June 16, 2017

Dear

Re: Your request for access to information under Part II of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act [Our File #: HCS/061/2017]

On May 24, 2017, the Department of Health and Community Services (the Department) received your request for access to the following records:

All correspondence, written, electronic or otherwise, between provincial government and Labrador-Grenfell Health about Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman or containing the name Caro-Guzman between January 1, 2015 and May 24, 2017.

- Modified to any records instead of between

I am pleased to inform you that a decision has been made by the John G. Abbott, Deputy Minister for the Department 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 you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the processing of your access request, as set out in section 42 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act). 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.

The address and contact information of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is as follows:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
2 Canada Drive
P. O. Box 13004, Stn. A
St. John’s, NL A1B 3V8

Telephone: (709) 729-6309
Toll-Free: 1-877-729-6309
Facsimile: (709) 729-6500
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.

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 Completed Access to Information Requests 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
Duly noted. Thx.
John A

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Bell network.

Hi John,

I received an update form LGH re: physician, I have briefed Alicia. Please call me if you want to discuss.

699-2446.

Angie Batstone
Director, Medical Services
Department of Health and Community Services
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Email: angelabatstone@gov.nl.ca
Phone: 709-729-7686
FYI —

From: Allan Bock [mailto:allan.bock@lghealth.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 11:41 AM
To: Williams, Tina (HCS) <TinaWilliams@gov.nl.ca>
Cc: Timmins, Emily <EmilyTimmins@gov.nl.ca>
Subject: FW: Information request ... Doctor fired? ... Alexis Caro Guzman

Hi Tina,
See media request and response sent.

From: Allan Bock
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 11:09 AM
To: 'Terry Roberts' <terry.roberts@cbc.ca>
Subject: RE: Information request ... Doctor fired? ... Alexis Caro Guzman

Hi Terry,
I have a response to your request:

Labrador-Grenfell Health can confirm that Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman, Family Physician, is no longer employed at the Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital, St. Anthony, effective May 10, 2017.

Out of respect for the privacy of the employee-employer relationship, Labrador-Grenfell Health will not be providing any details.

Allan Bock
Chief Communications Officer | Labrador-Grenfell Health
227 Hamilton River Road | P.O. Box 7000, Station C
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL | A0P 1CD | T. 709-897-2351 | C. 709-899-1568 | F. 709-896-4032 |

Follow us: @LGHealthNL
From: Terry Roberts [mailto:terry.roberts@cbc.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 10:46 AM
To: Allan Bock <allan.bock@lghealth.ca>
Subject: Information request ... Doctor fired? ... Alexis Caro Guzman

Good morning, Allan.
I have received information that disciplinary action has been taken against Dr. Caro Guzman, a general practitioner at Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital in St. Anthony. Can you confirm this? And provide details? Does Dr. Caro Guzman still have hospital privileges? Is he fee-for-service? Salary? Thanks.

--
Terry Roberts
CBC News
St. John's, NL
709-576-5250

Confidentiality Warning: This message and any attachments are intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s), are confidential, and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, retransmission, conversion to hard copy, copying, circulation or other use of this message and any attachments is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail, and delete this message and any attachments from your system. Thank you.
Potential copyright material

If you wish to obtain a copy please contact the ATIPP Office at (709) 729-7072 or atipoffice@gov.nl.ca.
FYI – written transcript attached

From: Allan Bock [mailto:allan.bock@lghealth.ca]
Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Williams, Tina (HCS) <TinaWilliams@gov.nl.ca>
Cc: Timmins, Emily <EmilyTimmins@gov.nl.ca>
Subject: NLNewsNow Transcript - DOCTOR SAYS HE WAS FIRED

Hi Tina,

See attached radio interview transcript and associated links:


From: NLNewsNow Production [mailto:production@nlnewssnow.ca]
Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2017 9:22 AM
To: Allan Bock <allan.bock@lghealth.ca>; Tony Wakeham <tony.wakeham@lghealth.ca>
Subject: Fwd: NLNewsNow Transcript - DOCTOR SAYS HE WAS FIRED: A doctor from St. Anthony has not

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: <production@nlnewssnow.ca>
Date: Thu, May 11, 2017 at 9:51 AM
Subject: NLNewsNow Transcript - DOCTOR SAYS HE WAS FIRED: A doctor from St. Anthony has not
To: allan.bock@lghealth.ca, tony.wakeham@lghealth.ca

DOCTOR SAYS HE WAS FIRED: A doctor from St. Anthony has not his job. "Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman", known locally as Dr. Caro, has been working in St. Anthony since June 2006 but not anymore. He says this week he was fired. ["Ern Simms", Mayor] [Labrador-Grenfell Health]

Program: CBC - West Coast Morning Show
Aired: 2017/05/11 07:12:00am
Please find attached the requested transcript.

