

A SAMPLE OF PHYSICIAN COMMENTS ON SUNSHINE LIST LEGISLATION FOR PHYSICIAN PAYMENTS

SUPPORT FOR STEWARDSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Although likely unpopular amongst the majority of physicians, I believe support of Bill 5 is a critical opportunity for the AMA to show leadership in moving forward to work with the government on the high cost of physician compensation as a proportion of provincial health care costs.

IT'S OK AND HAPPENS ELSEWHERE

- Our BC colleagues have had their income published for many years and it doesn't seem to affect the need for their medical care. People don't stop seeing the doctor, nor has the BC government stopped paying doctors just because we can look up how much a doctor makes there.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

- Of additional concern to physicians in small towns is that not only will people see how much they are billing, but in these small communities everyone knows where the doctors live. This has the potential to create a unique target selection opportunity for a criminal element.
- I'm concerned high earners will be targeted as a result of this legislation. This could be for donations (that's OK), fraud (look out) or outright theft (scary).

COMPLEXITY OF PUBLISHING PHYSICIAN PAYMENT DATA

- It should be mandatory that they read through a disclaimer (with multiple components) explaining the hours of physicians, the overhead costs of practice and the summary of expenses/professional fees physicians pay (including the cost and years of their schooling) before any public individuals have access to physicians' billing information.
- I would hope the public is made aware that the fees paid are not a salary to the physician but cover overhead and staffing wages.
- Aside from this being a gross (before tax and overhead) figure, it doesn't take into account debt load and repayment, especially for our junior colleagues.
- The income of physicians is proportional to the workload and revealing the income without revealing the workload is a biased way of revealing an outcome.

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

- I believe the publication of private information linked to income will make the workplace hostile and lead to morale problems.
- On a personal level, publishing my annual fee-for-service income will most certainly lead to disruption of personal relationships with family, friends, and also, potentially, with my staff.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

- I am puzzled as to what this bill is trying to achieve? If for transparency as claimed, then ALL public sector incomes should be published, not simply the over 125k earners.
- In fact all the relevant and “necessary” information is already currently available to the public, and has been as long as I can remember at least back to the late 1990s, as published in the Alberta Health Statistical Supplement available online on Alberta Health’s own website no less. This extensive document provides an exhaustive accounting of physician payments, broken down by ranges, modes and means, both within and across all specialties. It is completely irrelevant to provide the names of physicians over and above what this document already provides and a completely unjustified invasion of personal privacy on the part of the government.