
Liberals want update on Cameron recommendations

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Liberal

Leader Yvonne Jones wants government to update the people of the province on the progress of the recommendations which came out of the Cameron Inquiry.

Justice Margaret Cameron oversaw the public inquiry into the breast cancer testing scandal. She released her report containing 60 recommendations in March.

Jones said the government last updated the progress of implementing the recommendations in May.

"When you examine the report, you see in fact, that only one recommendation was fully implemented at that time," she said in the House of Assembly Wednesday.

While the next scheduled progress report is not due until this coming March, Jones asked if one could be tabled before the House closes for Christmas.

Health Minister Jerome Kennedy said recommendations are being acted on, but didn't commit to tabling an update in the next couple of weeks.

Jones then brought up public statements by the chairman of oncology at Memorial University. She said Dr. David Saltman is concerned about a lack of colorectal cancer screening programs in the province.

"He goes as far as calling the situation a tragedy," Jones said.

She went on to say that 400 new cases of colorectal cancer are diagnosed each year — and 200 people die of the disease annually — in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Early screening for this type of cancer, can result in 90 per cent of

(those deaths) being preventable," Jones said.

She then asked Kennedy to commit to establishing a provincial screening program. Kennedy said he's aware of Saltman's comments. He said the issue is a high priority as his department prepares for next year's budget.

But Kennedy said if approved in the budget, the first step would be to hire a screening co-ordinator.

He said a provincial screening program could only begin six months after that co-ordinator was in place.