /CNW/ - Commission lawyers and staff of the Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology in Ontario are interviewing witnesses and examining hundreds of documents in preparation for public hearings later this year and for the Commissioner's initial public statement next week. The Commissioner, the Honourable Stephen Goudge, will outline his plan for fulfilling his mandate at 10 a.m. on June 18, 2007, at the Metropolitan Hotel at 108 Chestnut Street in Toronto.

His statement will be open to the public and to the media.

The Inquiry's mandate is to conduct a systemic review and an assessment of the policies, procedures, practices, accountability and oversight mechanisms, quality control measures and institutional arrangements of pediatric forensic pathology in Ontario from 1981 to 2001 as they relate to its practice and use in investigations and criminal proceedings. The Commissioner is to make recommendations to address systemic failings and restore and enhance public confidence in pediatric forensic pathology in Ontario.

The Commission's mandate does not include reporting on any individual cases that have been or may be subject to a criminal investigation or proceeding. However, in the days following his statement, members of the Commission will meet privately with individuals or families affected by practices in Ontario's pediatric forensic pathology system between 1981 and 2001.

"It will be very helpful for me to speak with those directly affected in order for me to understand the impact that systemic failings have on people's lives," said Commissioner Goudge. "These meetings must take place in private in order not to prejudice any ongoing legal proceedings and in view of the intimate and personal nature of the matters that may be discussed. These meetings will not be part of the formal hearing process."

Commissioner Goudge noted that the Commission is not empowered to correct errors in specific cases nor provide financial compensation.

"But the information from the meetings will be extremely useful background to me in my work," he said.

"The Commission is dedicated to making sure that no one ever has to endure the horror of being charged criminally, or having a family unit pulled apart, or being convicted because of flawed pathology findings or evidence."

The Commission may be contacted in confidence at (416) 212-6878 or by e-mail at: contact@goudgeinquiry.ca.

The Commission's offices are at 180 Dundas Street West, Toronto, ON., M5G 1Z8

More information about the inquiry is available on the Commission's web page: www.goudgeinquiry.ca

The Order in Council establishing the Inquiry:
<http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/news/2007/20070425-pi-tr.asp>

The Inquiry into Pediatric Forensic Pathology in Ontario was established by the Government of Ontario under the Public Inquiries Act on April 25, 2007.

The Commission is to deliver its final Report and recommendations to the Attorney General no later than April 25, 2008.

For further information: or to arrange an interview with Commission
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