NL News Now
Email: production@nlnewsnow.ca
Tel:  709-726-6397
Web:  www.nlnewsnow.ca

--

Web: www.nlnewsnow.ca

Tel: 709-726-6397
Fax: 709-726-6396
Toll Free: 888-721-6397

Confidentiality Warning: This message and any attachments are intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s), are confidential, and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, retransmission, conversion to hard copy, copying, circulation or other use of this message and any attachments is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail, and delete this message and any attachments from your system. Thank you.
DOCTOR SAYS HE WAS FIRED: A doctor from St. Anthony has lost his job. "Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman", known locally as Dr. Caro, has been working in St. Anthony since June 2006 but not anymore. He says this week he was fired. ["Ern Simms", Mayor] [Labrador-Grenfell Health]

Program: CBC - West Coast Morning Show
Aired: 2017/05/11 07:12:00am
Duration: 00:13:30
Reporter: Cherie Wheeler
Ref Id: X8k-5s9-11

---------------------------------------------

BERNICE HILLIER: A doctor from St. Anthony has lost his job. Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman, known locally as “Dr. Caro”, has been working in St. Anthony since June 2006, but not anymore. He says this week, he was fired. CBC's Cherie Wheeler reached him yesterday in St. Anthony.

CHERIE WHEELER: Dr. Caro, why did you first move to St. Anthony?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: I loved the community and I loved the people of the town, the first time I visited, and it was a great place to start working as a doctor.

CHERIE WHEELER: So, you've been there for more than ten years? How do you feel you've fit into the community?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: Well, I think I fit in well with the community, and have good friends there. I tried to do my job; my job as a doctor, the best that I could, and that was reflected back from the community, who were very thankful for the services I provided. So, the feedback from the community has always been great, and patients have always said that I have a good name, and they want to work with me. So, the feedback from the community, and my feeling in the community, has been amazing all these years.

CHERIE WHEELER: Dr. Caro, how did you find out that you lost your job this week?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: I got a call from the Chief Operating Officer from Labrador-Grenfell Health. He told me that Tony Wakeham was here...Tony Wakeham is the President and Chief Executive Officer for Labrador-Grenfell Health...that he was here and needed to speak to me, and that if I needed to secure a representative or a lawyer for that meeting, that I should do so. And then, I asked him 'I don't understand what this is all about', and then he told me 'I cannot comment on the phone', and I said 'Well, you're telling me to get a representative at 4:30 p.m. I don't know where I'm going to get a representative'. 'Okay. If you cannot get one, we will meet with you at 7:30 this coming morning...the coming morning'. And I said 'Well, you're not giving me a lot of time. Where am I going to get a representative, right?'
And, in any case, I went to her office immediately and I tried to speak with a representative, and at that time Barbara Blake said 'Okay. We have reached to a point in which we are going to terminate our relationship with you and Labrador-Grenfell Health'. So...so, I told him 'So, you're firing me?' And she said 'No, no, no; we're not firing you. We are terminating our relationship with you and Labrador-Grenfell Health. As you have all the right to terminate your relationship with us, we also have all the right to terminate our relationship with you'. And, I asked then 'What is the cause?', and she said 'No, there is no cause, there's no reason. We are going to offer to give you a package. So, in lieu of the three months notice that we're supposed to give you, we're going to give you a termination pocket package. And then, as of tomorrow May 10th, 2017, you no longer work with the organization'.

CHERIE WHEELER: Why do you think that they're doing this?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: I am known in the hospital to be very outspoken and very vocal about things that do not work, and things that I think could be better. Not everybody likes that. I have spoken with lawyers about this, and apparently they have all the right to do something like that. My point of view is its totally unfair that somebody dismisses you without cause, without giving you a reason, and jeopardizing the health of the community. I don't think that is right.

CHERIE WHEELER: So, what will you do now?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: I would love to stay here, but if I am let go...definitely, I will have to look at the future ahead.

CHERIE WHEELER: So, are you fighting this at all? Do you have any recourse?

