



News Release

Provincial Auditor

Medical equipment not properly maintained, says Auditor

For release after the Report has been tabled.

REGINA, December 1, 2010 – Poorly-maintained medical equipment is putting Saskatchewan patients at risk, according to Acting Provincial Auditor, Brian Atkinson. The Auditor's comments accompanied the release of his 2010 Report – Volume 2.

The Auditor found that Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority did not adequately maintain equipment used to diagnose and treat patients. "About 28% of the equipment tested in our audit was not properly serviced," said Atkinson. The Auditor expects this issue is not confined to this Authority. "I encourage all regional health authorities to use our findings to assess their equipment maintenance processes."

The Auditor expressed concern over the Ministry of Social Services' limited progress in protecting children. After two years of urging, the Auditor found the Ministry still did not know how many children were in the Minister's care, who they were, and where they lived. Ministry employees were not following the Ministry's policies for placing and protecting children. "As a result of these deficiencies, the Ministry did not know if the children it was responsible to protect were safe and receiving proper care," said Atkinson.

The Government continues to focus on inaccurate and incomplete information when reporting its finances, according to the Auditor. The Government focuses primarily on the General Revenue Fund (GRF) even though the GRF does not include significant parts of the Government's activities. The Government can manage the results of the GRF by moving money between the GRF and government agencies. "Saskatchewan lags behind the other provinces in its reporting," said Atkinson. "Other provinces focus on summary-level reporting that includes all government. So should the Government of Saskatchewan."

The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority is responsible for managing risks to the province's water supply. Changes in population, water use, climate and weather impact the availability of water. The Auditor found that the Authority did not have adequate processes to identify risks to the water supply. The Authority needs to do a better job of identifying risks in order to manage them.

The Auditor also found the Government neglected to collect all its revenues. The Ministry of Agriculture did not know if it was charging the right rates on land it leases for petroleum and natural gas production. The Ministry estimates that it undercharged lessees \$600,000. The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport continued commercial leases in Saskatchewan parks (for operations such as golf courses) even when lessees were several years behind in payments. Unpaid amounts totalled more than \$1 million. The Ministry of Justice did not claim expenses to which it was entitled under a cost-sharing agreement with the Federal Government. The unclaimed expenses totalled \$1.8 million.

The report describes how the Office of the Provincial Auditor has been denied access to audit certain accounts related to public money. *The Provincial Auditor Act* requires the Auditor to audit all accounts related to public money. However, the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises has not permitted the Auditor access to audit. In addition, Sask Lotteries and the Western Canadian Lottery Corporation have denied the Auditor access to audit their accounts related to public money. Because the Auditor has been denied access, he is unable to report to the Legislative Assembly on whether this public money was appropriately safeguarded and spent for the purposes intended.

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The *2010 Report – Volume 2* is available on the Internet at www.auditor.sk.ca.

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