
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

GOVERNMENT MOVES TO IMPROVE MSP AND PHARMACARE SERVICES

VICTORIA – The Province is moving to modernize and improve the administration of the Medical Service Plan and PharmaCare, Health Services Minister Colin Hansen said today.

“The MSP registration process has not changed significantly in 30 years,” said Hansen. “It is still largely paper-based, despite an 80 per cent increase in B.C.’s population and vastly increased expectations for service. The most common complaints that come to me through my office and as I travel across the province are about services through MSP.

“We have today completed a process we began over a year ago to find a company with 21st century technology and business practices to re-engineer the outdated registration and claims processing in our health benefits operations.”

After an intensive year-long procurement process, MAXIMUS BC has been selected to provide program management and information technology services to government. B.C.’s health benefits operations services include responding to public inquiries, registering clients, and processing medical and pharmaceutical claims from health professionals. Direct health care services to patients are not involved.

Under the terms of the 10-year, \$324 million contract, the operations will remain in Victoria. MAXIMUS BC will offer jobs to the approximately 230 full and part-time staff at their current levels of wages and benefits, and employees will continue to be covered by the BC Government and Services Employees Union collective agreement.

“This is the first major B.C. contract to be signed since the passage of new, tougher privacy protection legislation,” Hansen said. “We thank the Information and Privacy Commissioner for his extensive report on the potential impacts of the USA PATRIOT Act. We have assessed the MAXIMUS BC agreement against the commissioner’s recommendations and have determined that the contract meets or exceeds those recommendations. In addition, the agreement fully complies with the recently amended Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the government’s revised privacy guidelines. The requirements for the protection of privacy are stringent and onerous, and provide an unprecedented level of protection in the country in this area of service.”

Privacy and security have been top priorities of this initiative since its inception. Strict privacy measures, records management and retention policies will be implemented, including:

- Data storage and access will be based solely in Canada, and can only be changed with the Province’s express consent.
- All directors on the board of MAXIMUS BC are resident Canadians.

- No remote access to data from outside of Canada.
- Special restrictions on data access and supervision requirements of U.S. employees working in Canada on transition and transformation activities.
- All employees and sub-contractors who have access to data will sign non-disclosure agreements with the Province.
- A whistleblower hotline will be available for employees.
- The Province can take over the operations of MAXIMUS BC in the event of a potential disclosure of personal information.

Since 1997, IBM has been providing information technology services, including the merging of databases, to support the operation of the MSP and PharmaNet. During the planned transition from IBM to MAXIMUS BC, retraining opportunities will be made available for staff to acquire new skills as the processes become increasingly computerized. The valuable knowledge and experience of MSP and PharmaCare staff in Victoria will now be combined through this arrangement with the best available technology and business processes to improve the timeliness and quality of services.

“Once the new business processes and updated technology are in place, telephone calls to MSP will no longer be associated with a busy signal, and automated services will be faster and more user friendly,” Hansen said. “This is the best solution in the short and long-term and will be an integral part of an effective, sustainable health care system for British Columbians.”

For more information on the agreement visit: <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cpa/mediasite> online.

3 backgrounder(s) attached.

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