

May 1, 2020

**Public Statement:
Information and Privacy Call for Investigation on Behalf of Patients and Physician Members**

On April 28th the Minister of Health's press secretary released information via the Edmonton Journal stating the government has looked at the Garneau Pediatric Associates individual clinic billing and publically released billing information for this single clinic. The details are in the "Edmonton pediatrician warns of service cuts thanks to changes billing" article. The Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association has sent a letter to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta to formally request an investigation to determine if there was a privacy breach by the Minister's office.

As physicians we tirelessly advocate in the interest of our patients. The Garneau Pediatric Associates were passionately representing their patients' access to care in this article and now we are standing together for patients' information privacy. Billing data collected by Alberta Health contains private information protected by the *Health Information Act*. We are filing this complaint to ensure the Minister's office did not access patient information inappropriately. Private patient information must not be obtained and used for politics.

We are also concerned that the political staffers of the Minister breached the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* by obtaining business information of the Garneau Pediatric Associates and releasing it to the public. An investigation will bring to light if the Minister's office has violated the Act. Despite the formal inquiry, as colleagues of the Garneau Pediatric Associates, we are deeply troubled that the UCP would single out a clinic to induce fear, anxiety and intimidation. It is distasteful and unbecoming of a Minister's office to abuse their power by menacing our colleagues.

The Edmonton Zone Medical Staff Association is here for patients and physician members. We appreciate the professionalism and diligence of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta in conducting this review. A formal investigation will provide much needed answers for our patients and colleagues.