

Hepatitis C Tainted Blood Class Action

News

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For immediate release

Memorandum of understanding marks progress in Hepatitis C compensation discussions

OTTAWA - Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh and legal representatives for individuals infected by the Hepatitis C virus through the blood system before 1986 and after July 1, 1990, today announced that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing the federal government to provide compensation to those individuals. Discussions will continue as both sides negotiate the amounts and categories of compensation.

On November 22, 2004, Minister Dosanjh announced the launch of discussions to explore options for financial compensation to the pre-1986/post-1990 class. The discussions began immediately and both the federal government and legal representatives for the class have been working diligently to resolve the complex issues surrounding compensation.

Over the past year, the Government of Canada and legal representatives of the pre-1986/post-1990 class have made progress in their discussions on options for compensation. This commitment to compensate is an important step in advancing compensation discussions further.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the tremendous burden Hepatitis C places on the lives of people infected and on the lives of their families," said Minister Dosanjh. "By entering into this MOU, both sides have made a clear commitment to the ongoing negotiation process. The federal government will compensate the pre-1986/post-1990 class because it is the right and responsible thing to do."

Discussions are now at the point where finalizing the settlement is dependent upon both sides obtaining additional information as to the current size of the class, their current health status and the likely progression of the disease in the class. It is expected that the process of obtaining the necessary information and concluding the negotiations will require a minimum of several months.

The federal government and class counsel recognize there are people awaiting an outcome. The MOU is evidence of their commitment to concluding the discussions as soon as possible once the appropriate information is available.

Both sides will continue their discussions over the coming months to negotiate amounts and categories of compensation recognizing the actual and legal circumstances of the claimants.

Claimants do not have to take any steps at the moment. A further announcement will be made once a settlement agreement has been concluded to advise claimants what they need to do to apply.