

2020 Report – Volume 1 Summary of Main Points

ANNUAL INTEGRATED AUDITS AND IT AUDIT WORK

Chapter 1 Government Relations—Northern Municipal Trust Account

Other than the following, the Ministry of Government Relations had effective rules and procedures to safeguard the Northern Municipal Trust Account's public resources. The Ministry did not:

- Adequately supervise staff responsible for recording Trust Account financial information including making sure it had complete and accurate information to prepare financial statements. The 2018 financial statements presented for audit contained significant errors (undisclosed contractual rights related to leases, and improperly recorded water and sewer expenses). Management corrected these errors; the Trust Account's 2018 financial statements are reliable.
- Adequately segregate duties of employees responsible for key accounting functions of the Trust Account (e.g., receiving money, preparing bank deposits, making payments)
- Prepare bank reconciliations of the Trust Account before the end of the following month—as its policy expects

Effective financial controls help ensure management has quality information to make decisions.

Chapter 2 Highways and Infrastructure

The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure had effective rules and procedures to safeguard public resources for the year ended March 31, 2019 other than the following areas.

The Ministry's Saskatchewan Highway Patrol needs to always follow policies when making purchases with purchasing cards (e.g., only making purchases within approved individual transaction limits, having supervisors approve transactions). This helps the Ministry treat suppliers equitably, and verify purchases are for legitimate business purposes.

Also, the Ministry needs stronger processes to oversee purchases of Highway Patrol equipment and supplies, and track regulated Highway Patrol equipment, such as firearms and ammunition. Requiring additional approvals or limiting these types of purchases to a few individuals would reduce the risk of buying unauthorized or inappropriate items. Given the portable and regulated nature of Highway Patrol equipment, tracking them and their use reduces the risk of liability for misplaced or lost items used for inappropriate purposes.

Furthermore, Ministry staff continues not to always ensure unneeded user access is removed promptly from its IT systems. Not following these established processes makes the Ministry's data and systems vulnerable to inappropriate access.

During 2018-19, the Ministry and the Transportation Partnerships Fund complied with the authorities governing their activities relating to financial reporting, safeguarding public resources, revenue raising, spending, borrowing and investing, except that the Ministry did not always obtain quotes or tenders in accordance with The Purchasing Act, 2004.

The 2018-19 financial statements of the Transportation Partnerships Fund are reliable.



Chapter 3 Public Service Commission—Centrally Managing and Securing MIDAS HR/Payroll

The Public Service Commission manages the Government's human resources and payroll IT systems (MIDAS HR/Payroll) for 34 government ministries and agencies with approximately \$1 billion in annual payroll expenses. Annually, we complete specified auditing procedures to support our integrated audits of agencies that use MIDAS HR/Payroll.

The Commission uses third-party service providers to help manage and host its payroll systems. The Commission did not agree in writing on a deadline for receiving the annual audit report on security controls with the service provider responsible for hosting the online portal access for government employees (i.e., PSC Client). The Commission received the January to December 31, 2019 report timely (i.e., on March 6, 2020), but it did not receive reports timely for the prior three years.

Clear written deadlines could help the Commission consistently receive timely information to monitor security controls for PSC Client and its data.

Without timely information to monitor security controls at its key service providers, the Commission may be unaware of control deficiencies that could allow unauthorized disclosure of, or changes to, payroll data.

Chapter 4 Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Other than the need for better management of user access to its IT systems and data, the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) had effective rules and procedures to safeguard public resources as at December 31, 2019. WCB's 2019 financial statements were reliable and it complied with authorities governing its activities related to financial reporting, safeguarding public resources, revenue raising, spending, borrowing, and investing.

Chapter 5 School Divisions

This chapter summarizes the results of the 2018–19 annual audits of the 27 school divisions. The 2018–19 financial statements of each of these school divisions are reliable, and each complied with authorities governing its activities related to financial reporting, safeguarding public resources, revenue raising, spending, borrowing, and investing.

Twenty-four of the 27 school divisions had effective rules and procedures to safeguard public resources. Northern Lights needs to prepare and review financial reports for school-generated funds. Northwest needs to independently review and approve monthly bank reconciliations and journal entries. Sun West needs to test its IT disaster recovery plan.