DR. ALEXIS CARO-GUZMAN: Well, I...right now, I don't know if I have a recourse, because what I've...what I've been told from the lawyers that I've spoken with is, it looks like they have all the right to do something like that without reason...that they can terminate anybody without reason. It looks like they can do that. But, my question is to the people of New...of St. Anthony and the government: Why would you do something to a community like that, when the best interests of the community are not taking, or being taken into account?

BERNICE HILLIER: That was Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman. He was let go from Labrador-Grenfell Health this week without cause. A spokesperson with Labrador-Grenfell Health confirmed that Dr. Caro-Guzman is no longer employed there, but said the health board wouldn't be providing any more details. Ern Simms is the Mayor of St. Anthony and he is on the line with us this morning. He has been listening to what Dr. Caro-Guzman has had to say this morning. Good morning, Ern Simms.

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: Good morning, Bernice.

BERNICE HILLIER: Well, what does it mean to your town to lose a doctor?
MAYOR ERN SIMMS: Well, I guess, like any town, losing a doctor is something we are very concerned about. Over the past number of years, we've had a very difficult time in recruiting doctors... not only a general practitioner; a family doctor, but also surgeons and the like. And, in fact, there are positions here with the board up to a month ago that I was made aware of, that have not been filled, and we're hoping that these will be filled. So, that is a concern for, not only St. Anthony, of course...I mean, Labrador-Grenfell/Curtis Hospital...they serve more than just the northern peninsula...they serve Labrador as well, so...

BERNICE HILLIER: Has Labrador-Grenfell Health given you any reason; any indication of why they'd fire Dr. Caro-Guzman?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: No. They won't call me, I'm sure of that. They didn't...they didn't give Mr. Caro...Dr. Caro a call, so I don't think they're going to call me why. That doesn't sound like the people I know at Labrador-Grenfell.

BERNICE HILLIER: What do you mean by that?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: Well, they're used to doing things their own way. They always have been. I mean, I've seen this type of instance before. This is not the first doctor that has been let go. I've heard reasons before; I'm not sure if doctors have been given reasons before. Its the first time I've heard it like this, but, no, I run into that sort of wall with Labrador-Grenfell and its policies, and it's understanding, I guess, what freedom of speech means in their mind. And, no, I don't expect to hear...get a call. If I do, I'll be pleasantly surprised, but I don't know if the conversation will end that way.

BERNICE HILLIER: Have you expressed concern to Labrador-Grenfell Health about their dismissal of Dr. Caro-Guzman?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: I've expressed it to the board. I spoke to a board member last night, but that doesn't give me any, you know, pleasure in thinking that a CEO can just walk into a hospital and do what he wants to. I mean, that bothers me. I always thought that a board did an input to, you know, things like this (inaudible) in most places that I have throughout my career and everything else, the people in charge of the board are the people that actually hire and dismiss and everything else. But, in this case, it's one person doing it all, and that sort of leaves me with a bad taste in my mouth, as if to say, you know, say nothing else.

BERNICE HILLIER: Are you saying that the board member you spoke with wasn't able to shed any light for you on what had happened with Dr. Caro-Guzman's employment?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: No. If he was, he would have to contact the CEO to talk with him, and find out if he could say anything else.

BERNICE HILLIER: Dr. Caro-Guzman had been there for more than 10 years. So, not only are you losing a
doctor; you're losing one of your more senior physicians. How big of a loss is this?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: It's a...it's a big loss. I mean, we've been, over the past number of years, down to two and three general practitioners, and it's been, you know, wait line after wait line trying to get appointments and things like that. And, you know, it doesn't say a lot for the way things are managed and done, to me. I've, you know, grown impatient at times; this one of sort of put me at a point where, what do you do? I mean, you hear what's going on, so, it's about time something was done about this. And, I think it's time for somebody to do a complete review of the operations of Labrador-Grenfell, and start out and do things over, and put some...somebody there that actually understands medicine and knows what are doing, because I think there's a bit of a problem that has existed there for a number of years. In fact, our minister, Mitchelmore, over the years, has sat down and tried to discuss things with Labrador-Grenfell as well. I don't think he was all that successful at the time. So, right now, he has a better chance of doing things that, you know, can help the situation relieve itself.

