



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**News Release**

**Auditor: Stronger Hospital Discharge Processes for Patient Safety and Bed Management Needed**

**REGINA, Sask., June 3, 2015** – Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority needs to strengthen how it discharges patients from hospitals to reduce the risk of re-admissions, and achieve better health outcomes for patients, says Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson in her *2015 Report – Volume 1*, tabled today. In her Report, Ferguson notes that better communication between healthcare providers is required to help streamline the hospital discharge process and keep patients safe.

Making sure that patients get the care they need both during and after a hospital stay requires the coordination of many healthcare providers and services. The Provincial Auditor reports that all key decision makers were not always actively involved in discharge planning for patients. This increases the risk of inconsistent or incorrect discharge information, and impacts the ability of healthcare providers to plan appropriate care for patients after they are discharged. “An uncoordinated hospital discharge may result in health complications for patients after they leave the hospital or conversely, may result in patients staying in the hospital longer than needed and poor bed management,” says Ferguson. “Regina Qu'Appelle needs to address this by developing strategies to facilitate better communication between doctors and the rest of the healthcare team.”

Regina Qu'Appelle also needs to make sure that healthcare providers properly transfer patient discharge information. For example, the Provincial Auditor found that information on patients' hospital stays was not always forwarded to the post-discharge care providers in a timely manner. “This information is necessary for maintaining continuity of care,” says Ferguson. In addition, medication reviews were not always performed at the time of discharge. The Provincial Auditor notes that medication reviews reduce the risk of medication errors, and can help prevent costly re-admissions into the healthcare system.

The provincial government provides assistance when emergencies overwhelm the resources or capacity of local authorities (municipalities). In her Report, the Provincial Auditor describes how well the Ministry of Government Relations coordinates emergency preparedness in the province. Because emergencies can happen suddenly and without warning, Ferguson states that the Ministry must ensure the Government is ready. The Ministry needs to do more to keep up-to-date assessments of risks of potential emergencies that could require provincial assistance each year, and confirm that key provincial government organizations have emergency management plans that align with the provincial plan. These steps will better coordinate responses, and help reduce the human and financial impact of emergencies.

Additional issues highlighted in the Provincial Auditor's Report include:

- ✧ Coordinating English-language programs for recent immigrants
- ✧ Monitoring vehicle inspection stations that certify vehicles for Saskatchewan roads
- ✧ Inspecting industrial wastewater sites to protect human health and the environment
- ✧ Buying power from the private sector
- ✧ Evaluating potential use of public-private partnerships (P3s)
- ✧ Implementing the sector-wide strategic plan for the Prekindergarten to Grade 12 education sector



Further details regarding the key topics covered in Volume 1 of the 2015 Report can be found in the accompanying [Backgrounder](#). The full *Provincial Auditor's 2015 Report – Volume 1* is available online at [www.auditor.sk.ca](http://www.auditor.sk.ca).

*The Provincial Auditor is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. The Office serves the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan by providing independent assurance and advice on the management, governance, and effective use of public resources.*

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