

Hospital Records Open To Public Scrutiny

October 20, 2010

Legislation proposed today would, if passed, improve the transparency and accountability of hospitals by making them subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) as of January 1, 2012.

Hospitals would have until January 1, 2012 to implement any necessary processes and protocols needed to support the administration of the Act.

Personal health information is excluded and remains protected by the Personal Health Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner has supported extending FIPPA to the hospital sector.

Hospitals are subject to access and privacy legislation in British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland.

Expanding freedom of information:

Cancer Care Ontario became subject to FIPPA in 2010.

Ontario brought publicly funded universities under FIPPA in June 2006.

Local Health Integration Networks were covered by FIPPA in 2005.

The energy sector including Hydro One, and Ontario Power Generation were brought back under FIPPA in 2005 and local public utilities in 2004.

The *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), 2004*, established privacy protection for personal health information, and provides individuals with a right of access to their personal health information.

Increasing transparency:

The government has taken several other steps to increase transparency and accountability:

In April 2010 the Government of Ontario launched its expenses disclosure [web site](#), where for the first time the expense claim information of cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, political staff, government appointees, and senior management in ministries is posted publicly. The site also provides links to web sites of 22 of Ontario's largest agencies where the expense claim information of senior executives, appointees and the top five claimants is also posted.

The *Public Sector Expenses Review Act, 2009*, enables the Integrity Commissioner to review the expense claims of appointees and senior executives of designated government agencies and organizations.

The *Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004*, provides unprecedented transparency and accountability to the province's books prior to an election. The Ministry of Finance released the first Pre-Election Report on Ontario's Finances in April 2007.

The *Audit Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004*, broadens the powers of the Auditor General of Ontario to review public sector organizations like hospitals, school boards and universities.

The government also delivered on its commitment to ban partisan government advertising by putting groundbreaking legislation – the *Government Advertising Act* – into force in 2006. The legislation was the first of its kind in Canada.

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