Also, in 2018–19, Lloydminster Public improved its financial related controls and implemented previous recommendations.

PERFORMANCE AUDITS

Chapter 6 eHealth—Securing Portable Computing Devices

Portable computing devices (e.g., laptops, smartphones) create security risks for an organization because they are attractive targets for attackers, may become infected with a virus or malware, and are easy to lose.

This chapter reports on the processes eHealth Saskatchewan had to secure health information on portable computing devices from unauthorized access.

At August 2019, eHealth had effective processes, other than in the following areas, to secure health information on portable computing devices. eHealth needs to:

- Adequately configure portable computing devices

Unsupported and unencrypted laptops make it easier for an attacker to gain access to information stored on the device. Inappropriate security settings on portable computing devices can expose the device, and the eHealth IT network to viruses and malware.

- Regularly train staff on the security threats associated with portable devices

Uninformed staff are susceptible targets who may click on something that they should not, infecting their device with malware or a virus. This creates a potential access point for malicious software into the eHealth IT network.

- Take appropriate action when devices are reported as lost or stolen

Not properly wiping mobile devices or removing laptops from the eHealth IT network if lost or stolen increases the risk of unauthorized access to private and confidential health information on the device and into the network.

- Sufficiently control and monitor the eHealth IT network access to detect and prevent malicious activity

Portable devices create attack paths to corporate networks. Controlling and monitoring the eHealth IT network access helps mitigate the impact of security breaches.

Having proper controls over portable computer devices reduces the risk of security breaches including having personal health information fall into the wrong hands.

Chapter 7 Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority—Regulating Vehicle Dealers to Protect Consumers

The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority is responsible to regulate Saskatchewan's financial and consumer marketplace, including motor vehicle dealers.

The Authority had, other than in the following areas, effective processes for regulating motor vehicle dealers to protect consumers. The Authority needs to:

- Select motor vehicle dealers for inspection based on a formal analysis of key risks for non-compliance.

Using clearly defined risk factors to select motor vehicle dealers for inspection can help the Authority ensure it focuses inspection resources on dealers at higher risk of non-compliance. In addition, it can help the Authority plan for investigating unlicensed motor vehicle dealers. Having documented rationale for selecting dealers would also help demonstrate the use of a fair and consistent regulatory approach.

- Formally analyze the results of its enforcement activities so it can determine whether those activities achieve their intended impact.

Analyzing enforcement activity results (such as non-compliance trends) can help focus enforcement resources on areas that can best promote compliance. A well-defined risk-informed approach can help build Saskatchewan motor vehicle consumers' confidence in the Government's ability to protect their consumer rights.



Chapter 8 Horizon School Division No. 205—Maintaining Facilities

Horizon School Division No. 205 is responsible for maintaining 38 schools and four other facilities located across east-central Saskatchewan. Almost 90 percent of its schools are more than 50 years old, and on average, in poor condition (similar to the 2017 estimated provincial condition of schools).

At September 2019, Horizon had effective processes to maintain its facilities other than in the following areas. Horizon needs to determine whether it is doing enough and has the right maintenance to move towards having its facilities and components in a satisfactory condition. Specifically, Horizon needs to:

- Prioritize all identified maintenance deficiencies associated with fire protection and suppression systems and boilers. The audit identified seven sprinkler and 19 fire alarm systems with deficiencies unrepaired more than a year after the Division identified the deficiencies.

Prioritizing important maintenance deficiencies can help the Division avoid non-compliance with applicable codes and provide safe environments for all students, staff, and the public.

- Use the maintenance IT system to its full capacity, and keep information in that system up-to-date and accurate. Horizon did not use the system to keep up-to-date information about the condition of its assets, track key preventative maintenance activities it expected to do, or to fully track or monitor the completion of certain planned maintenance. We also found some information in the system was not accurate (e.g., not updated for completed maintenance).

Improved use of the maintenance IT system would assist the Division in better prioritizing identified maintenance deficiencies, and monitoring the completion of maintenance. Tracking key information for significant components in the maintenance IT system would enhance the Division's ability to plan, track, and monitor the maintenance of its facilities and components. This would enable the Division to use the system to monitor changes in facility conditions and deferred maintenance to help determine whether it is doing maintenance at the right time.

