Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act [Our File #: HCS/098/2016]

On July 21, 2016, the Department of Health and Community Services received your request for access to the following records:

“And and all communications to and from the minister's office relating to air services. July 8-15, 2016, inclusive.”

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the Deputy Minister for the Department of Health and Community Services to provide access to some of the requested information.

Access to the remaining records, and/or information contained within the records, has been refused in accordance with the following exceptions to disclosure, as specified in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act):

- Section 27 - Cabinet Confidences
- Section 29 - Policy Advice or Recommendations
- Section 30 - Legal Advice
- Section 35 - Disclosure Harmful to the Financial or Economic Interests of a Public Body
- Section 40 - Disclosure Harmful to Personal Privacy

As required by 8(2) of the Act, we have severed information that is unable to be disclosed and have provided you with as much information as possible.

In accordance with your request for a copy of the records, the appropriate copies have been enclosed.

Please be advised that you may appeal this decision and ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the decision to provide partial access to the requested information, as set out in section 42 of the Act (a copy of this section of the Act has been enclosed for your reference). A request to the Commissioner must be made in writing within 15 business days of the date of this letter or within a longer period that may be allowed by the Commissioner. Your appeal should identify your concerns with the request and why you are submitting the appeal. The appeal may be addressed to the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL, Canada A1B 4J6 t 709.729.7007 f 709.729.5824
You may also appeal directly to the Supreme Court Trial Division within 15 business days after you receive the decision of the public body, pursuant to section 52 of the Act (a copy of this section of the Act has been enclosed for your reference).

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 me by telephone at (709) 729-7010 or by email at vanessamacey@gov.nl.ca.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Macey
ATIPP Coordinator
RFP Background and Current status

- In mid-2014 Fitch and Associates presented an analysis of the province’s Air Ambulance Program which recommended that HCS procure two air ambulance services to supplement provision of services by the Government’s two air ambulance aircraft:
  - The provision of a turbo-prop air ambulance aircraft available 24/7 to be utilized within the province. This aircraft would be capable of landing at all airports and airstrips; and
  - The creation of an on-demand standing offer list of air ambulance providers to respond to air ambulance transport requests to/from Ontario and Quebec health facilities. The on-demand standing offer works as follows; all the qualified providers are ranked in order of lowest price to highest price offered per flight. When a transport to the mainland is required the lowest price provider receives the first option to accept the flight, however if they cannot accept (aircraft not available), then the next lowest price provider would be contacted until a qualified provider accepts the flight. This process is used for each flight for the duration of the standing offer contract.

- On December 22, 2014 HCS issued two RFPs for air ambulance services. Proponents could bid on one or both RFPs:
  - **Air Ambulance Aircraft and Aviation Services Provision (Aviation Services)** to contract for provision of a 24/7 air ambulance aircraft used primarily within the province to supplement Government’s Air Ambulance Program; and
  - **Long Distance Air Ambulance and Medical Flight Team Provision (Long Distance)** – For an on demand standing offer list of air ambulance providers to respond to air ambulance transport requests to/from Ontario health facilities.

  HCS signed a two year contract with an option for a third year for the 24/7 use of a Citation II jet aircraft. The contract was signed in September 2015 and runs to August 2017.
Three private air ambulance proponents responded to the Long Distance RFP:
  - Provincial Aerospace Limited (St. John's);
  - Latitude Air Ambulance (Hamilton); and
  - Fox Flight Limited (Toronto).

However due to changes in the air ambulance industry's operating environment caused by fuel price decline and reduced air ambulance demand, FFL's proposed standing offer price of $26,500 per flight responded in writing saying they wanted to maintain the pricing quoted in their original RFP response.
HCS issued the Long Distance RFP at a time of uncertainty over the sustained availability of a Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HV-GB) Medical Flight Team (MFT) due to recruitment and retention issues. At the time only, the St. John’s MFT was available to cover the province. Two operational MFTs are required to utilize a Government air ambulance aircraft with a MFT escort to fly patients to mainland health facilities. One team to escort the patient and one to cover the province in case of a critical transport is required. With only one operational team in St. John’s, HCS utilized private air ambulance providers for all transports to Ontario and Quebec health facilities. It was hoped that the Long Distance RFP would provide a list of air ambulance providers at competitive pricing.

Subsequent to issuing the Long Distance RFP, HCS has been able to stabilize the staffing of the HV-GB MFT. As of May 2016, that team is available to cover the province if the St. John’s MFT is needed to escort a patient to the mainland.

