



March 16, 2012

NEWS RELEASE

Access Inquiry getting organized

Calgary – Justice Vertes has commenced work on the necessary organizational steps required to support the public inquiry into the possibility of improper preferential access to publicly funded health services in Alberta.

The inquiry will be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the *Health Quality Council of Alberta Act* and has all the powers, privileges and immunities of a commissioner under the *Public Inquiries Act*. The inquiry will be conducted in a manner that ensures its independence.

Justice Vertes is looking forward to undertaking this challenging inquiry into a very sensitive subject. The inquiry will proceed in an open and expeditious manner and steps will be taken to ensure that its proceedings are accessible, impartial, fair and scrupulous at all times.

As in all inquiries, the inquiry will follow the evidence based on the facts that come out at the hearings. Thus it is anticipated that the question of whether improper preferential access to publicly funded health services is occurring will necessitate an examination of whether and under what circumstances such access occurred in the past and if such circumstances exist now.

The public and members of the media will be kept informed about the progress of the inquiry as it proceeds. However, in order to maintain the independence and impartiality of the inquiry, Justice Vertes will not be conducting interviews with the media and will not be making any comments other than those made in the course of the public hearings and upon its completion.

The inquiry will ensure that people have the information needed to participate and are able to follow the proceedings as they progress. Further detail will be available in the next several weeks.

As part of the inquiry's Terms of Reference, a report must be submitted to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly no later than April 30, 2013.

- 30 -

Terms of reference for the public inquiry are available at
http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/orders/orders_in_council/2012/212/2012_080.html

Contact: Karen Fantin at (403) 815-4883.