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NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Nov. 2, 2011

Privacy Commissioner launches investigations into two privacy breaches

VICTORIA — The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has initiated investigations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) into two separate privacy breaches.

The first breach involves the loss of an unencrypted laptop at the Toronto airport containing the personal information of 450 patients of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. The second involves the disposal of Ministry of Children and Family Development records in a dumpster behind a Saanich apartment building last week.

British Columbia's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* requires public bodies to protect personal information and make reasonable security arrangements to prevent unauthorized access, use, disclosure, or disposal.

"I am deeply concerned that sensitive personal information may not have been encrypted on a mobile device," stated Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham. "In 2005, we issued guidelines that made clear that electronic records containing personal information should always be encrypted when in transport. British Columbians have a right to expect that ministries and health authorities will take all reasonable steps to protect their personal information."

The privacy breach investigations will determine the causes of the breaches and will examine whether each of the public bodies has:

1. Taken adequate steps to contain the breach.
2. Properly evaluated and addressed the risks associated with the breach.
3. Notified affected individuals as appropriate.
4. Developed a comprehensive plan to prevent any similar future breaches.

Individuals who would like further information about the steps they can take to protect themselves online can access our website at www.oipc.bc.ca or contact us by phone at 250 387-5629.

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