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Patients to be notified following theft of clinic laptop

Computer contained names and addresses – not health records

LETHBRIDGE – Alberta Health Services (AHS) is notifying approximately 5,000 patients after a laptop was stolen from a local clinic.

The laptop – stolen from the Lethbridge Sleep Clinic on Oct. 17, 2014 – was not owned by AHS and not connected to any AHS network. The laptop contained a database with the names and addresses of patients, dates of services and types of equipment used by the clinic. The laptop and database were password protected but not encrypted. The laptop did not contain information such as an individual's Alberta Health Care Number.

The theft was reported to the Lethbridge Regional Police Service.

“Any breach of patient information, even one such as this that doesn't impact patient care or health information, is inexcusable,” says Sean Chilton, Chief Zone Officer, South Zone. “It's unfortunate this theft of clinic property occurred and we sincerely apologize to any patient impacted by this breach of our information safeguards.”

AHS Privacy is now working with South Zone leadership to notify the individuals whose demographic information was contained on the laptop. AHS Privacy will continue to work with clinic staff to review safeguards and ensure appropriate measures have been taken to prevent this from happening again.

“There is no indication that the information was targeted for fraudulent purposes, and we believe the risk of identity theft is low,” says Chilton.

AHS has stringent policies in place regarding the safeguarding of health information, and all employees and contractors are expected to act in accordance with these policies, as well as Alberta's privacy legislation.

Alberta Health and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner have been notified.

Patients with concerns can call 1-855-550-2555.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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Note: Sean Chilton will be available to speak to media at 1:30 p.m. today in the atrium at Chinook Regional Hospital, 960 19 Street South, Lethbridge

For media inquiries, contact:

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