



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Truro, NS

Day 3

March 18, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 12: Tami Clarke**

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[00:00:00]

**Ches Crosbie**

Tami Clarke, do you undertake and affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

**Tami Clarke**

I do.

**Ches Crosbie**

Thank you.

**Criss Hochhold**

Can you please tell us your name? We know where you live, because of Kirk. Your name and occupation, please.

**Tami Clarke**

My name is Tami Clarke, and I'm a coordinator for Public Works.

**Criss Hochhold**

I'm going to do a continuation really, right from Kirk's testimony. Because you are his spouse and the significant health issues that Kirk had would have had an impact on you as well.

**Tami Clarke**

Yes.

**Criss Hochhold**

How were you affected by Kirk's health issues? I know it's a very broad question, but how were you affected? We can imagine the distress you went through at the time that he was at the hospital.

So I'd like to focus more on the time since then. How has that impacted you and your quality of life and your relationship?

**Tami Clarke**

I had to receive the vaccine, both vaccines, after he had his blood clots in his lungs in order to keep my job, so—

**Criss Hochhold**

I'll get to that.

**Tami Clarke**

Okay, so my quality of life in general?

**Criss Hochhold**

Yeah, just with Kirk. And then we'll talk, I want to get to that.

**Tami Clarke**

I'll wake up in the middle of the night to see if he's still breathing. I'm nervous to leave the house sometimes because I don't know if he's going to be okay. He's different because he doesn't socialize as much, or he's not able to do the physical things that he'd like to do or talk for long periods of time.

**Criss Hochhold**

What impact does that have on you and your relationship?

**Tami Clarke**

I feel overwhelmed. I feel anxious. I feel depressed. And I feel alone.

**Criss Hochhold**

Tami, who were you working for when Kirk received his vaccines? Who was your employer at that time, do you remember?

**Tami Clarke**

The Province of Nova Scotia.

**Criss Hochhold**

In what capacity, what department for the Province of Nova Scotia where you working at?

**Tami Clarke**

Education and Early Childhood Development.

**Criss Hochhold**

When the requirement came out for the vaccine, bearing in mind that Kirk had effects from the vaccination, what were your thoughts to the vaccine requirements?

**Tami Clarke**

I didn't want to have that vaccine.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you reach out to your employer and see regarding those mandates? Did you send any emails or letters?

**Tami Clarke**

No, I didn't. I just asked my director at the time if there was any exemptions for someone who would feel traumatized by taking a vaccine that their partner had that affected them so much.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you send an email on November 19th to the NSGEU [Nova Scotia Government Employees Union] asking the union not to mandate vaccines?

**Tami Clarke**

I did.

**Criss Hochhold**

What was the response to that?

**Tami Clarke**

They said as long as the employer has a policy that clearly states what they're going to do about vaccines, that that was all they were going to require.

**Criss Hochhold**

The contract that you have, the Province and your role with the Department of Education, did that have any mention of vaccination requirements?

**Tami Clarke**

It did not.

**Criss Hochhold**

What was the reason given by your employer for requiring employees to be vaccinated?

**Tami Clarke**

So that we didn't spread COVID-19 to others.

**Criss Hochhold**

I'm just going to think about what specifically was your role within the Department of Education.

[00:05:00]

I know you said educator, but can you be more specific? Can you elaborate on that please?

**Tami Clarke**

I was a coordinator for the transcripts and international programs. I was only dealing with the people in my group, and there was three of us all together and no members of the public whatsoever.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you had three of you working together as a group in an office setting.

**Tami Clarke**

Yes, in an office of three to four hundred people approximately.

**Criss Hochhold**

But how many for you, you said in a group of three?

**Tami Clarke**

Just three for us in my division, specifically.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay.

**Tami Clarke**

Including myself.

**Criss Hochhold**

So there was really no reason given for them why they required the vaccination other than nothing at all? No reason other than just that you need to get this done?

**Tami Clarke**

It was just so that we don't get COVID-19 or spread it to people around us. And that we are civil servants, so we are the people who the province would look to for direction, I suppose.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you seek an accommodation for a vaccine? I know you sent an email off to the NSGEU regarding asking them not to implement the mandates, but did you send any correspondence asking them for an accommodation?

**Tami Clarke**

No.

**Criss Hochhold**

How come?

**Tami Clarke**

I had people who I knew that were in my department and otherwise that had asked for accommodations, well, an exemption to the vaccine for religious reasons and reasons that were much worse than mine. Heart conditions and things like that. And they were all denied, so I didn't bother to go that route.

**Criss Hochhold**

So no accommodations or exemptions at that point then, you thought.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you felt you had choice in regards to getting a vaccination, for your employment?

**Tami Clarke**

My choice was either be vaccinated or be unemployed with no income.

**Criss Hochhold**

Which route did you choose?

**Tami Clarke**

I chose to be vaccinated.

**Criss Hochhold**

How did you feel about that decision?

**Tami Clarke**

I felt like my autonomy was taken away. I felt like I didn't have the freedom to choose what chemicals were in my body. And I felt like I was taking a drug that hadn't been tested and that I could die or have something that's long-term like Kirk.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you were scared.