- Give the Board periodic, comprehensive maintenance reports about the results of its maintenance activities and anticipated impact to inform decision-making. The Division did not fully utilize its facilities maintenance budget over the past three years (including preventative maintenance funding from the Ministry of Education), even though it had an estimated deferred maintenance of over \$70 million.

Sufficient analysis and reporting of maintenance results enables the Board to assess whether the Division effectively maintains its facilities and components, and effectively uses maintenance funding.

Chapter 9 Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Saskatchewan—Providing Property Guardianship Services to Adult Clients

This chapter sets out the results of our audit of the processes the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Saskatchewan had for providing property guardianship services to its adult clients.

In providing property guardianship services the Office has, by law (subject to a court order appointing the Office), the authority to do most things that a capable person may do relating to their financial affairs.¹ This includes receiving income (e.g., Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability, Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, Old Age Security), paying expenses (e.g., rent, medical expenses, personal allowances), and holding, securing and managing assets (e.g., personal property, real estate, investments).

We found, at July 2019, that the Office had effective processes to provide property guardianship services to its adult clients, other than it needs to consistently keep rationale for key decisions when identifying property of adult clients, particularly those decisions requiring judgment of trust officers. Documenting rationale for key

¹ *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act* (s. 43) and *The Public Guardian and Trustee Act* (s. 30). The Office cannot make a will for the client.

decisions supports judgments made in specific instances. Keeping documentation of key decisions in client files would ease transitions of clients between trust officers (e.g., in event the assigned trust officer is on leave).

The Office must ensure the financial affairs and property of vulnerable members of society for whom it acts as property guardian are appropriately managed and not at risk.² Adult clients under property guardianship do not have the capacity to manage their own finances and property. This magnifies the importance of the Office having effective processes to provide property guardianship services to adult clients.

Chapter 10

Saskatchewan Research Council—Purchasing Goods and Services

The Saskatchewan Research Council purchases various goods and services to deliver research and development services. The Council purchased approximately \$72 million in goods and services in 2018-19.

This chapter sets out the results of our audit on the Council's process to purchase goods and services.

Overall, at November 2019, the Council has reasonable processes in place to purchase goods and services from suppliers. It needs to make improvements in the following areas:

- Give staff written guidance on setting the time tenders should remain open, and communicating tender results with suppliers.

Such guidance helps increase the likelihood of suppliers responding to tenders and the Council achieving best value. Also, establishing standard minimum tender periods and establishing guidance on communicating tender results would help the Council show it treats suppliers fairly and complies with external trade agreements.

- Consistently follow its established policies for purchasing cards (p-cards, company issued credit cards) including always respecting p-card individual transaction limits, and better monitoring changes to those limits.

Not following purchase card policies and monitoring individual card limits increases the risk of employees making inappropriate purchases.

- Formally assess and track supplier performance.

Having a formal supplier evaluation process reduces the risk of using unqualified or inappropriate suppliers.

Effective procurement processes are key to ensuring purchases are transparent, fair, and support the Council's achievement of best value. Not having effective procurement processes increases the risk of not using public resources wisely and placing the Council's reputation at risk.

Chapter 11

SaskEnergy—Keeping Existing Transmission Pipelines Operating Safely

SaskEnergy owns and operates about 15,000 kilometres of natural gas transmission pipelines in the province to deliver natural gas to more than 390,000 customers located throughout Saskatchewan.

Overall, at January 2020, SaskEnergy has effective processes in place to keep existing natural gas transmission pipelines operating safely other than needing improvements in the following areas.

- Documenting the rationale for how often it carries out each of its pipeline inspection activities. SaskEnergy uses pipeline inspections to monitor the condition of pipelines, and assess the risk of pipeline failure (e.g., natural gas leakage). It also uses inspections to assess its compliance with

² Adapted from Ministry of Justice and Attorney General Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, *Annual Report for 2018-19*, p. 2.



regulatory requirements. Our testing found it did not document the rationale for the frequency of three of its ten types of inspection activities. Documented rationale shows how SaskEnergy is addressing the key risks. This guidance also helps personnel understand basis for planned frequency of inspections.

