

EXPERT PANEL ON SARS AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Health and Long-Term Care Minister Tony Clement today announced the creation of an expert panel on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and other infectious diseases.

Mandate

The mandate of the expert panel is to:

- identify the key lessons learned in the province's healthcare system handling of the SARS outbreak;
- use the understanding derived from these key lessons to provide practical, focused and forward-looking advice on all appropriate health system measures to strengthen infectious disease control in each sector and on a system-wide level ;
- assess required reserve capacity in the system, research and measures to strengthen infectious disease control, public health and system response capabilities; and
- provide advice and recommendations on the design and implementation of planned and future infectious disease management initiatives.

The panel is expected to provide advice to the minister by December.

Chair

Dr. David Walker, Dean of Medicine at Queen's University, has been selected to chair the panel. Dr. Walker holds the rank of professor in the university's departments of emergency medicine and family medicine. He is also currently chair of the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine.

Dr. Walker has been president of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians, president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and chair of of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada specialty committee and examinations committee in emergency medicine.

In 1998, he was appointed vice-dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Queen's University. In July 1999, Dr. Walker became director of the School of Medicine, and in November 1999 he was named Dean of Medicine, as well as chief executive officer of the Southeastern Ontario Academic Medical Organization.