

THE RED ROOM

To all MLAs of Nova Scotia and Law Ammendment Committee Members

I would like to be clear, the Public needs to have trust to receive safe healthcare from providers. They also need privacy. Giving custodians access to detailed patient records without patient consent should not be a best practice.

I am not against advancements in New Technology for the purposes of Healthcare Improvements and accessibility nor am I against providing options for patients to obtain safe pathways to access their Healthcare Information. But there is concern regardig lack of Resources available for individual victims of Privacy breach. Nova Scotia lacks an Enforcement Officer for The Personal Health Information Act. So if a Custodian should be found to have violated patient privacy, complainants may be left to fend for themselves to address the issue.

Communities have worked tirelessly to encourage victims of various assults to trust thier Healthcare Circle, to receive treatment patients need to know that they are safe sharing details that sometimes require reports to law enforcement. Details and accounts of serious Injuries,Diagnosis and sometimes sexual assults or abuse. The loss of that trust could make it very difficult for Drs and Nurses to treat future patients. Knowing that details of those reports could one day be accessed outside of that Circle of Care could deter would be future patients from seeking healthcare or needed treatments of all kind both physical or theraputic.

Therefore, it is my view that patients should be informed and with their basic Human Right, decide individually, exactly what private health information is accessed or shared and the intended use. Such as research!

As the Minister of Health mentioned aggregated data. Does the publice know the use of aggregated data? Is consent required?

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Patient information is of great monetary value and requires careful considerations and Protection against misuse.

I implore the members of this committee to consider the possible impacts to mental health of existing and future patients that believe their information is held in the strictest of confidence with the highest levels of security. I would worry that this change to existing legislation could be risky, taking into consideration the N.S. Government has already ordered a review of The Freedom of Information Privacy Legislation and working groups are reported to deliver recommendations by spring of 2025. Why add new Custodians now? I worry that our Nova Scotia Government has not kept pace with technology and may not be able to provide appropriate privacy protections for yet another group of Custodians.

Patients have a right to informed consent when attempts are made to give Custodians not in their circle of care access to their private health information.

It is also my understanding but for a few exceptions, Canadas data law requires that health information custodians obtain consent before they collect, use or disclose personal health information.

But the most important piece is that the Public continue to expect that conversations, including sensitive healthcare information, details of mental health diagnosis and trauma be kept CONFIDENTIAL between Drs, Nurses, and Therapists unless required by law to save a life, or with informed consent when deciding to share outside of their circle of care.

I thank you for allowing me to be a voice today not only for myself but many others.

And I thank you for your time.

Carrie Smith

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