- Setting clear expectations as to when contractors are to submit final inspection reports and when staff are to review, approve, and enter them into its risk-modelling IT system. Our testing of ten inspections found SaskEnergy received the final reports up to 86 days after an inspection. Delays in receipt of reports cause delays in approval and entry of results into the application. Using final inspection results about the most recent pipeline condition in its risk-modelling IT system supports more reliable assessments of pipeline condition and risk of failures.
- Including results of key pipeline inspection and repair activities in its data storage IT system within specified timelines. Our testing found certain inspection reports not entered into the IT system until four or five months after inspection completion. Having complete and up-to-date records helps support effective decision-making about upcoming inspection plans and repairs.

Without properly designed and effective processes to operate pipelines safely, SaskEnergy faces the risk of fires or explosions caused by ignition of the natural gas that has leaked from transmission pipelines. This can cause serious injuries, death or significant property damage.

Chapter 12 Social Services—Monitoring Foster Families

The Ministry of Social Services uses foster families to provide care for children requiring protection and out-of-home care. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring children placed in foster homes with foster families are well cared for and safe. At March 31, 2019, there were 486 foster homes located across the province.

The Ministry had, other than in the following areas, effective processes to monitor whether foster families provide a safe and secure environment for children in care.

The Ministry needs to follow its policies and established practice to:

- Consistently complete background checks prior to approving new foster families. For one file we tested, the Ministry did not perform a background check in its case management system for two adult children living in the foster home until 14 months after approving the foster family.

Not completing the necessary background checks for all adult residents in a foster home may result in a potential threat to a child's safety when placed in the home.

- Consistently conduct annual home safety checks, and obtain annual criminal record declarations for approved foster families.

Annual home safety checks and criminal record declarations confirm a foster home remains safe.

- Consistently complete annual review reports of foster families.

Delays in completing annual review reports may result in foster families not receiving timely and necessary training and support, and reduces the ability of the Ministry to take timely action.

In addition, the Ministry needs to require periodic criminal record checks on all adults residing in approved foster homes. For the 30 foster family files we tested, the foster homes were approved between three and 29 years ago, which was the last time criminal record checks were completed. Periodic criminal record checks reduces the risk the Ministry has incomplete or inaccurate information about criminal charges against foster parents, which reduces risks to children in foster homes.

Chapter 13

Water Security Agency—Regulating Water Use

Saskatchewan has over 100,000 waterbodies (i.e., lakes and rivers), of which about 10,000 have human demand for water use. Part of the responsibility of the Water Security Agency is to plan for sustainable use of water including authorizing (i.e., licensing) individuals and companies to draw water from ground and surface water sources. At 2018, the Agency had licensed the annual use of about 1.4 million cubic decameters of water—enough to fill over 550,000 Olympic-size swimming pools each year.

Estimating long-term water availability is difficult, and requires making assumptions using scientific calculations. Estimating availability of groundwater is even more challenging because groundwater is harder to accurately measure and quantify than surface water.

Furthermore, Saskatchewan's water resources and demand for water is not evenly distributed across the province. Southern Saskatchewan has more demand for water given its population and industries (e.g., oil and potash extraction, and irrigation) that require sustainable water to operate. Also, southern Saskatchewan is typically a relatively dry area with a high variability in annual precipitation.

At December 2019, the Water Security Agency had, other than in the following areas, effective processes to regulate water use to support a sustainable water supply. It reasonably monitors the quantity of water in and flowing through Saskatchewan on an overall basis. But, it needs to do more to better regulate on a water-use licence basis. This includes:

- Developing guidance about staff documenting key decisions and analysis when assessing water-use licence applications and water availability
- Developing enforcement procedures to help identify and address significant non-compliance with conditions imposed on individual water-use licences
- Maintaining accurate water-use data to enable better monitoring of water use, and actively monitoring whether licensed water users comply with water-use licences
- Giving senior management reports on the nature and extent of non-compliance and related enforcement activities

Furthermore, to support the achievement of its goal of ensuring a sustainable water supply, the Agency needs to update when it expects to complete outstanding key regulating-water-use actions from its *25 Year Saskatchewan Water Security Plan*.

