

# N.L. cancer test inquiry begins

## Opposition reels from patient numbers

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As the province begins a much-anticipated public inquiry into faulty hormone receptor tests Wednesday, Newfoundland and Labrador's NDP Leader Lorraine Michael says she was shocked by the latest patient figures from the government.

Health Minister Ross Wiseman released new numbers Tuesday showing that 108 cancer patients whose tests were done inaccurately have since died. The province retested 1,013 patients' samples in 2007 and found that 383 of them had the tests done incorrectly.

"To understand these numbers, it is essential to remember that a changed [test result] does not necessarily mean that appropriate cancer treatment was delayed," Wiseman said in a news release Tuesday. "Nor do these numbers indicate that there is a relationship between an inaccurate [test] and progression of the disease or death."

Michael said she finds the latest numbers and the health minister's response difficult to accept.

"To think that it could be 108, it does make my blood run cold, I have to say," Michael said Tuesday after the numbers were released. "And I don't want to hear the government — Mr. Wiseman, or anyone else — making light of it. Light in the sense of saying that 'Oh, maybe they didn't die because of not getting the treatment.' "

The public judicial inquiry into the faulty hormone receptor tests begins Wednesday morning in St. John's.

Wiseman confirmed to CBC that he'll appear to face questions at some point during the public inquiry.