**Tami Clarke**

Oh yeah, yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

How long after—I guess to put it in perspective, with Kirk’s health issues—did you go through this?

**Tami Clarke**

How long did I go through—

**Criss Hochhold**

When Kirk had health issue side effects, how long into his side effects, into his health issues, before you had to make a decision to get vaccinated? Is this early on after his vaccine injury?

**Tami Clarke**

It was about a month.

**Criss Hochhold**

About a month. So quite fresh.

**Tami Clarke**

So in November, I had to be vaccinated with my first vaccination and his condition was diagnosed in October, October 19th.

**Criss Hochhold**

So weeks, barely. Do you remember where you got the vaccine?

**Tami Clarke**

Yes. At the Independent Grocer in Hubbards, Nova Scotia.

**Criss Hochhold**

Do you remember who administered it to you?

**Tami Clarke**

I don’t know her name, but I could find it. I think there’s only a staff of under five there.

**Criss Hochhold**

Perhaps, do you know what the role was, a pharmacist?

**Tami Clarke**

Yes, a pharmacist.

**Criss Hochhold**

Were you advised of any risks?

**Tami Clarke**

Yes, I don't remember what they were. It was a short thing that they sort of did; I think it may have been a page. It was quite quick. Your choice was either say yes or don't have the vaccine.

**Criss Hochhold**

Just like Kirk, you're a young lady. Given your age and your health, did they do a personal risk assessment on you, from the pharmacist's perspective, in terms of a need of a COVID vaccine?

**Tami Clarke**

No, I do remember filling out a form prior to getting the vaccine that was a government form asking if I had any autoimmune issues. And I did tell them that I have Graves' disease, but they knew that. So I informed the pharmacist, without prompting, that I have that. And she said I was fine, good to go.

[00:10:00]

**Criss Hochhold**

No issues.

**Tami Clarke**

No.

**Criss Hochhold**

Do you remember which date you received the vaccines?

**Tami Clarke**

I received my vaccine on November—the first one, November 24th, 2021.

**Criss Hochhold**

Do you have a lot number with you as well?

**Tami Clarke**

Yes, it's FF5109.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you have any symptoms, any signs, anything going on after your vaccine?

**Tami Clarke**

I felt traumatized by the vaccine, so it would be anxiety and—yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

Any side effects from the vaccination other than the mental health side, the anxiety, the depression, potentially?

**Tami Clarke**

No.

**Criss Hochhold**

Thank you. You had to take a second vaccine as well.

**Tami Clarke**

I did. In order to go back to work again, I needed a second vaccination.

**Criss Hochhold**

And you received that when?

**Tami Clarke**

January 18th, 2022.

**Criss Hochhold**

Do you have the lot number for that as well, please.

**Tami Clarke**

Same. FF5109.

**Criss Hochhold**

Same lot number.

**Tami Clarke**

It was.

**Criss Hochhold**

About six weeks apart. Any signs of symptoms regarding the second vaccine?



**Tami Clarke**

Other than the feelings of anxiety and trauma, no.

**Criss Hochhold**

Tami, we only have a few minutes left, but I want to dig just two things. I cannot imagine what you went through. How did it make you feel having to go get a vaccination, knowing that your spouse had a significant vaccine injury? And your employer was unwilling to listen and nor apparently was the Province. How did that make you feel?

**Tami Clarke**

Horrible. I feel like there's no trust. I feel like there's a broken system and I am just a number. I don't feel like there's a human side of things and there was an agenda and it was just the agenda and not me. And, yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

How were you guys affected financially with all this? Because Kirk is not able to work at this point in time. But I wanted to run over it if that's okay.

**Tami Clarke**

He had to go on unemployment insurance at first and then, in between unemployment insurance and the benefits from his workplace for disability, there was 120 days of no income whatsoever for Kirk. And for me, I was on short-term illness as long as I could be through my employer, but then it would go down to 70 per cent. And I was able to— I had to go back to work at that point. So we've had to determine which bills to pay. If we can afford to eat the same way. If we can visit our family at Cape Breton because we can't afford gas. Just lots of decision-making that we never had to make before.

**Criss Hochhold**

You've been able to find employment a little closer since then. Has the situation improved over the last little while? Is there a light at the end of the tunnel for you?

**Tami Clarke**

I'm closer to my home, so I don't worry for Kirk as much. Now that I have a new employer, I feel like they understand that sometimes I have to work from home if Kirk isn't feeling well because I just want to make sure that I can take him to the hospital if he needs to go. Yeah, I feel like it's a more positive workplace.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you have an employer that actually accommodated you needs.

**Tami Clarke**

Yes.

**Criss Hochhold**

We are slightly over time, so I'll stop my questions now. But I'll see if the commissioners have any questions. No?

Tami, thank you very, very much. I really appreciate you.

**Tami Clarke**

Thank you.

[00:15:03]



***Final Review and Approval:*** Jodi Bruhn, August 3, 2023.

*The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method.*

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