An increasing demand for water, combined with a potentially drier climate, increases the importance of regulating water. Effective monitoring of water allocations and usage is key to Saskatchewan having a sustainable supply of water available. A safe and secure water supply is essential to Saskatchewan's continued economic development and high standard of living for both current and future generations.

FOLLOW-UP AUDITS

Chapter 14

3sHealth—Procuring Goods and Services for Member Agencies

By January 2020, Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) implemented the five remaining recommendations from our 2015 audit of its processes to procure goods and services for the Saskatchewan Health Authority, healthcare affiliates, and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (member agencies).

3sHealth:

- Used a checklist to support adequately documenting the rationale for the procurement method selected for group purchases of goods and services



- Periodically assessed and reported on the performance of suppliers of goods and services
- Provided feedback to the national group purchasing organization used to make certain group purchases before the organization extended its existing purchase commitments with suppliers
- Published its estimate of annual cost savings to the health-care system along with information to help the public understand the basis for its annual and cumulative estimate

Having effective processes to procure goods and services for its member agencies allows 3sHealth to manage risks and obtain the best value in a fair and transparent way.

Chapter 15 Advanced Education—Working with the Advanced Education Sector to Achieve Ministry Strategies

The Ministry of Advanced Education, in conjunction with post-secondary institutions, continues to actively work towards establishing common measures to enable monitoring of the achievement of advanced education sector strategies as recommended in the 2015 audit.

By February 2020, the Ministry and post-secondary institutions established 24 indicators, with three more in development. The Ministry wants institutions to report on this common set of indicators by September 2020 to facilitate consistent and comparable sector-wide reporting. In addition, the Ministry started working with institutions on developing a performance framework (e.g., measurable targets and timelines).

Without specific measurable targets or timelines, the Ministry is hindered in analyzing and reporting progress towards achieving its strategies.

Chapter 16 Environment—Regulating Landfills

By January 2020, the Ministry of Environment had implemented one of the three remaining recommendations and made progress on the remaining two recommendations relating to the Ministry's regulation of landfills.

By January 2020, the Ministry had not approved guidance documents on composting or landfills and waste management. In January 2020, the Ministry finalized, approved and publicly released its strategy for landfill design and operation. The Ministry's *Solid Waste Management Strategy* set out long-term goals for waste reduction in the province, assists in addressing the challenges of waste management and identifies potential economic opportunities for the waste industry.³

The Ministry revised landfill permits to include requirements for groundwater monitoring. As landfill permits expire, the renewed permits include this new requirement.

The Ministry still needs to conduct inspections on landfills as planned. Timely inspections determine whether the landfills operate in compliance with the permit. Permit requirements exist to enhance the environment and public safety.

Chapter 17 Health—Detecting Inappropriate Physician Payments

Each year, the Ministry of Health pays over \$500 million to about 1,800 physicians under a fee-for-service arrangement.⁴ The Ministry directly compensates physicians at agreed-upon rates for specific services provided to residents with valid health coverage. Physicians submit approximately 364,000 billing claims every

³ Ministry of Environment, *Saskatchewan's Solid Waste Management Strategy*, (2020), p. 1.

⁴ Under the fee-for-service arrangement, the Ministry directly compensates a physician at a pre-set rate for each specific insured service provided to a Saskatchewan resident.

two weeks. The Ministry cannot practically confirm the validity of all billings before paying physicians. As such, the Ministry must have effective processes to detect inappropriate physician payments.

By December 2019, the Ministry made some progress on two of the four outstanding recommendations we made in 2017 and implemented the remaining two.

Based on a 2019 cost-benefit analysis, the Ministry has been approved to purchase a new IT system that will better identify inappropriate physician billings and payments. It expects to operationalize the system in 2022.

The Ministry also identified new risks related to inappropriate physician billings. It has yet to complete a comprehensive risk-based strategy to detect inappropriate physician billings for insured services before the payment is made for the service.

The Ministry created a new set of criteria, consistent with best practices of other provinces, to refer physician billings to the Joint Professional Medical Review Committee (JMPRC). The new criteria aims to select the most complex and high-risk cases for the JMPRC to review.

