

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

February 10, 2010

PARIS (Primary Access Regional Information System) is a community-based clinical information system used by Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA). It is separate from the provincial Electronic Health Records (EHR) system and from the medical records of primary care physicians and most walk-in medical clinics. Client information recorded in PARIS includes:

- home- and community-based residential health care for adult and children;
- mental health services;
- addictions services;
- preventative health;
- rehabilitative care; and
- palliative care.

Implementation of the system began in 2002. It is now in more than 75 community locations throughout Vancouver and Richmond. The system links health care information throughout the region to create integrated electronic records for clients of these health care services.

The audit examined the security controls and procedures in place to protect client information contained in PARIS. A detailed management report including 127 recommendations was presented to VCHA in August 2009. Because of the number and severity of weaknesses found in the audit, the report release was delayed six months to allow VCHA time to address the issues.

Ten major security weaknesses were identified that could jeopardize the privacy and security of health records in the PARIS system:

- user access to information is beyond “need-to-know”
- system security is inadequate to protect against internal or external attacks
- lack of a comprehensive security policy
- the database is not secure
- risk of data leakage (inappropriate disclosure)
- inadequate monitoring of the system
- improper maintenance of user access
- unsecure network access
- inadequate traffic control on the internal network
- lack of proper record management practices

For each of these issues, the Auditor General has made recommendations to address the main concerns and improve the overall system security.

For more information, please contact:

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A copy of the full report is available on our website at: www.bcauditor.com