March 24, 2016

Dear [Redacted],

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act [Our File #: HCS/031/2016]

On March 7, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services (the Department) received your request for access to the following records/information:

“During a March 7th call to VOCM Openline, Minister Haggie referred to letters/emails received by the Minister from a group of doctors stating their support of Central Health Management. I request all records of information, i.e. correspondence, letters, emails and notes regarding such."

The Department has reviewed your request in the context of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and is pleased to inform you that a decision has been made to provide access to the requested information. In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.

Please be advised that responsive records will be published following a 72 hour period after the response is sent electronically to you or five business days in the case where records are mailed to you. It is the goal to have the responsive records posted to the Office of Public Engagement’s website within one business day following the applicable period of time. Please note that requests for personal information will not be posted online.

If you have any further questions, please contact the undersigned by telephone at 709-729-7007 or by email at angelapower@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

Angela Power
ATIPP Coordinator
Honorable Dr. John Haggie  
Member of the House of Assembly for Gander district  
Minister of Health and Community Services

Sent via email - johnhaggie@gov.nl.ca

March 3rd, 2016

Re: Central Health Physicians and Opinions around Patient Safety

Dear Minister Haggie;

The Central Regional Health Authority is responsible for providing healthcare to the citizens of Central Newfoundland and Labrador. It serves the largest geographic region on the island with a population greater than 100,000 people. Within the region are two Regional Health Centres providing secondary care: James Paton Memorial Regional Health Centre and Central Newfoundland Regional Health Centre. There are multiple community health centres across the region where patients access primary medical care. The coordination of this complex system requires a capable senior management team.

There are nearly 200 full-time physicians affiliated with Central Health. Recently a small group of physicians made public statements in the media about a “toxic work environment” and “ongoing concerns regarding poor leadership that is compromising patient safety.”

We submit these statements do not reflect the opinion of the majority of doctors working within Central Health.

There are multiple examples of partnership between Senior Leadership of Central Health and its physicians on patient safety initiatives. Examples include reduction of hospital acquired infections (ventilator acquired pneumonia), dangerous blood clots (venous thromboembolism), implementation of standardized patient order sets in acute and long-term care, increased safety in the operating room (safe surgery checklist) and patient-centred maternity care, to list a few.
Central Health fosters a just culture where employees are encouraged to bring forward areas of “potential risk” for further investigation before any harm or injury befalls a patient. Central Health employs a physician in the role of Champion for Patient Safety. It is the job of this physician to insure patient safety and evidence-based practices are the standard of care in the organization.

Central Health has engaged in LEAN Healthcare principles in recent years to ensure clients access high-quality, timely care while demonstrating stewardship of public resources.

The Senior Leadership team consistently address issues from all angles, balancing the risks and benefits, predicting not only the intended consequences but also the possible unintended consequences. Decisions are not made until these issues have been thoroughly considered, and collaboration with other important stakeholders has taken place. While individual physicians may not always be happy with these decisions, the discussions around them are always respectful and collaborative.

We the undersigned are a diverse group of physicians from across this region who have lived and worked in Central Newfoundland & Labrador for many years. We wish to express confidence in the Senior Leadership Team of Central Health, and offer ongoing support of its mandate to provide quality care to the population of Central Newfoundland.

On behalf of the group, I submit this letter and include a list of names below.

Sincerely,

Dr. Francois DeWet, MB, ChB, CFPC
Chief of Staff, Rural, Central Health
List of concerned physicians:

Dr. Jared Butler, MB, BAO, BCh, CFPC(SEM)
Clinical Chief of Family Medicine, Grand Falls-Windsor

Dr. Jody Woolfrey, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Senior Staff Physician, Dr. Hugh Twomey Health Center, Botwood
Physician Champion - LTC, Central Health

Dr. Mohammed Imana, MB, BS
Senior Medical Officer, Brookfield

Dr. Bakir Al-Tikriti, MB, ChB
Senior Medical Officer, Lewisporte

Dr. Charanjit Thind, MB, BS
Senior Medical Officer, Harbour Breton

Dr. Frank Hicks, MD, CFPC
Senior Medical Officer, Springdale

Dr. Richard Lush, MD, FRCSC
Clinical Chief of Internal Medicine, Central Health

Dr. Jennifer Mercer, MD, FRCSC
Clinical Chief of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Central Health

Dr. Kristopher Luscombe, MD, FRCPC
Clinical Chief of Psychiatry, Central Health

Dr. Lynette Powell, MD, MSc, CFPC
President of Medical Staff Association, CNRHC

Dr. Bryan Woolridge, MD, FRCSC
Chief of Staff, JPMRHC, Central Health

Dr. Steven Parsons, MD, FRCSC
Chief of Staff, CNRHC, Central Health