



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01225

Name of petitioner

Michelle Stewart on behalf of C.diff Justice Group

Petition title

Outbreak of Clostridium difficile at the Vale of Leven Hospital

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to instruct, with immediate effect, an independent public inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 into the outbreak of clostridium difficile at the Vale of Leven Hospital so that wider lessons for the whole NHS can be learned and that the inquiry involves, and publicly funds, all relevant individuals, groups and organisations affected by the outbreak to determine the inquiry's terms of reference and identify the issues to be examined.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

The C.diff Justice Group has taken a range of actions to campaign for a full public inquiry into the C.diff outbreak at the Vale of Leven Hospital and other Scottish hospitals. The group has organised a press conference to raise awareness of the issue and worked with the media to highlight this to the Scottish public; co-operated with the Independent Review Team; maintained communication with the Procurator Fiscal and worked with MSPs, including Jackie Baillie MSP who represents the constituency in which the Vale of Leven Hospital is situated. In addition there have been two meetings with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, and the other political party spokespersons from the Liberals, Labour, Conservatives, the Greens and Margo MacDonald MSP.

Petition background information

The C.diff Justice Group is made up of the families of relatives who died as a result of the outbreak of Clostridium difficile at the Vale of Leven Hospital, during the first half of 2008. The families believe that a full, independent public inquiry into the unprecedented outbreak should be carried out as a matter of urgency.

On 12 September a motion (S3M-2524) was passed in the Scottish Parliament which resolved that the Scottish Government should instruct a full public inquiry into the C.diff outbreak under the Inquiries Act 2005.

The C.diff Justice Group does not believe that the Scottish Government's Independent Review Team Report (published November 2008) answers all the questions needed to avoid a similar outbreak in the future, as this report was prepared in five weeks and has not provided a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances and procedures that

allowed such a tragedy to occur.

The Independent Review Team Report has received considerable media coverage and been subject to a BBC documentary on Frontline Scotland that has stressed the need for further investigation into the outbreak.

Experts have urged the Scottish Government that the Independent Review Team Report will not suffice. For example, Professor Brian Toft, the leading UK patient safety specialist with Coventry University told the BBC that the report was "not fit for purpose". Furthermore, the Report's lead author, Professor Cairns Smith has admitted the report has failings and has said, "We didn't get to the bottom of every aspect and that was really unrealistic in terms of the timescale." Emeritus Professor of Bacteriology, Hugh Pennington from the University of Aberdeen, has said further investigation is necessary because, "I think it's very reasonable to suppose that more than 18 people died at the Vale."

A public inquiry will ensure that lessons are learned across the NHS and further deaths from c.diff are minimised.

While the C-diff Justice Group appreciate that the Public Inquiry is inquisitorial in nature we do not want our role in any Public Inquiry to follow to be marginalised or passive. We have campaigned tirelessly for the Public Inquiry and therefore believe that we ought to play a full role in every aspect of the Inquiry from assisting with setting the terms of reference, to investigating matters before the Inquiry Hearing, to leading evidence and fully cross examining witnesses at the Inquiry Hearing. For this purpose we require the assistance of appropriate legal representatives in the form of Solicitors and Counsel and this cost ought properly and reasonably to be met by the State.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01225>

Related information for petition

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NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

1642

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

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