

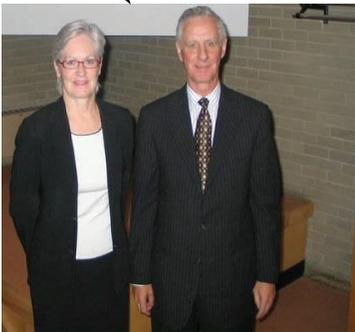


# OMBUDSNEWS

Ombudsman, Access and Privacy Newsletter



## A Strong Right To Know Week in Manitoba



Irene Hamilton and John Reid at the University of Winnipeg (2007)

**R**ight to Know Week 2007 was a definite success. The Province of Manitoba and cities of Brandon and Thompson proclaimed Right to

celebrated and critically assessed our right of individual access to information.

Canada's former Information Commissioner John Reid, who helped mark the event in Manitoba, reminded us that Right to Know is not just a day (internationally commemorated every September 28<sup>th</sup>) or a week (Canada's unique approach to the event), but a movement.

Know Week in their jurisdictions. Public officials and other citizens made presentations, media covered events and featured special items on the topic, and countless Manitobans

Manitoba's Right to Know Committee is considering ways in which the public can continue to be kept aware of their right to know throughout the year.



## CSI: Manitoba – On the Case

This is about CSI. No, not the popular TV series, but the Community and Social Issues (CSI) team of the Ombudsman Division. While our TV counterparts deal with gruesome crime scenes, the investigators on our CSI team deal with complaints relating to people's health, security, family and money matter. These complaints often involve the departments of Justice, Health, and Family Services and Housing, as well as others.

This team gives presentations to the public and government departments and agencies. The presentations are designed to explain what the team does and to make sure the most vulnerable members of our community are aware of services of the Ombudsman. As well, it monitors the actions taken on inquest recommendations and follows up on systemic issues in an effort to improve the administration of government.



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## Partnering With Manitoba Health to Help Health Professionals with PHIA

On November 8, 2007, Manitoba Ombudsman and Manitoba Health collaborated to host "PHIA and Health Professionals: Making it Work," an interactive session for representatives of Manitoba's health regulatory bodies.

*The Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) applies to health professionals who are members of health regulatory bodies (21 organizations, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association, the Manitoba Association of Optometrists and the College of Occupational Therapists). Health professionals have responsibilities under PHIA concerning access by



patients to their own personal health information and for protecting the privacy of patients' personal health information. Health regulatory bodies play a pivotal role in helping their members keep up-to-date on PHIA issues.

Representatives from Manitoba's health regulatory bodies were invited to the session and 12 organizations attended with a total participation of 27 attendees. Topics included common and emerging issues handled by Manitoba Ombudsman, distinguishing between access and disclosure, and an open discussion on issues on access and disclosure identified in advance of the session. In addition to the participants' contribution, topics were covered by representatives from Manitoba Health, Manitoba Justice and Manitoba Ombudsman.

Thanks to the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba for use of their boardroom.

### *Did you Know...*

that *The Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) was proclaimed 10 years ago on December 11, 1997? At that time, Manitoba was the only jurisdiction in Canada to have an information privacy law dedicated exclusively to personal health information. A Manitoba first!

## Privacy Horizons Explored at the 29th International Conference of Data Protection Commissioners

In late September, Montreal hosted over 600 delegates from every continent (but Antarctica!) to hear from some of the world's foremost privacy experts on emerging technology, security and human rights issues.

The three-day conference included meetings of the international Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners, where Manitoba was represented by Ombudsman Irene Hamilton. The data authorities adopted three resolutions acknowledging the need for:

- data protection authorities to become more actively involved in the development of universally accepted international privacy standards in the area of information technology;

- data protection authorities to continue to work collaboratively to strengthen data protection worldwide; and
- an international approach to establish standards that safeguard passenger travel information.

