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# President's Letter

May 12, 2011

## Update on concerns about confidentiality oaths

*NLMA endorses Eastern Health's policy*



**Patrick M. O'Shea**  
MD, CCFP, FCFP  
President

Dear Colleagues:

In the last few days we have had discussions with representatives of the regional health authorities and have communicated our concerns about some of the confidentiality oaths and affirmations that you have been asked to sign.

We have had the opportunity to review the draft "Oath of Confidentiality" from Eastern Health and yesterday wrote to Eastern's director of access and privacy, Ms. Marian Crowley, indicating our endorsement of their policy. Physicians working within Eastern Health are advised that they may sign the Oath of Confidentiality when asked to do so.

Eastern Health's Oath of Confidentiality clearly references the professional obligations of physicians concurrent with recognizing the need to discuss issues of concern with the health authority administration prior to launching any public disclosures. All members should act responsibly and in collaboration with the health authority when considering the need for any kind of public pronouncement.

We have also spoken to Central and Western Health, and plan to contact Labrador Grenfell, and have strongly advocated for similar language in their confidentiality oaths and affirmations for physicians. Until such time as we are satisfied with the confidentiality oaths and affirmations of the remaining three health authorities, physicians in Central, Western and Labrador-Grenfell are advised not to sign.

We will advise you of the outcome of our discussions and are hopeful of a speedy resolution to this matter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. O'Shea". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Patrick M. O'Shea, MD, CCFP, FCFP  
President

The logo for the Newfoundland &amp; Labrador Medical Association, consisting of the letters "NLMA" in a stylized, bold, cursive font.

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