

Hello!

I am Judith Beaman. I have been appointed to lead a Commission that will offer support and assistance to people affected by the results of the flawed Motherisk test – a test that until recently was used to determine drug and alcohol use by parents whose children were involved in the criminal justice and child protection systems primarily in Ontario.

A report released last December found that the Motherisk laboratory at the Hospital for Sick Children performed hair strand tests that were inadequate and unreliable. This may have contributed to a number of erroneous and heart-wrenching decisions children's aid societies and courts. The Motherisk test was supposed to be a tool that would guide authorities to look out for the best interest of a child. Sadly, this did not turn out to be the case. It has created uncertainty in the province's child protection system. In some cases, mistakes may have been made. It is the task of the Commission to assist those negatively affected to seek a remedy for those mistakes, to the extent that this is possible.

The Government of Ontario has taken up the recommendation of that report by creating this Commission that I head. Over the next two years, the Commission will offer support and assistance to those affected by the flawed test results. This will be not be easy, but my staff and I will make the utmost effort to help those affected to get the help that they need..

We plan to accomplish this through a Review and Resource Centre that will be staffed by skilled professionals who will assess cases that may have been affected by the flawed hair tests between 1990 and 2015. We will look at cases that are brought to us, but we will also review some cases on our own initiative. The task of the Review and Resource Centre will be to provide support to affected persons – be they parents, children, young adults, siblings or adoptive parents.

We will listen carefully, analyze each situation, offer advice and, if possible, direct affected individuals toward a remedy. Specifically, we will provide information, counseling assistance, legal advice and alternative dispute resolution.

The Order in Council that spells out the assignment given me by the Government of Ontario directs me to make sure that the existence of the Commission and its work reach Indigenous and other communities that are

too often marginalized. My counsel, my staff and I are making a special effort to accomplish this. We are committed to reaching potentially affected people and communities through the media, the Internet and by carrying our message directly to communities across the province.

We are committed to making the utmost effort to reach every person and community that may have been affected by the flawed tests.

If you or your family believe that you have had your lives wrongly affected by the Motherisk test, please contact us. We will inform you about the findings of the Motherisk Hair Analysis Review – released last December by Justice Susan Lang – and also about the resources available through the Commission.

To get in touch with us please e-mail us at: info@motheriskcommission.ca or telephone us at 1-844-303-5476. A message left there will receive prompt attention. You may also reach us by mail at 400 University Avenue, Suite 1800A, Toronto, ON, M7A 2R9.

More information about the Commission is available on our web page www.motheriskcommission.ca

Thank you for your attention.

