

---

## Boy 'fighting for his life'

### Opposition says officials downplaying latest testing errors

BY ALISHAMORRISSEY  
amorrissey@thetelegram.com  
THE TELEGRAM

---

The

province's opposition leader says health authorities are downplaying the severity of a lab error which has left a 14-year-old boy "fighting for his life."

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones said Wednesday the boy's radiologist told the family a lab error in his tests resulted in him receiving a dangerous dose of Cyclosporine, a drug given to lower immunity in transplant patients which can cause kidney failure in incorrect doses.

"(The family) felt both Eastern Health and the government were downplaying this particular issue, not communicating the real importance of what this meant to people and so it's very difficult for them today as they sit at the bedside of their son," Jones said.

The mistake was found in the calibration of a machine in Eastern Health's biochemistry lab.

Because of the faulty test results, some 235 organ transplant and immune disorder patients may be affected by testing errors.

Though the Health minister said at the time the inaccurate tests were unacceptable, he did say he was pleased with

the way the health authority handled the information.

Jones described the comments as back-patting and said the boy's family told her if they hadn't threatened to go public with their story Eastern Health would have never called a news conference last week to talk about the errors.

A series of errors affecting tests to determine treatment for breast cancer patients conducted between 1997 and 2005 in the Health Sciences immunohistochemistry lab resulted in a boondoggle over disclosure to patients, a public inquiry, the scathing Cameron report and a class-action lawsuit that Eastern Health settled for \$17.5 million.

The most recent errors are attributed to the implementation of a new machine in June 2009. They were brought to light by a transplant nurse earlier this month.

The tests have been suspended at Eastern Health and are being done in Halifax.

Jones said Wednesday it was unfortunate the same day a boy is in critical condition due to lab errors, she's also marking the anniversary of the release of the Cameron Inquiry into botched breast cancer tests.

Jones said she has spoken to three other people who are concerned about the long-term effect on them.

Those people didn't report any immediate health problems, Jones says.

Eastern Health officials promised to comment today, but also sent out a statement late Wednesday, reacting to Jones' concerns.

Eastern Health CEO Vicki Kaminski said in the statement the boy's situation wasn't discussed last week to protect the family's privacy. She said she offered to meet with them, but understands the family's focus is on the care and well-being of their son.

"On behalf of Eastern Health, I do sincerely apologize to this patient's family for the distress these errors have caused them," said Kaminski.

"I am concerned by any comment suggesting that we are downplaying the seriousness of these errors. We are taking it very seriously and are making contact with patients and their physicians who potentially have been impacted by these errors."