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Mr. Glenn Thibeault MPP
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RE:ONTARIO LIBERAL GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO BLOCK MOBILE PET IN
ONTARIO.

The tragic irony, is that even if we had a PET scanner in Sudbury, and Sam Bruno
was alive:

- **Sam almost certainly would not be allowed to have a PET scan on the camera, which will be named in his honour!**
- **50 % of Ontario colon cancer patients with possible metastasis do not qualify for an OHIP funded PET scan.**

Why?: Because they have the misfortune of living in Ontario. They'd have to go to
Quebec, or perhaps Paraguay to get their scans.

"What those blocking PET in Ontario are doing borders on immoral."

Dr. Al Driedger Senior Member of Ontario Government PET Steering
Committee when he resigned in 2009.

Dear Mr. Thibeault

I wrote you a letter last April outlining issues regarding PET in Ontario. You did not
acknowledge my letter, nor to my suggestion to meet 'off the record' so we could
speak freely about the complex issues facing your government and most

importantly the patients of Ontario. Dr. Hoskins, our 'Minister of Health' also did not respond to my letter last May in spite of a Provincial Law demanding he or someone on his staff do so. It is worth noting that Dr. Driedger wrote a similar letter to Mr. Smitherman when he was the Ontario Liberal Minister of Health. Mr. Smitherman on more than occasion refused to acknowledge or respond to Dr. Driedger's letter.

- **Indeed, without exception, not a single critical question or concern that PET experts and Expert Medical Organizations submitted to various politicians and Ministry of Health Experts starting in early 2000 have ever been addressed.**

I had hoped to work quietly behind the scenes with your government on both introducing PET and bringing about a more rational, medically effective approach to our patients with the potential of actually reducing health care costs.

Your recent announcement with Dr Hoskins about Operational Funding for a PET in Sudbury was nothing more than a cheap political move to block the introduction of Mobile PET in Ontario. It is time you defended your position on PET. Ontario patients have the most restricted access to PET in medically civilized countries on the planet.

Ministry of Health Announcement for Operational Funds for PET Scanner in Sudbury:

Your announcement will stimulate donations to The Sam Bruno PET fund. However the primary purpose was to block HSN's efforts to make use of a Mobile PET scanner until the donations reached what is required for a permanent PET. Using a Mobile PET as an interim solution to give Sudbury patients immediate access to PET was supported by the Bruno Family, The Sam Bruno PET Fund and Ms. France Gelinis NDP MPP. Thus the 'quick' in and out of Sudbury announcement when you were sure Ms. Gelinis would not be in town to ask any 'informed' and potentially embarrassing questions.

The announcement seemed to imply we would have PET by April 1 2016 when the 1.6 million dollars would be available. What you neglected to mention in your announcement or your recent propaganda letter to your constituents, was that not only must the community raise 100% of the cost of the PET/CT, but as there is no place to put it, an estimated further 1.5 million dollars for a room to house it. The cost estimates are now a total of 5 million and likely more.

- The sun 'will rise in the west' before a scanner would be here by April 1, and we'll be lucky if it is here even in two years!

Another 'critical' point not made clear was that these Operational Funds could only be used for a '**permanent**' PET. As I would learn soon enough, it COULD NOT be

used to make sure HSN did not run a deficit by bringing in a Mobile PET until the permanent PET, 100% dependent on the completely unpredictable time frame of when 100% of the cost of the scanner, AND, the building to house it were available.

- The total cost to the hospital to have a Mobile PET scanner in Sudbury 'next week' would be that of installing a 220-volt line to power the otherwise fully self contained unit.
- It begs the question as to why the Mobile PET wasn't here years ago, as HSN tried to on more than one occasion.
- **Most importantly is the question as to why the Operation Fund agreement made sure these funds could NOT be used to get a Mobile PET in the interim, yet available April 1 where it will simply 'sit' for at least several years!**

Your announcement comes at a time of both world and personal financial instability and huge pressure for scarce donor dollars for other critical efforts such as NEO Kids. It could be argued that NEO Kids would have far greater benefit for the community. A PET scanner will only be allowed to scan some 750 patients per year. Quebec with half the population of Ontario and more PET scanners, believes their patients are worthy of the world standard of imaging guided management of diseases. They fund roughly 3,000 patients/scanner/year. Ontario cancer patients have the most restricted, and 'notorious' access criteria for a PET scan on earth.

- As much as 90% of OHIP funded PET scans are used for the investigation of possible lung cancer. **The indication is the exact opposite of the entire world expert opinion and could result in charges of malpractice.** More importantly for patients who do have lung cancer, it leads to a six to eight week delay in starting appropriate treatments. This is intentional.
- I also just saw a requisition for a Gallium scan for a 27-year-old woman with lymphoma. When I went to a meeting at John Hopkins on PET in 2007, for the 'short historical' talk on Gallium, the presenter, from Israel, had to go in to their archives to even find an example.
 - Years ago I joked that;"The Smithsonian Institute was looking for primitive medical cultures still using Gallium for lymphoma. They only had to look next door to Ontario!"
- There are now limited OHIP indications for Lymphoma. However not for her circumstances. What is tragic for this young woman, and thousands of other cancer patients like her, is that they have the misfortune of living in Ontario.

What about the situation for women with Breast Cancer in Ontario?

