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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

BRIAN MASON, MLA

Edmonton Highlands-Norwood
Leader, Alberta's NDP Opposition

Chair, Standing Committee on Health
721, Legislature Annex
9718 107 Street
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August 8, 2008

Mr. Fred Horne,

The unnecessary death of five babies due to congenital syphilis is of great concern to all Albertans. The syphilis epidemic comes at a time when Alberta's public health system faces a crisis, exemplified by the mysterious departure of several of Alberta's top public health doctors.

These departures have still not been properly explained, but it has come to my attention that in at least one case, the departure may have been connected to a disagreement on measures to contain the syphilis epidemic. Given the threat to public health which this epidemic represents, and the disarray of Alberta Health, I believe that it is imperative that the Standing Policy Field Committee on Health convene a meeting to inquire into this matter. Accordingly, I am requesting that you, as Chair of the committee, convene an emergency meeting of the committee at the earliest possible time.

At that time, I propose to deal with the motion of my colleague Rachel Notley, to call Health Minister Ron Liepert, former Deputy Minister Paddy Meade and the departed public health doctors to appear before the committee. It is my hope that the committee can get the facts regarding the failure of Alberta Health to deal promptly and effectively with the outbreak of this preventable disease and the unexplained departure of the public health doctors.

This epidemic has already taken the lives of five babies. Further delay in getting the facts out is unacceptable. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Brian Mason
Leader, Alberta's NDP Opposition

Cc: Ms. Bridget Pastoor (Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Health)