



Return to Written Question

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MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Health Information Systems

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by Mr. Testart on March 14, 2018 regarding health information systems.

It is important to clarify that the purpose of the Health Information Act is to balance the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information for the provision of health and social services, with the safeguarding of individuals' rights as set out in the Act. Health Information Custodians are charged with the responsibility of complying with the Act, as well as appropriate use of one or more health information systems or applications designated by the Department of Health and Social Services to facilitate such compliance in the course of providing health and social services.

There are health and social services information systems used throughout the Northwest Territories. Most of the systems and technology are proprietary and the extent of modification allowable is limited by the technology. Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table a list of these health information systems to which Health Information Custodians must provide information under the Act. This list includes brief descriptions of the information systems.

Of the information systems used by the Health and Social Services Authorities and the Department, 15 have been designated as Electronic Health Information Systems under Section 6 of the Health Information Act Regulations.

The Department's investment in electronic health information technology includes the assessment and, where required, update, modification or purchase of technology to support the work of Health Information Custodians. Further, the Department's training for Health Information Custodians regarding the Health Information Act facilitates the appropriate use of this technology to fulfill responsibilities to their patients or clients and ensure compliance with the Act. The Department has not identified any existing health information system that currently requires modification, so no cost estimate is available at present.

As old technology is replaced and the Department makes new investments in information systems, advances in technological options to support custodians in meeting their obligations to provide safe care and improve client outcomes are carefully considered. The Department and the Health and Social Services Authorities continue to make investments in technology that enable best care and improvements to health outcomes for our clients.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.