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**Stronger Protection of Personal Health Information is in the Works**

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart today announced that the Yukon government is developing a personal health information act.

“Personal health information is collected by government and by a variety of health-care providers to inform decisions about health care,” Hart said. “Yukoners expect this information to be protected by all health-care providers. We need to develop additional protections, given the sensitivity of information and the technological changes that are being made in health care, while ensuring that our health-care providers have the information they need to provide the highest quality care.”

The legislation is being developed through two phases of consultations. During the first phase, a reference group composed of key health-care providers will be created to provide recommendations on major policy issues to be addressed in the new act. The second phase of the consultation will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the proposed act.

“Given the fact that Yukon residents must often travel to a health-care provider in another province or territory, access to a person’s information is necessary in order to provide responsive, appropriate care,” Hart added.

Hart said he expects the new act will address the sharing of information required by health-care professionals in other Canadian jurisdictions, in a protected manner. The legislation must support a system that uses both electronic and paper health records and allows personal health information to be accessed by health-care professionals when and where necessary. In addition, any new legislation needs to be able to respond to technological advancements.

Over the next 12 months, a reference group will develop recommendations on the legislation that supports improved quality of health-care services while protecting personal health information. A public consultation paper will be available following the work of the reference group.

Meanwhile, the Yukon government will continue to work on developing its electronic health records system.

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