

I want to make some brief remarks regarding the scope and focus of this inquest into the deaths of Lori Dupont and Marc Daniel.

The sole authority for the inquest lies in the *Coroners Act*. The relevant sections are:

31. (1) Where an inquest is held, it shall inquire into the circumstances of the death and determine,

- (a) who the deceased was;
- (b) how the deceased came to his or her death;
- (c) when the deceased came to his or her death;
- (d) where the deceased came to his or her death; and
- (e) by what means the deceased came to his or her death.

R.S.O. 1990, c. C.37, s. 31 (1).

(2) The jury shall not make any finding of legal responsibility or express any conclusion of law on any matter referred to in subsection (1).

R.S.O. 1990, c. C.37, s. 31 (2).

(3) Subject to subsection (2), the jury may make recommendations directed to the avoidance of death in similar circumstances or respecting any other matter arising out of the inquest. R.S.O. 1990, c. C.37, s. 31 (3).

The late Mr. Justice Campbell held in his decision in *People First – Family Bennett vs. Porter* that it is for the coroner to decide the scope and focus of an inquest. An inquest is not a broad public inquiry nor is it a royal commission. Rather, it is a focused inquiry into a specific death or deaths. As the coroner presiding at this inquest, it is my duty to determine the scope and focus of the inquest. I will briefly set out my thoughts in this regard.

In these deaths, there are some specific issues related to domestic violence and some general issues related to the workplace in which these two persons worked. These will constitute the areas of focus of this inquest.

The specific issues related to domestic violence to be considered at the inquest are:

1. The actions taken by the employer with respect to allegations of threatening behaviour on the part of Dr. Daniel, either directed at Ms. Dupont or at other staff members. As this is a specific inquiry into these deaths, other violent or threatening incidents against a particular group or

individual, either inside or outside the healthcare sector, will not be considered at the inquest.

2. The actions taken in the criminal justice system before the death of Ms. Dupont with respect to the private information laid by her.

General issues related to the workplace that will be explored at the inquest are:

1. Governance of medical staff at hospitals under the Public Hospitals Act and the Regulated Health Professionals Act.
2. The role, if any, of the medical staff shortages in determining the readiness of Dr. Daniel to return to work.

There is obviously a great deal of complexity to the circumstances surrounding these deaths. It will be necessary for all parties to the inquest to work collaboratively to effectively and efficiently put the necessary evidence before the jury. I believe this is possible and that upon hearing the evidence, the jury will be able to render a true verdict and make appropriate, and, hopefully, effective recommendations aimed at the prevention of death in similar circumstances in the future.