BERNICE HILLIER: Now, when you say you'd like to see a complete review of Labrador-Grenfell Health's operations, what's happening that's impacting patient care? Because as we all know, what happens at the higher echelons is, you know, one thing, but how do you see it affecting the care that people in the St. Anthony area are getting?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: Well, I don't know specifically the St. Anthony area, as you said, but I know that anybody who is working, and they're not happy with the way things are going in the workplace, are not necessarily putting 100% of their concentration into the care of the people that they're working with, whether it be in education or in health or whatever. And, living in a workplace...working, you know, under conditions like that...that certainly has to impact care. Its, you know...being stressed out and things like that is not good in the workplace. We've heard (inaudible) more and more, but, you know, in an incident like this, this is going to, I think, rub people the wrong way here, because, you know, when you when you can't talk to people, what can you do? I mean, freedom of speech is guaranteed the Bill of Rights. If you haven't got that, then you might as well all pack your bag and go somewhere that we hear talk of on the news. Take off down to the States and work with Mr. Trump, you know...that sort of thing.

BERNICE HILLIER: How worried are you about how the loss of this doctor is going to impact people?

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: Well, it's kind of worrisome, because a lot of people, you know, when they have a doctor...and getting a doctor, for, like a family doctor..it's always been difficult here, because of the change in people that you see. I mean, there's a lot of a lot of local doctors coming in and going all the time, and trying to follow up and seeing the same doctor all the time is a very difficult thing in a rural area. To have Dr. Caro here for that long, and, you know, the patients that he sees (inaudible); that's a blessing to people. You know, with our population the way it is, a lot of senior citizens have a very...you know, they're going to be very concerned with this. And anybody, I think, has a right to be concerned if you don't see the same doctor to follow up. I mean, everything you know about the doctor and the doctor knows about you might not necessarily be on the chart. That relationship, I don't think, can be replaced, you know, day to day, and every time you go to the hospital.
BERNICE HILLIER: Ern Simms, thanks so much for your time this morning.

MAYOR ERN SIMMS: No problem. Thank you for calling.

BERNICE HILLIER: That is Mayor Simms; Mayor Ern Simms of St. Anthony. Well, what do you think of what's happened with the doctor situation in St. Anthony, with Dr. Caro-Guzman being let go this week without cause? We would love to hear from people in that area about what they think of losing a doctor who's been there as long as Dr. Caro-Guzman has.

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

NL News Now
Email: production@nlnewssnow.ca
Tel: 709-726-6397
Web: www.nlnewssnow.ca
Alicia, please see below. Any questions let me know. Denise

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Bell network.

Hi,

As discussed. Please advise if the following can be forwarded onto the MHA’s office:

**Update on Family Medicine Appointments at the Charles S. Curtis Memorial Hospital, St. Anthony**

Labrador-Grenfell Health advises that clients of Dr. Caro-Guzman who have questions about their scheduled or future appointments can contact Vicki Squires-Hedderson, Secretary with the Family Medicine Department at Curtis Memorial Hospital. She is happy to take their question or concern and will advise on arrangements and/or options for making an appointment with a Family Physician. If necessary, she will take their name and telephone number and advise that Labrador-Grenfell Health will get back to them. Vicki will advise clients that if they have an urgent issue, they should proceed to the ER Department.

Vicki’s contact information is 454-0652 or vickie.squires@lghealth.ca and she is available to take calls 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Dr. Caro-Guzman’s departure will not have an impact on the public’s access to family physician appointments. Labrador-Grenfell Health was already aware that Dr. Caro-Guzman was going to be away from St. Anthony from May 11th to 23rd inclusive and again from June 17th to August 6th inclusive. Therefore, very few clients had been scheduled to see him during the upcoming summer months. Labrador-Grenfell Health is in the process of contacting clients who may have already been booked to see Dr. Caro, to offer alternatives.

Curtis Memorial Hospital has eight family physicians, five of which are presently filled. Labrador-Grenfell Health can advise that it had already started a process of filling one of the vacant family physician positions at Curtis Memorial Hospital and expects the position will be filled by mid-June.

As is its regular practice, Labrador-Grenfell Health is also engaging locums to address any identified gaps in service.