- **Ontario is the only place offering PET on the earth where it is not accepted that there are clear examples where a PET scan is considered the world standard of investigation.**

HISTORY OF EFFORTS FOR MOBILE PET IN SUDBURY:

One of Sam Bruno's goals was to get a PET scanner for Sudbury as soon as possible, and clearly a Mobile PET was the perfect solution. His larger goal was for Ontario Cancer patients to have the same kind of access to PET as was already available even in Third World countries like Argentina. He was fully informed about what the Ontario Liberal Government and indeed the Ombudsman, Mr. Andre Marin, were doing to block PET. Sam made the government very nervous and the Minister of Health, Ms. Deb Matthews went so far as to insult him in a letter to the Sudbury Star when he died and could not defend himself. She commented on what a remarkable man he was, but went on to say: "But Sam got a few things wrong." As you know, Sam got absolutely nothing wrong.

- Astonishingly, Mr. Andre Marin sent a representative to speak with Sam here and Sudbury and explain why Sam's request to have Mr. Morin release the two investigations he made into the 'process of' how the Ontario Government was introducing PET, and then barred from Public Access.
- **Perhaps, Mr. Thibeault, you would like to tell your constituents why one person, Mr. Sam Bruno who had colon cancer, amongst the tens of thousands of Ontario patients with cancer got such 'personal attention' from Ms. Deb Matthews and Mr. Morin and MOH.**

Mobile PET plays a significant role in providing PET around the world. In the US almost 50% of PET scans are performed on Mobile Units. I was in charge of the first Mobile PET in Canada some six or seven years ago. HSN looked at a business model even then to bring PET to Sudbury as did Thunder Bay before they got their permanent PET. Given the miniscule 'capital costs' to the hospital it begs the question of why they could not do so?

- Long ago, the Ontario Liberal Government introduced Bill 8, which makes it illegal for a hospital to run a deficit.
- Then the MOH either **deliberately underfunds** what it costs, in this case to do a PET exam, or in some cases refuses to pay for other critical but expensive tests in Nuclear Medicine for cancer patients, **forcing the hospitals to run a deficit.**

In the past year or so I once again approached Senior HSN Administration to rethink ways of how we could make up the difference between what OHIP deliberately underfunds and what the actual cost to perform PET exam is. This could be as low as

\$500/patient. It was even discussed that monies could come from The Sam Bruno PET fund.

When I heard about the Operational Funds April 1 I thought wow, this is perfect! We could have the Mobile PET here April 1 and use a tiny fraction of the Operational Fund to insure the hospital won't run a deficit until the Operational Funds could be used when full funding for the scanner AND building to house it were in place. I immediately met with my Senior Administrator. To my dismay, although NOT to my surprise, suddenly HSN will not even consider the possibility of a Mobile PET, but only the permanent PET, which is utterly dependent on the vagaries of donor funds.

However I would like to make something absolutely clear. I have no doubt our HSN administration are doing everything within their power to get a PET here based on what the MOH will allow them to do. The problem they are faced with, and the public needs to be aware of, is the MOH 'encourages hospitals to follow the script' by using threats and intimidation.

It has been made very clear to me on more than one occasion by different senior hospital administrators in more than one hospital that: "David you cannot say anything that will contradict or embarrass the government, or they will cut our funding."

- **I am virtually certain that HSN got 'the call' from the MOH to abandon it's plans for MOBILE PET, or else! .**

Of course this will be denied, but, Mr. Thibeault, and perhaps Dr. Hoskins would like to help you out here, you will now have to explain why HSN has abandoned the plans for the Mobile PET.

Do you honestly expect people to believe that suddenly HSN does not want to have a Mobile PET here April 1, no deficit, and fully meet our patients needs until the funds were in place for a permanent PET?

It does beg the question why you and Dr. Hoskins made this move to block our Mobile PET plans for the benefit of Sudbury patients.

- For more than two years the physician owner of the Mobile PET in Windsor has been stonewalled in his negotiations with the government to provide Mobile PET for patients in communities across Ontario including Sudbury.
- **If Sudbury was to get a MOBILE PET, then the other communities would rightfully demand they were given the same deal.**
 - That is, sufficient funds to make up for what OHIP won't pay for and therefore **not incur a deficit as provincially mandated.**

Instead, you and Dr. Hoskins would rather have our highly stressed and often-ill patients drive to Toronto, currently on dangerous winter roads, and then pay all their expenses! The reality is that their travel expenses can be more than what it would cost to cover the 'built in loss' by OHIP!

MY QUESTIONS TO YOU MR. THIBEAULT:

1. Will you demand that the MOH allow HSN to use a small fraction of the Operation Funds, which will be 'gathering dust', to make up for the deficit forced on HSN by the MOH and thus have the Mobile PET in Sudbury April 1?
2. Are you prepared to have a public meeting here in Sudbury and answer questions from your constituents and make clear your stance on an interim Mobile PET for Sudbury as well as the Liberal Parties approach to PET in Ontario?

I would encourage you to invite back Dr. Hoskins, who as a physician will be able to respond to medically oriented questions.

Your recent Winter 2016 Update for your constituents shows the broad smiling faces of you and Dr. Hoskins. Surely a public meeting would be the perfect opportunity to show just how truly sincere you two are about the plight of our patients and your plans to make sure Sam's dreams for Sudbury and Ontario finally come true.

Regards

Dr. David Webster

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