

Lawsuit launched against B.C. Ear Bank

Class action names UBC, Providence Health and Vancouver Coastal Health as defendants

Broadcast News

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

VANCOUVER -- A class action suit has been filed against the B.C. Ear Bank over fears that some tissues supplied by the bank could have been contaminated with diseases like HIV or hepatitis.

The suit grew out of a Health Canada report that accused the bank of not keeping proper records to confirm that appropriate screening of tissue donors had been done.

The suit says as a result of the report, unused tissue was recalled and patients who had been given tissue were urged to be tested for HIV and hepatitis.

One of those patients is Margaret Birrell, who had an ear operation at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver in 1994 and received tissues supplied by the ear bank.

She is the lead plaintiff in the class action filed by Vancouver lawyer David Klein.

The suit names as defendants the University of B.C., which helped oversee the ear bank, Providence Health Care Society, which operates St. Paul's, and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

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