The Ministry identified options to increase the number of investigations into physician billing practices, but has not completed a formal assessment on which options to choose or reject.

Strong processes to detect inappropriate physician payments will help ensure taxpayers only pay for insured services delivered and medically required.

Chapter 18 Highways and Infrastructure—Road Safety Concerns on Existing Highways

By November 2019, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure had improved its processes to address safety concerns raised on existing provincial highways by implementing the last recommendation we originally made in 2015.

The Ministry continued to report to senior management Safety Improvement Program (SIP) projects completed over the last five years costing more than \$1 million. The Ministry expanded its reporting to include projects that did not prove to reduce collisions (e.g., installation of an electronic radar sign).

The reports provided an evaluation of whether SIP helps reduce the frequency and severity of highway collisions.

Chapter 19 Labour Relations and Workplace Safety—Strategies to Reduce Injury Rates

By February 2020, the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety was issuing its summary offence tickets under occupational health and safety legislation consistent with its policy. Prompt issuance of summary offence tickets reinforces the importance to employers of addressing identified violations to help reduce workplace injuries.

Chapter 20 North East School Division No. 200—Increasing Grade 3 Students Reading at Grade Level

The North East School Division No. 200 implemented the one recommendation remaining from our 2016 audit. Since May 2018, North East appropriately requires that schools use a single tool to assess Grade 3 student reading levels. North East previously evaluated the effectiveness of the tool.

Focused assessments and monitoring of Grade 3 reading levels helps North East efficiently identify students who need additional support or resources.



Chapter 21

Prairie Valley School Division No. 208—Monitoring Progress of Home-based Learners

In Saskatchewan, home-based educators have the responsibility for educating their children, and the right to direct their children's education from their home. School Divisions are responsible for registering and monitoring home-based education programs by assessing program compliance with the law and related policies, and assessing the progress of learners.

By January 2020, Prairie Valley School Division No. 208 significantly improved its processes to monitor home-based education programs. It addressed all eight recommendations from our 2018 audit. Key improvements included the following.

The Division revised its forms and templates to help educators provide all required information for their home-based education programs. It effectively registered home-based education programs, and assessed the education plans and annual progress reports provided by educators. Following its assessments, the Division consistently gave educators timely feedback on learners' annual progress reports.

In addition, to encourage educators to comply with home-based education documentation requirements, the Division implemented a practice of reimbursing educators for eligible expenses only after it received and assessed learners' annual progress reports.

Effective monitoring of home-based education programs helps ensure they assist home-based learners in making sufficient educational progress for their age and ability, and providing them with a quality education.

Chapter 22

Regina School Division No. 4—Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Regina School Division No. 4 has improved its processes to promote positive student behaviour.

During the 2018–19 school year, the Division systematically collected, analyzed and reported detailed information on attendance. It also systematically collected, and reported to its Board data on behaviour incidents and student suspensions. Analyzing data about attendance and student behaviour enables the Division to determine if its initiatives are making a positive difference.

The Division maintains guidance for schools regarding documentation of steps taken to support positive student behaviour including attendance. It documented key discussions, decisions, and steps taken to support student attendance in accordance with Division guidance. Keeping documentation of actions taken to address attendance issues helps provide a consistent course of action and monitor steps taken to promote regular student attendance.

By September 2019, the Division tracked updates to its administrative procedures resulting from its annual review process. Periodically reviewing administrative procedures helps ensure their continuing relevance and applicability.

Chapter 23

Saskatchewan Government Insurance—Confirming Only Qualified Drivers Remain Licensed

By November 2019, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) continued to work on implementing one outstanding recommendation we reported in 2016.

SGI entered information promptly into its AutoFund IT system consistent with its procedures for the vehicle impoundments, criminal code convictions, and roadside suspensions we tested.

Staff are not always entering driver information about out-of-province summary offence tickets into the AutoFund IT system within the expected timeframes. SGI has clear, formal guidance on timeframes to record driver information. Delays in entering traffic offence information can delay the commencement of SGI's disciplinary process for unsafe drivers.

