

Hello. I'm Judith Beaman, head of the independent Motherisk Commission. In this video, I'll update you on the Commission's work over the past year and share our plans for this year. I'll also describe how the Commission might be able to help you or your family.

The Ontario government set up the Commission a year ago to offer support to people affected by flawed hair testing done by the Motherisk lab at SickKids hospital. The testing was used in child protection cases to see if parents were using drugs or alcohol. It was carried out from 1990 to 2015.

Justice Susan Lang who had conducted a review of the lab's hair-strand testing, had found that the results obtained were inadequate and unreliable for legal purposes. She recommended that this Commission be set

up to help individuals and families who may have been harmed by the flawed hair testing. So far, 146 people have contacted the Commission looking for help, and we have reviewed over 500 individual cases that are in the child welfare system, awaiting a final decision. This year, we'll be reviewing many more cases. We're doing in-depth reviews of these files to see whether the hair testing played a *substantial* role in the outcome of the case. If it did, the Commission will contact everyone who was affected and help them get legal advice.

The Commission also offers counseling and dispute resolution free of charge for people who were affected by the testing. Counseling is confidential and independent of the Commission. It's also completely optional. You don't

have to receive counseling for the Commission to review your case.

My team and I have met with many organizations and visited communities across Ontario to talk about the work of the Motherisk Commission. We have made special efforts to connect with communities that were most affected by the flawed hair testing... people who are racialized, Indigenous peoples, and children and youth. We're listening carefully, analyzing each situation, offering advice and helping people who were affected to find a remedy, wherever possible.

That's what we did in 2016.

This year, as I mentioned, we're continuing to review individual cases and help people who contact us for support.

We'll also be bringing people and organizations together to talk about what we have learned so far, and to help restore relationships and confidence in the child protection system.

We want to talk about what happened and to whom; why it happened; why it matters; and what changes are needed to prevent it from ever happening again. We want to hear from people with many different experiences and perspectives... people who were affected by the testing, children's aid societies, legal organizations, community groups and others.

At the end of the year, I will be submitting a report to the government on the Commission's activities and what we have learned.

If you believe that you or your family was wrongly affected by a Motherisk test, please contact us. We're here to help.

Email [info@motheriskcommission.ca](mailto:info@motheriskcommission.ca); telephone 1-844-303-5476; or write to us at 400 University Avenue, Suite 1800A, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2R9. We'll get back to you quickly.

There is more information is on our web page

[www.motheriskcommission.ca](http://www.motheriskcommission.ca)

Thank you.