

March 5, 2012

Retired Justice appointed to head public inquiry into access to health services

Calgary - Mr. Justice John Z. Vertes has been appointed by the Board of the Health Quality Council of Alberta to head up the public inquiry into the possibility of improper preferential access being given to publicly funded health services in Alberta. If evidence is found to substantiate concerns, the inquiry's terms of reference include a call for recommendations on preventing improper access in the future.

Vertes retired in 2011 as the Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. He was appointed as a justice in 1991 after 14 years of practice in Yellowknife, primarily in the fields of criminal and civil litigation. While serving on the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, Vertes also sat as a justice of the Court of Appeal of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Court of Appeal as well as a judge of the Supreme Court of the Yukon Territory. He was appointed a justice of the Nunavut Court of Justice and the Nunavut Court of Appeal in 1999.

The public 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*.

"We are very pleased that Justice Vertes will be heading up this inquiry," said Dr. Lorne Tyrrell, chairman of the board of directors of the Health Quality Council of Alberta. "He is widely acknowledged as a leading jurist and known for the wisdom and sound guidance he brings to bear on issues of public interest such as aboriginal justice, judicial codes of conduct and legal education."

The Health Quality Council of Alberta gathers and analyzes information and collaborates with Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, health professions, academia and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the health care system.

Mr. Justice Vertes' resume is attached.

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

Note: Justice Vertes is currently out of the country and unavailable for comment.

For further information, contact Dr. John Cowell at 403- 297-8162.



Mr. Justice John Z. Vertes Resume

- Born January 16, 1950, in Budapest, Hungary.
- Bachelor of Laws, Osgoode Hall Law School of York University (1975).
- Admitted to the bars of Ontario and the Northwest Territories, 1977.
- Practiced law in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, from 1977 to 1991, primarily in criminal and civil litigation.
- Appointed Queen's Counsel in 1988.
- Appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories on September 13, 1991.
- Also appointed in 1991 as a justice of the Court of Appeal of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Court of Appeal as well as a judge of the Supreme Court of the Yukon Territory.
- Appointed a justice of the Nunavut Court of Justice and the Nunavut Court of Appeal in 1999.
- Retired as the Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories on July 1, 2011.
- Member, Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice, International Commission of Jurists, Commonwealth Magistrates & Judges Association, and the Canadian Bar Association.

- **Positions previously held:**
 - President of the Law Society of the Northwest Territories (1984-85).
 - Member, National Executive Committee of the Canadian Bar Association (1982-84).
 - Board member of the Canadian Bar Insurance Association (1988-91).
 - Board member of the Yellowknife Big Brothers Association (1978-88).
 - Member, governing council of the N.W.T. Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists (1980-86).
 - Representative of the Canadian Bar Association with observer status at the First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal Rights (1983 & 1984).
 - Chairman of the N.W.T. Legal Services Board (governing the provision of legal aid services) from 1987-91.
 - President of the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce (1990-1991).
 - Member, Board of Directors, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (2002-2004).
 - President of the Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association (2006-2007).
 - "Judge-in-Residence" and holder of the Milvain Visiting Chair in Advocacy at the University of Calgary Law School (September, 2006, to April, 2007).
 - President of the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (2009-2011).
 - Member of the Governing Council of the Commonwealth Magistrates & Judges Association (2006-2012).
 - Faculty member of numerous continuing education programs for the National Judicial Institute, the Canadian Bar Association, the Alberta Queen's Bench Judges Education Seminar, the Law Society of the Northwest Territories, and the Federation of Law Societies of Canada National Criminal Law Program.

- **Publications:**
 - "Jury Trials in Canadian Aboriginal Communities" (2007) 17 Commonwealth Judicial Journal 14.
 - "The Development of Judicial Codes of Conduct: A Canadian Perspective" (2010) 18, Commonwealth Judicial Journal 22.
 - "Why Can't We Be Friends? Should Judges be on Facebook" (2011) 19 Commonwealth Judicial Journal 3.