While HCS may still occasionally have to contract a private air ambulance provider the need for the use of private air ambulance providers will decline significantly.
Action Being Taken:

- [s.35(1)(d)]
- [s.30(1)(a)]

Prepared/Approved By: W. Young/H. Hanrahan/B. Clarke
Ministerial Approval: Received from Hon. John Haggie, MD

July 5, 2016
## ANNEX 1 - Proposal Comparison

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<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<th>Latitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Presented by single company legally responsible</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>10.2</td>
<td>Certification Page Signed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Proponent Understands and accepts RFP Terms and Conditions</td>
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<td>10.3</td>
<td>Mandatory Requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Service ceiling of at least 35,000 feet</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Minimum cabin pressure differential of 7.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>- Safely completing a non-stop flight to London Ontario</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Twin Engine</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Twin Pilot IFR Capable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medical cabin outfitted to meet scope</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Has all necessary permits and certificates for air ambulance</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Access to required medical personnel</td>
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<td>- Liability insurance required</td>
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<td>Secondary Aircraft Specifications</td>
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<td>Cost</td>
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<td>$7.80</td>
<td>$18.40</td>
<td>$18.64</td>
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Potential copyright material

If you wish to obtain a copy please contact the ATIPP Office at (709) 729-7072 or atippoffice@gov.nl.ca.
Minister signed the above note. Signed original returned to H. Hanrahan with question from Minister. It is in TRIM as BN-2016-00037 and has been uploaded to Sharepoint for Cabinet Secretariat.

Colleen Power
Secretary to the Minister
Hon. John Haggie, MD., F.R.C.S.
M.H.A. – Gander
Minister of Health and Community Services
Background

- Labrador-Grenfell Health contracts a private company, Innu Mikun Airlines, to operate a chartered air service on the North and South coasts of Labrador.

- Two components of the service: Schedevac service provides access to residents who have to travel to regional referral centres for medical services not available at community clinics in these areas. Service operates three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Medevac service provides emergency medical transportation to residents.

- The schedevac routing has one aircraft leaving Happy Valley-Goose Bay, stopping at airstrips in Southeast Labrador, and proceeding to St. Anthony. Aircraft turns around and returns the same day to airstrips and finally back to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. A second aircraft leaves Happy Valley-Goose Bay, stops at airstrips in Northern Labrador, turns around at Nain, and returns the same day to Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

- The fee structure for the schedevac service is: $40 round trip (increasing to $80 Oct. 1, 2016) for patients; no cost for escorts.

- Traditionally, number of patients using the schedevac service to access medical services at St. Anthony decreases during the summer and fall months; many people use the road access and the Strait of Belle Isle ferry service. This is not the case on the North Coast where there is no road access.

Budget 2016

- Labrador-Grenfell Health announced on April 18, 2016 that the schedevac service was moving to a twice-a-week service on the South Coast of Labrador only.

- Change was part of a series of measures to reduce spending and supporting the Government Renewal Initiative in Budget 2016.

- Innu Mikun Airlines initiated discussions with Labrador-Grenfell Health on exploring options to maintain the three day a week service.

- Changes to chartered air service contact with Innu Mikun Airlines

- Labrador-Grenfell Health announced on July 12, 2016 that the three day a week chartered schedevac air service on the South Coast of Labrador was being maintained.

- Through an arrangement with Innu Mikun Airlines, the Health Authority is able to realize the projected savings from the planned move to a twice-a-week schedule.

- Under the arrangement with the contractor, Labrador-Grenfell Health is able to provide South Coast residents with greater flexibility in planning medical appointments. Residents can also take advantage of commercial seats available from Innu Mikun Airlines for non-medical travel.
Key Messages

- Labrador-Grenfell Health is maintaining the three-day-a-week chartered air schedevac service on the South Coast of Labrador.
- South Coast residents who use the schedevac service to access medical services not available through community clinics in the area will continue to travel to a regional referral centre on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- The arrangement that Labrador-Grenfell Health reached with Innu Mikun Airlines provides residents with greater flexibility in planning their medical appointments.
- A majority of the seats on the aircraft – 11 of 17 seats – are assigned for medical travel.
- If patient demand dictates that Labrador-Grenfell Health requires additional capacity, the Health Authority can request an additional flight of Innu Mikun Airlines. No one will be left behind.
- Labrador-Grenfell Health will realize savings through this arrangement as it is only paying for two flights per week, not three.
- Under the arrangement, residents who wish to travel by schedevac for non-medical reasons will be able to take advantage of commercial seats that are available on the aircraft.

Potential Questions

When does the fee increase come into effect? The schedevac fee is increasing from $40 to $80 per round trip for clients on the South and North Coasts. Escorts are not charged. This comes into effect on October 1, 2016. Even with the increase, it remains a cost-effective method of travelling to a regional referral centre for medical services.

Does Labrador-Grenfell Health’s decision to maintain the three-day-a-week service represent backtracking on a budget initiative to save money, as you announced in April? The Health Authority is able to realize savings that were projected with the decision to reduce the schedevac frequency to two days per week. We are pleased that we were able to reach an arrangement with our service provider to maintain the three flights per week.

How much is Labrador-Grenfell Health saving with this initiative? The cost of operating the chartered air service, not including medevacs, is approximately $2.2 million. We project the savings from the new arrangement for July to December will amount to approximately $240,000.

Tina Williams
Director of Communications
Department of Health and Community Services
709-729-1377
tinawilliams@gov.nl.ca
Tony will do an interview with CBC’s Labrador Morning Show tomorrow on schedevac services. The reporter is [redacted] and it will air at approximately 7:15 a.m.

As an FYI, LGH plans to share their key messages with us once final.

Tina Williams
Director of Communications
Department of Health and Community Services
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