



Alberta Health
Services

Dr. Stephen Duckett
President and Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Nadeem Esmail, Director
Health System Performance Studies
Fraser Institute
4th Floor, 1770 Burrard Street
Vancouver BC V6J 3G7

Dear Mr. Esmail,

Thank you for your letter of April 28th seeking permission to name Alberta's hospitals in the next edition of the Fraser Institute's *Hospital Report Card*.

In your letter you suggest that this will "help Albertans make more informed choices about their healthcare". However, the research evidence, albeit mainly from the United States, does not support the view that such publications are used by patients in their decision making process. Further, as the information you would publish will be somewhat dated, if patients were guided by your publication they may be making the wrong choice.

Report card publications tend to have a spurious air of scientific rigour, when in fact they may be quite misleading. They may also be sensationalized in the media, causing patients and citizens to make unfounded adverse judgements about the health care system.

I applaud your aim of promoting transparency in the system but in my view there are more appropriate and sophisticated ways of achieving this. I set out an approach to promoting transparency and accountability I fostered in my previous role in the attached publication from the *Medical Journal of Australia*. I propose building on this approach to ensuring transparency and accountability in Alberta rather than the simple report card method.

I therefore do not propose to authorize release of names of individual Albertan hospitals for your publication.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. J. Duckett".

S. J. Duckett

19 /05/2009

Attachment