



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 1

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EVIDENCE

Witness 7: Judy Soroka

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[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Our next witness today is Judy Soroka. Judy, can you state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name.

Judy Soroka

My full name is Judy Soroka, S-O-R-O-K-A.

Shawn Buckley

Judy, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

Judy Soroka

I do.

Shawn Buckley

Now, you are a retired nurse.

Judy Soroka

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And in connection to your nursing practice, you sustained a back injury back in 1992, which is now chronic?

Judy Soroka

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

But that injury resolved and you were able to keep working as a nurse.

Judy Soroka

Correct.

Shawn Buckley

Now, over the years and into your retirement in 2017, you basically were able to keep things going and in check by doing things like having chiropractic, massage, physio, and other things. Can you tell us about that? Tell us what you were doing, and then tell us what changed once the lockdowns came.

Judy Soroka

After the injury resolved, I really didn't need any regular health practitioner services. I was able to exercise, maintain a healthy lifestyle with running and hiking and doing gardening. I love gardening, and the like. And then as, of course, aging happens, I was having some discomfort and went to my doctor, and she suggested I see a sports medicine therapist.

This was in 2009. And he recommended a prolotherapy, which is a different kind of therapy. It's not cortisone injections, but they use a 10-inch needle on a 10-millimetre syringe and inject a sugar solution in the back just to stimulate the healing of the back. And that worked very, very well. I was able to go back to do whatever I was doing. And then when the lockdowns came, I was able to go to the gym. I was lifting weights. I was probably the healthiest person, for a nurse. For a nurse, we always sustain injuries. I was doing pretty good. And then when the lockdowns happened, I could not go to the gym. I could not swim. And I began to have more pain. So I went back to my doctor and again referred me to the same sports medicine specialist. Fortunately, he was still around. He hadn't retired. And again, I had the same prolotherapy treatment in the other side.

And just so you know, those treatments are not covered by Alberta Health Care. They're about \$250 a shot and looked about— Usually about 10 injections into the site. That did not really resolve the problem. The first one was successful. This one was not quite successful. I finished the treatments in 2021. In conjunction with this therapy, I also was to go to a physiotherapy. There are special exercises to do to help with the healing and the strengthening and endurance. And I was not able to do that because of the lockdowns. Moreover, I chose not to get the gene therapy based on my research. And of course, there's repercussions from that. So when the lockdowns were lifted and we needed the vaccine passport, I was disallowed from participating in society as other people did. I was not given the privilege.

Shawn Buckley

And just so we're clear. So you weren't able to go swimming again. Which was necessary for you to keep your back problem in check?

Judy Soroka

Yes, and to go to the gym to do the exercises that I had to do. I was not able to do that. So consequently I still had more pain. I went back to my doctor, and I said, "I think I've got a new normal going on here." She says, though, "There's no new normal for you." And I've

been with her for over 30 years. And we did the x-rays, and the x-rays have shown that I have deteriorated in my spine. I've got a bit of a curvature and my spine is now twisted where it's impinging on my spinal cord. Surgery is not an option; risks outweigh the benefits. If I'm unable to maintain some sort of mobility I could end up in a wheelchair.

Shawn Buckley

Am I correct that if it twists any more, there's a danger of paralysis?

Judy Soroka

Yes, that's correct.

Shawn Buckley

You were telling us that you were very active prior to the lockdown. My understanding is,

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and you mentioned garden, but basically you would also hike. You were a White Hat Volunteer at the Calgary Airport, so you'd be walking a couple of k [Kilometres] a volunteer shift. Basically, you were extremely active prior to the lockdowns.

Judy Soroka

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

How are you now?

Judy Soroka

I've had to give up a lot of things, which is very, very hard for me. People accuse me of "the moss doesn't grow under my feet." My husband can attest to that. But I've had to give up gardening. I cannot go back to the airport at Calgary. I cannot walk long distances. I cannot sit for lengths of time. My height is actually shrunk two inches, and I am short and that doesn't help matters.

I've got beautiful grandchildren. I cannot play with them like I'd like to. It's not a day that goes by that I don't have pain. I have declined to go on strong painkillers, like narcotics or using cannabis or anything like that, because I could not function that way. So I live with pain pretty much every day. I bought a new mattress, three thousand dollars for a new mattress, to see if that would help. I've done everything I can. And in discussion with my doctor, she didn't really intimate that it was because of the lockdowns, but she has recognized there was a change in my physical status before and now.

Shawn Buckley

Now, how has this affected you socially, the lockdowns, and then also not being to attend in different places because you're not vaccinated?

Judy Soroka

There has been a huge division. I've lost, as a previous lady mentioned, I've lost long-term friends. They're afraid to be around me. My mother passed away in September of 2021. She was admitted to the Peter Lougheed Hospital, diagnosed with one condition, but she died with COVID. And there's an accusation that I gave her COVID because I was not jabbed, if I may say so. And that was really hard. The remarks were very, very cruel. And my mother had not been vaccinated, injected, until she was into the hospital, and she died within a few weeks. Socially, yes, I've lost long-term friends. I will be celebrating my 45 nursing-year reunion in June. And I cannot go to that because there have been comments made from my classmates—who I thought better of, as critical thinking nurses open to debate and dialogue—that the unvaccinated essentially should not be part of society, and it would be okay if they just died.

Shawn Buckley

And how do comments like that make you feel?

Judy Soroka

It's very hurtful, very cruel, and I do acknowledge that and I do mention that. But it just doesn't seem to sink in that those remarks are very cruel and very hurtful and that it's not true.

Shawn Buckley

Judy, I don't have any further questions. I'll ask if the commissioners have any questions for you. And there are no questions. Judy, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I sincerely thank you for your testimony today.

Judy Soroka

Thank you for your time.

[00:08:39]

Final Review and Approval: Anna Cairns, August 30, 2023.

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