Thx – Barbara and Allan
Barbara Molgaard Blake
VP, People and Information and Chief Operating Officer (South)
Labrador-Grenfell Health
178-200 West St.
St. Anthony, NL A0K 4S0
709-454-0190 (office)
709-454-1247 (cell)
709-454-2871 (fax)
barbara.blake@lghealth.ca

www.lghealth.ca

Confidentiality Warning: This message and any attachments are intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s), are confidential, and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, retransmission, conversion to hard copy, copying, circulation or other use of this message and any attachments is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail, and delete this message and any attachments from your system. Thank you.
Thanks. I totally agree.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone on the Bell network.

Hi Denise,

Yes, we were aware of this. The reporter sent an email to me on Friday around noon just as I was boarding the flight to return to Goose Bay. No service between St. Anthony and Goose Bay. When I landed I advised the reporter by email that I would look into his request. I didn’t get a response, but it was after 4:30 p.m. at this point. Discussed with Tony and decision was made not to do interview – nothing to be gained by doing an interview. I replied to the reporter this morning that as is the case with all employee-employer relationships, Labrador-Grenfell Health has an obligation under law to uphold privacy and confidentiality. For that reason, I stated that we were declining the opportunity to be interviewed on this subject.

I will follow-up and give Tina a heads-up on this.

Allan Bock
Chief Communications Officer | Labrador-Grenfell Health
227 Hamilton River Road | P.O. Box 7000, Station C
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL | A0P 1C0 | T. 709-897-2351 | C. 709-899-1568 | F. 709-896-4032 |

Follow us: @LGHealthNL
Potential copyright material

If you wish to obtain a copy please contact the ATIPP Office at (709) 729-7072 or atippoffice@gov.nl.ca.
Hi Tina,
Just wanted to give you an FYI on this news report that was flagged on Friday. In particular, the statement in the story which read: Health authority CEO Tony Wakeham has not responded to a request for an interview (story filed at 2:47 pm).
The reporter sent an email to me on Friday around noon just as I was boarding the schedevac to return to Goose Bay. No service between St. Anthony and Goose Bay. When I landed I advised the reporter by email that I would look into his request. I didn’t get a response, but it was after 4:30 p.m. at this point. Discussed with Tony and decision was made not to do interview – nothing to be gained by doing an interview. I replied to the reporter this morning that as is the case with all employee-employer relationships, Labrador-Grenfell Health has an obligation under law to uphold privacy and confidentiality. For that reason, I stated that we were declining the opportunity to be interviewed on this subject.
Allan

Reasons behind rare termination of St. Anthony doctor remain a mystery
Medical association says Labrador-Grenfell Health followed protocols in termination of Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman
By Terry Roberts, CBC News Posted: May 12, 2017 2:47 PM NT Last Updated: May 12, 2017 2:47 PM NT

Terry Roberts
CBC News
Terry Roberts is a journalist with CBC’s bureau in St. John’s.

- Follow Terry Roberts on Twitter

A medical doctor based in St. Anthony for the past 11 years has been dismissed without cause by the health authority that employed him, and the mystery remains about why such a rare and drastic action was taken.

- 'I was very outspoken': Long-serving St. Anthony doctor terminated without cause
The Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association represents doctors in the province, and its executive director acknowledged Friday that it has not received an explanation. “They’re staying very quiet about the circumstances,” NLMA executive director Robert Thompson told CBC News, referring to Labrador-Grenfell Health.
Robert Thompson is executive director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association. (Jeremy Eaton/CBC)
Dr. Alexis Caro-Guzman worked as a salaried physician in St. Anthony since June 2006. His contract was terminated this week, with neither the health authority nor Dr. Caro-Guzman offering any explanation.
The only clue came from Caro-Guzman, who admitted during an interview that he’s been outspoken during his time in St. Anthony.
The health authority defended its silence by saying it is respecting the privacy of its former employee, while Caro-Guzman has said he wanted to seek legal help before revealing details of his admittedly testy relationship with Labrador-Grenfell.

CBC News spoke briefly with Caro-Guzman on Friday, but he was travelling and declined an interview.

Health authority CEO Tony Wakeham has not responded to a request for an interview.

Meanwhile, Robert Thompson said the health authority has every right to terminate Caro-Guzman's contract, and it appears it followed the established protocols in doing so.

But Thompson said he can't remember such a scenario occurring in the past.

"The provision is there for a circumstance like this to occur, but it is a rare situation," he said.

Confidentiality Warning: This message and any attachments are intended only for the use of the intended recipient(s), are confidential, and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, retransmission, conversion to hard copy, copying, circulation or other use of this message and any attachments is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail, and delete this message and any attachments from your system. Thank you.