



F06-11-MS Adopted Child Seeks Medical History of Natural Parents

A woman requested a review of a decision by the Ministry of Children and Family Development to withhold certain information in the records related to her adoption. She also expressed concern that some pages of the copies sent to her were of such poor quality as to be illegible.

She said her main interest in seeking information about her birth parents was to determine ethnicity and other factors related to a hereditary disease that affects her and may also affect her descendants. Having reviewed the records, we confirmed that one section of the records related to the medical history of a person assumed to be her birth parent. We also supported the ministry's position that it is obliged not to release such information to an adopted person because it is legally viewed as another person's personal information.

However, the ministry said the applicant might be able to obtain the information by contacting the Adoption Reunion Registry, which could then review the withheld records to determine if they contain information related to possibly hereditary conditions and to then convey this information to the applicant.

We relayed this advice to the applicant and also told her she could obtain personal information of a birth parent provided the parent provides consent to the ministry. Adopted children can learn the identity of a natural parent if both parent and child have registered with the Adoption Reunion Registry.

The ministry explained that some released pages were very difficult to read because they had been copied from microfilm, which deteriorates over time. Unfortunately, such was the case with the withheld pages containing a medical history.