



**Summary of Remarks by Pesticide Research Team
Queen's Park News Conference
April 23, 2004**

BACKGROUND ONLY — NOT TO BE USED AS ATTRIBUTED QUOTES

1. Our review has found evidence of serious harmful effects in several areas including cancer, reproductive effects and impacts on the nervous system. These effects are found in both occupational and home and garden exposures.
2. We intend to use the results of the review to update patient education materials and develop tools for family doctors that will help them to reduce the pesticide exposures of their patients.

We believe family physicians need to use a precautionary approach in informing patients about pesticide-related risks to health. This approach calls for precautionary measures to be taken where there is evidence of harm, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully understood. It also places responsibility on producers and marketers of pesticides to prove their safety, not on the consumer to prove harm. Post-marketing surveillance for health effects is a routine and expected part of drug marketing, and we would like to see pesticide producers taking a leading role in similar studies of pesticides.

3. Last November, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma researchers Hardell and Eriksson published a study to analyze whether the banning of 2,4-D in Sweden 27 years ago had reduced the rate of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma there. Their analysis concluded that 3 to 7.7% of cases of that cancer are attributable to exposure to phenoxyacetic acids (such as 2,4-D) and chlorophenols. This raises the hope that legislation such as the province-wide ban on cosmetic use of pesticides in Quebec could have a positive impact on our patients' health. We support efforts to reduce exposure to pesticides, such as the Toronto pesticide bylaw, and also support a comprehensive province-wide approach that could include education and legislation.
4. Our review suggests the need for 2 large longitudinal studies:
 - i) We need to study the pesticide exposures of a group of women intending to become pregnant, follow them through pregnancies,

- and continue with health studies of their children to learn more about critical times and levels of exposure;
- ii) We need to study a large cohort of children to determine their vulnerability to environmental problems including pesticide exposure, similar to the study already underway in the United States.
5. Finally, the leukemia study from Montreal showed that over 40% of children in the Montreal area had a specific genetic vulnerability to the effects of pesticides due to having a genetic makeup that caused them to metabolize pesticides slowly. Given that such a large proportion of society is vulnerable to harmful effects, action to reduce public exposure is justified, and needed.