

Pending final funding approval and scheduling details, the Ad Hoc Committee on NRT and the UPEI Student's Union will announce an October schedule of events. The schedule will feature feminist and journalist, Susan Coles, from the Canadian Program Service, as Public Forum presenter as well as three panel presentations and workshop sessions in each county. The panel presentations will precede the workshops and will include expert presentations on the medical, legal, and social realities and implications of NRT on Prince Edward Island. All sessions will be free of charge.

Advisory Council Chairperson, Linda Gallant, says, "Public consultative sessions are both necessary and timely. A public forum, county-based panel discussions, and workshop opportunities will help 'de-mystify' confusing technologies and procedures such as, in-vitro fertilization, surrogacy, and sex manipulation. We hope that Islanders will get involved in an issue that affects all of us in our society."

In preparation for the Advisory Council's submission to the Royal Commission in October, council and staff members held consultative meetings with interested women and women's groups. Chairperson Linda Gallant says more input is needed and looks forward to the fall information sessions. "The public-at-large must be given the opportunity to obtain current and understandable information about the social, ethical, health, research, legal and economic implications of NRT. The Island's public interest must be considered, recommending what policies and safeguards should be applied."

The East Prince Women's Information Centre (E.P.W.I.C.) is enthusiastic about the fall line-up of planned activities. Leslie Howes, E.P.W.I.C.'s Coordinator and member of the Ad Hoc Committee on NRT, says. "We are pleased about the campaign to involve Islanders in the current debate on NRT. The format serves the function of getting the information out as well as encouraging one-on-one and group discussion. This is vital, as not everyone will be granted an opportunity to appear before the

Royal Commission. Now, those that present may do so with valuable input from the voices of interested Islanders, representing both the rural and town centres.

UPEI Student Union President, Andrea Ledwell, agrees and adds, "Education on the issues of the future of human reproduction - the technological advancements and how we really feel about the process of bringing humans into the world, is crucial. Not enough is known about NRT and the medical, scientific, and legal terminology often surrounding this topic makes for an intimidating experience for most." Ms. Ledwell states, "It's time we get involved, ask questions, and make some decisions about the future that NRT will play in our lives. The NRT Information for P.E.I. will be a healthy opportunity to begin the process of public debate especially if we are to make informed decisions about our futures and the futures of our children."

Details of the schedule of events will be published as they are finalized. Please contact the P.E.I. Advisory Council on the Status of Women for more information.



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