Chapter 24

Saskatchewan Health Authority—Administering Medication in Weyburn and Estevan Hospitals

The Saskatchewan Health Authority is responsible for administering medication to its patients in Weyburn and Estevan hospitals.

As of November 2019, the Authority implemented our last outstanding recommendation about staff in these hospitals consistently documenting key information about patients (e.g., patient weight) to support decisions about medication prescribed in hospitals.

Chapter 25

Saskatchewan Health Authority—Efficient Use of MRIs in Regina

By January 2020, the Saskatchewan Health Authority implemented three and made progress on the other four of the seven recommendations we made in 2017 about the efficient use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) services in Regina.

The Authority developed work standards to have staff track the actual completion dates of each stage of MRI services and reasons for rescheduling MRI appointments in its IT system. The Authority also implemented an audit process to validate the accuracy of data in that system.

In addition, the Authority began to regularly analyze MRI volume data on a weekly and monthly basis to identify significant patient waits for MRI services, but more work remains.

The Authority needs to analyze the dates of the different stages of MRI services that it now tracks to determine causes and ways to address significant delays.

The Authority did not yet formally assess the quality of MRI interpretations radiologists provide; however, the Authority was in the process of developing a peer review program to do so.

The Authority appropriately monitored the selection and volume of MRI scans sent to contracted licensed private operators, but had not yet developed a process to monitor the timeliness and quality of MRI scans performed by private MRI operators.

Once the Authority implements processes to assess the timeliness and quality of all MRI scans, it needs to determine the nature and timing of additional information senior management and the Board will need to receive to better monitor MRI service delivery.

Having timely and quality MRI service delivery alleviates patient stress, avoids unnecessary referrals, and reduces costs.⁵ It also facilitates timely and appropriate diagnosis or treatment to help improve patient outcomes.

Chapter 26

Saskatchewan Health Authority—Maintaining Medical Equipment in Healthcare Facilities in Melfort and Surrounding Area

By November 2019, the Saskatchewan Health Authority improved its processes to maintain medical equipment consistent with required manufacturer standards. This equipment is located within healthcare facilities in Melfort and surrounding area. Maintained medical equipment includes intravenous pumps, ventilators, and cardiac monitors.

Maintaining medical equipment consistent with manufacturers' requirements decreases the risk of equipment working improperly or not safely when needed.

⁵ www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2576308/ (24 March 2020).



Chapter 27

Saskatchewan Health Authority—Medication Management in Long-Term Care Facilities in Kindersley and Surrounding Area

The Saskatchewan Health Authority is responsible for establishing and enforcing policies and procedures so long-term care residents get the right medication, at the right dosage, when required.

By December 2019, the Authority improved several processes for managing medication plans for long-term care residents in facilities located in Kindersley and surrounding area. It fully implemented five of seven recommendations we first made in 2014.

The Authority improved documentation in resident files by including quarterly medication reviews, prescription changes, and nurses' notes. This documentation decreases the risk of patients receiving incorrect medications, dosages, or frequency.

The Authority also established processes to identify trends and issues related to medication management. It summarizes medication incident reports centrally for facility managers to identify trends in medication incidents and create targeted training to correct the incidents. In addition, the Authority has initiated a process to assess the appropriateness of antipsychotic prescriptions given to residents.

The Authority still needs to document informed consent from long-term care residents or their designated decision-makers for the use of medication as a restraint or when changes to high-risk medications are made. Decision makers or residents should be aware if medication is used as a restraint or is changed, as medication can significantly impact a resident's quality of life.

Chapter 28

Saskatchewan Health Authority—Minimizing Employee Absenteeism

Excessive employee absenteeism prevents the Saskatchewan Health Authority from delivering cost-effective healthcare services.

Sick leave accounts for the bulk of the Authority's employee absenteeism. In 2018-19, the Authority experienced actual sick time per employee of about 82 hours (10.25 sick days) on a province-wide basis.

Since the 2017 audit, the Authority was transitioning to its provincial structure and determining its resourcing needs for its employee attendance support program. In 2020-21, the Authority planned to implement a new electronic case management system to better support attendance management.

