



**INFORMATION RELEASE**  
**from the**  
**COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
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Medical imaging services play a vital role in the diagnosis and on-going management of human disease. Reliable interpretation of images generated through X-rays, CT Scans, ultrasound, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) tests is critically important to safe high quality patient care.

With support and collaboration from the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) plays an important role in assuring the safety and quality of medical diagnostic imaging services throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

Under contract with the Government of Saskatchewan, the CPSS operates a province wide diagnostic imaging quality assurance program. This program is funded by the Ministry of Health and the Advisory Committee on Medical Imaging (ACMI) is a committee of the College Council which governs the program. This committee is populated with physicians who have acknowledged expertise in the interpretation of diagnostic images.

The ACMI conducts periodic audits of all physicians who provide diagnostic imaging services in the province. Most often, these audits confirm that physicians are performing satisfactorily and may offer some recommendations for future improvement in the quality of services provided.

Much less commonly, these audits identify physician performance concerns that may place patients at unreasonable risk of harm.

When such concerns are identified, the CPSS takes immediate action to mitigate future risk of harm to patients by using its regulatory powers under *The Medical Profession Act*. It also collaborates with the RHAs and the Ministry of Health to assess and mitigate on-going risk for patients that may have undergone diagnostic imaging studies that were not reliably interpreted.

Recently a routine CPSS audit of diagnostic imaging services in the Cypress Health Region identified concerns about the reliability of some DI studies performed in that region. The CPSS immediately alerted the Cypress Health Region and the Ministry of Health to these concerns and is working

collaboratively with these agencies to ensure that risk exposure for previous patients is mitigated and risk exposure for future patients is prevented.

It is understandably disturbing to the public when citizens learn that medical services they have received may not have been optimally safe or high quality. Everyone hopes that such services would be infallibly accurate every time.

In very complex modern health care systems, there is always risk that systemic flaws and human error may cause harm to patients. The College of Physicians and Surgeons is committed to doing everything within its powers to minimize the risk of harm associated with sub-optimal physician performance. It cannot single handedly mitigate systemic risk but it is committed to working with the Ministry of Health and RHAs to make the system as safe as possible in the future.

In its Strategic Operations and Directions for 2010 – 2011 the Ministry of Health has signaled its intent to work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to make the current Diagnostic Imaging and Quality Assurance program even stronger and more effective. The College of Physicians and Surgeons welcomes this opportunity to work with the Ministry and other stakeholders to strengthen its public protection effectiveness.

For further information about the engagement of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan in this process, please contact Ms. Rebecca Constant at 306.244.7355 or [rebecca.constant@cps.sk.ca](mailto:rebecca.constant@cps.sk.ca).