

Port Hope: Government of Canada Coverup regarding Uranium Contamination

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Health Canada told 'falsehood,'UMRC says

by **Joyce Cassin**

In a recent letter to the federal health minister, a Uranium Medical Research Centre (UMRC) official accuses Health Canada of telling an "unambiguous falsehood to the people of Port Hope and Members of Parliament."

Upon request from the Port Hope council and concerned members of Parliament, Dr. Jack Cornett and Health Canada made public statements intended to dismiss the medical significance of the UMRC study findings, UMRC deputy director Tedd Weyman stated in the letter to Tony Clement. Dated March 1, 2008, the letter has been posted on the Port Hope Community Health Concerns Committee's Web site.

Last November the UMRC released laboratory results of uranium measured in urine specimens of nine residents and former nuclear workers in Port Hope. The study was commissioned by the health concerns committee.

The urine samples revealed all study subjects' bodies to be contaminated by unnatural species of uranium, Mr. Weyman stated.

Neither Health Canada, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), Natural Resources Canada, Ontario Public Health, nor the provincial or federal environment ministries list these uranium species as present in Port Hope or as potential contaminants to the residents and workers there, and no environmental, biological or radiological study has previously identified these species of uranium in any jurisdiction in Canada, he stated.

"In doing so, Jack Cornett and Health Canada stated an unambiguous medical and scientific falsehood," Mr. Weyman stated in the letter. "In its December 20, 2007 statement to the Port Hope Town Council and local press, your department (Health Canada) states that the industrial commercial uranium contaminants and species of radioactive materials found by UMRC in the bodies of Port Hope former nuclear workers and residents are 'typical for Canadians.'"

Mr. Weyman stated that on January 21, correspondence to Port Hope Mayor Linda Thompson, on the minister's letterhead, repeated the same falsehood: "all the (uranium) levels are low and typical of the range in normal background values in individual Canadians"; and, "regardless of whether the uranium was natural or included artificial materials," the "highest reported uranium value . . . is only a fraction of the public dose

limit.”

Faye More of the health concerns committee said she’ll be surprised if the group ever receives a response to its concerns from Mr. Clement’s office.

“It’s difficult for them (the Ministry of Health) when people with expertise are coming along with these studies,” Ms. More said in an interview. “The fact is, we were promised studies a long time ago. What we want is the truth.”

The issue is not going to go away no matter how much the government agencies and CNSC want it to and these agencies have no evidence to support what they say, Ms. More said.

“Health Canada does not have the Port Hope study subjects’ medical and exposure history information needed to calculate radiation doses,” Mr. Weyman stated. “Director Cornett has categorically misinformed the Municipality of Port Hope. He stated that Health Canada contacted UMRC for detailed study information. No such contact was received. The Minister may have been misled into a belief that radiation dose can be calculated from the quantity of the uranium in the urine. This indicates Health Canada has also, like Dr. (Murray) Finkelstein, misunderstood the physical-chemistry of the species of the contaminant found in Port Hope.”

Dr. Finkelstein was hired by the Municipality of Port Hope to conduct an independent review of the UMRC study. He is with McMaster University’s occupational health and environmental medicine program and the University of Toronto’s family medicine and public health sciences department.

Northumberland-Quinte West MP Rick Norlock said professionals have looked at the UMRC study results and he trusts Health Canada more than a known anti-nuclear group.

“I don’t know how they (the health concerns committee) can claim their experts are right and all of ours are wrong,” Mr. Norlock said.

“We would love to have a forum in Ottawa to have the opportunity to challenge what they’re saying,” Ms. More said. “This isn’t going to go away.”

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