

Shared Health investigating breach of personal health information

October 25, 2019 – Shared Health is distributing letters this week to patients affected by a personal health information breach at Health Sciences Centre (HSC) Winnipeg Children’s Hospital. The breach was discovered following a break-in involving a locked cabinet in the reception/admitting area of HSC Children’s. A number of documents containing patient information were stolen during the incident, which occurred in the late evening/early morning hours of October 22/23.

“The safety and security of our patients’ personal information is a responsibility we take very seriously,” said Ronan Segrave, chief operating officer of HSC, a Shared Health facility. “We are collaborating with Winnipeg Police Service to investigate this event and are reviewing our security procedures to determine any steps necessary to enhance how we protect and store patient-related information.”

The information taken was kept in a locked cabinet in the reception/admitting area of HSC Children’s. Records containing health information of 54 individuals were stolen during this event. These records relate to two days’ worth of scheduled surgical procedures and include patients from Manitoba, Ontario and Nunavut, all of whom are minors.

Patient information contained in the stolen records could include the following:

- Patient Name & Medical Record Number
- PHIN
- Patient Date of Birth
- Patient Phone Number and address
- Contact Person Name, Phone Number, Address & Relationship
- Diagnosis & Type of Procedure
- Name of Surgeon
- Allergies

Shared Health is providing this information out of an abundance of caution as efforts are taken to ensure anyone affected is aware. Winnipeg Police Services were notified immediately upon discovery of the break-in. The Manitoba Ombudsman has also been notified.

Anyone affected by this breach will receive a letter from Shared Health’s Chief Privacy Officer. At this point, there is no indication that patients need to take any further action to guard their personal health information as a result of this breach.

“We want to assure our patients and their families that we are taking every measure to ensure this type of incident does not happen again in the future,” said Segrave. “We can provide families with our assurance that we have no evidence to indicate this was a targeted event, and offer our sincere apologies for the concern this information is sure to cause.”

HSC and Shared Health will be conducting a review of the incident, including a security assessment of areas where patient records are stored. Additional security measures have already been put in place to protect existing files.

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