
INFORMATION BULLETIN

November 25, 2005

I would like to address two issues today. The statements made in correspondence reportedly authored by a number of people and made public yesterday has done a great disservice to the families of deceased persons and to the dedicated men and women who work tirelessly on the front lines as full-time, and community coroners as well as all of those who support them throughout this province.

I want to assure everyone that the standards of this agency have not only been maintained over the past four years, but in many ways improved, for example we have standardized policies, improved training, and upgraded our offices to reflect modern technology.

I am not prepared to address the specifics contained in the correspondence, as it may involve human resource issues that not appropriately addressed in this forum. Furthermore, it is not my correspondence to respond to, it is addressed to the Solicitor General.

I will say however, that the decisions being questioned were mine to make in my role as Chief Coroner. These were difficult decisions relating to complex issues as we have tried to get the absolute most out of every dollar spent and every resource employed. I made these decisions in concert with members of my senior staff.

We have an established vision for the future and are working exceptionally hard at developing a strategic plan to achieve even more professionalism in the future. I recognize that some of those decisions are unpopular, and it is understandable that some are not pleased as change and transitions are never easy. I stand squarely behind every decision I have made.

These remain my decisions to make as Chief Coroner; I made them and will continue to do so.

I recognize I am accountable to the public and I do that through the Solicitor General. As this correspondence is addressed to the minister, I am sure that if he requires clarification or further information he will advise me and I stand fully ready and able to do that.

As to the suggestions that there are children's death that have not been investigated let me be crystal clear - every reportable death in this province has been investigated by a coroner according to established guidelines and standards. There are some children's death which have not received a secondary review - that will be done. Until the results of the Deputy Solicitor General's investigation and the review being conducted by Mr. Ted Hughes are complete I will have no further comment.

Terry Smith
Chief Coroner of British Columbia

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