Canada's federal, provincial and territorial privacy commissioner offices hosted displays to share their information privacy legislation, educational materials and culture. In her message to visitors to the Manitoba display, Irene Hamilton wrote: "...New dynamic technologies raise unprecedented risks that challenge data protection. Then again, modern technology can enhance information management and security.... Gatherings such as this forge relationships and inter-jurisdictional cooperation."





## Outreach to Dauphin, Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson and Churchill

During the weeks of October 29 and November 12, 2007, the Manitoba Ombudsman and staff conducted 13 presentations and three site visits in Dauphin, Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson and Churchill. Presentation activities included speaking to:

- Dauphin Regional Comprehensive Secondary School
- Provincial Government Departments
- Nor-Man and Parkland Regional Health Authority staff
- MacDonald Youth Services
- Municipal officials
- Kelsey School Division
- Child and Family Services Agencies
- general public
- The University College of the North

This northern tour assists in building relationships with government, citizens and communities and increases the awareness of our office. During our presentations we provided information about:

- services provided by Manitoba Ombudsman
- administrative accountability
- cross jurisdictional issues
- follow up activities on the implementation of the child welfare recommendations contained in *Strengthen the Commitment*
- how to be your own privacy commissioner
- what to do in the case of a privacy breach
- what personal information and personal health information can be shared and with whom

It is essential for the effective working of the office that both government and the public understand the role and function of the office. Manitoba Ombudsman will continue to reach out to communities throughout the province.

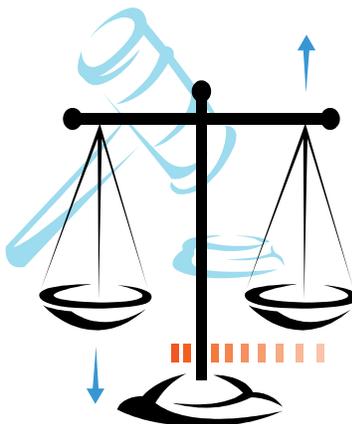
## Partners with the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman

The Manitoba Ombudsman continues to be an integral member of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO), which serves to provide a global network for Ombudsman offices from all sectors in Canada. The FCO acts as an umbrella organization which strives to promote the principles of natural justice and administrative fairness in a democratic society.

Staff from our office participates on the FCO Education and Training Committee which is responsible for providing specialized training for ombudsman staff. Last year a course curriculum on fairness in the delivery of government social benefits was developed and a conference was held

in Edmonton, Alberta in February 2007. A conference on the role of intake services is currently being developed.

From November 25-27, 2007 in St. John's, Newfoundland, the FCO hosted their third annual conference entitled, "The Specialist Ombudsman: Working Behind Prison Walls". Ombudsman staff from across Canada as well as international guests were in attendance.



Issues that were explored concerned inmate population management, ethical treatment of inmates, Canada's role in United Nation Treaties, health care services in the correctional context, comparative office practices and the application of administrative fairness.

Seasons  
Greetings!



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WEB SITE: [www.ombudsman.mb.ca](http://www.ombudsman.mb.ca)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

January 16, 2008 – Brown Bag Talk, “Preparing Fee Estimates under FIPPA”, for Access and Privacy Officers and Coordinators

February 6, 2008 – Workshop, “FIPPA and PHIA—Working with the Ombudsman”, for City of Winnipeg Employees at all levels

February 20, 2008 – Brown Bag Talk, “Privacy Considerations for Faxing and Emailing Personal and Personal Health Information”, for Access and Privacy Officers and Coordinators

March 12-13, 2008 – Conference, “Electronic Health and Medical Records”, Calgary, Alberta (More information posted at: [www.insightinfo.com](http://www.insightinfo.com))

April 30, 2008 – Workshop, “Working with the Ombudsman under *The Ombudsman Act*”, for City of Winnipeg Employees at all levels

October 22, 2008 – Conference, “Prairie Health Information Privacy Day 2008”, Winnipeg (More information will be posted on our website; hosted by Manitoba Ombudsman and the Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Alberta and Saskatchewan.)

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*Manitoba Ombudsman: Ombudsman and Access and Privacy Divisions*