By November 2019, the Authority had implemented checklists for managers in Kindersley and surrounding area to use in meetings with employees who have excessive absenteeism. The Authority still needed to:

- Identify the role human resources should play in addressing employee absenteeism
- Consistently document discussions and actions with employees who have excessive absenteeism
- Analyze significant causes of employee absenteeism, and report how it is addressing those causes

Effectively managing absenteeism contributes to quality service delivery to the public, minimizes costs, and supports the well-being of employees.

Chapter 29 Saskatchewan Health Authority—Overseeing Contracted Special-Care Homes in Saskatoon and Surrounding Area

The Saskatchewan Health Authority uses private operators of special-care homes to provide 24-hour care to those Saskatchewan residents who can no longer care for themselves.

By November 2019, the Authority had made some progress in addressing recommendations made in 2017 about overseeing 16 contracted special-care homes in Saskatoon and surrounding area. However, significant work remains.

The Authority along with the Ministry of Health and private operators of special-care homes clarified accountability relationships between all three parties. In 2019, the Authority started working with private operators to develop a new template contract. The Authority plans to finalize the template by March 31, 2020, and start work on signing new contracts with the 16 special-care homes in Saskatoon and surrounding area. It expects new contracts may be signed over several years as current contracts expire.

At November 2019, the Authority was waiting for the Ministry of Health to complete its revision to the Ministry's *Program Guidelines for Special-care Homes* before it takes additional steps to improve its oversight of contracted special care homes. Necessary steps include determining how best to: define the quality of services the Authority expects homes to provide, assess each home's compliance with those expectations and the Ministry's Guidelines, and address identified non-compliance to mitigate risks to residents within homes.

Not having a process to assess whether homes provide quality care and taking timely actions when necessary puts the residents of special-care homes at risk of not receiving quality services.

Chapter 30 Saskatchewan Housing Corporation—Maintaining Housing Units

The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) owns approximately 18,100 housing units across the province. It rents these units to individuals with access or affordability issues to help promote self-sufficiency and independence.

By February 2020, SHC implemented the two outstanding recommendations originally made in our 2012 audit of SHC's processes for maintaining its housing units.

SHC is working to align projected housing needs with having the right amount of housing units in the right communities. It has plans to prioritize maintenance activities for housing units based on housing unit condition to maintain them to a fair condition rating level.

Also, SHC regularly gives senior management sufficiently robust written reports about the maintenance of its housing units. These reports outline housing unit maintenance activities (i.e., planned, unplanned, completed, cancelled, in progress, and not started) during the year. In addition, it regularly provides the Board with information about the financial impact of maintenance.

Chapter 31 Saskatchewan Water Corporation—Purchasing Goods and Services

In 2018-19, Saskatchewan Water Corporation purchased \$45.7 million of goods and services.

By December 2019, SaskWater had, since our original audit in 2018, improved its processes to purchase goods or services. Key improvements include requiring staff to confirm compliance with the conflict-of-interest policy annually, updating its contract templates, clarifying its procurement policy about use of the sole source method of procurement, and giving its Board periodic information about its use of the sole sourcing method.



However, more work remains. SaskWater still needs to have its staff consistently follow its procurement policies. This includes having staff consistently document reasons for selecting non-competitive procurement methods, and obtain approval of purchase orders before committing to buy or receiving goods. Consistent adherence to procurement policies helps ensure SaskWater obtains best value when purchasing.

Also, SaskWater needs to develop a process to track purchases made through sole source procurements. Without this process, there is a risk that reports on sole sourcing procurements provided to the Board may not be complete.

SaskWater needs to track supplier performance. This would assist SaskWater in selecting suppliers for future procurements.

Strong processes to buy goods and services supports transparency, fairness, and achievement of best value in purchasing activities.

Chapter 32

Tourism Saskatchewan—Managing the Use of Social Media

By December 2019, Tourism Saskatchewan had implemented the final recommendation of the five initially made in our 2015 audit related to its processes to manage the use of social media.

Tourism Saskatchewan has mitigated potential risks associated with the use of social media. It finalized and incorporated a risk assessment into its policies. Having comprehensive social media policies will help ensure Tourism Saskatchewan address risks that arise when using social media.