



Worker fatally attacked

August 10, 2020

The contents of this report

This document reports the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) investigation of a fatal incident that occurred in August 2020. It begins with a short summary of what happened. The rest of the report covers this same information in greater detail.

Incident summary

A physician in a medical clinic sustained fatal injuries after being attacked by a patient in an examination room.

Background information

Employer

Village Mall Medical Clinic (the clinic) operated as a joint venture between six professional corporations. Each professional corporation was owned by a self-employed physician at the clinic. Expenses to operate the clinic were shared equally by each. The joint venture agreement established between the professional corporations was verbal.

Physician 1

Physician 1, the deceased worker, had worked as a physician for 20 years. They were the third physician to join the clinic joint venture in 2006. In addition to their medical practice, they were responsible for many of the day-to-day office tasks such as purchasing supplies for the clinic.

Physician 2

Physician 2 had worked as a physician for 25 years. They were the second physician to join the clinic joint venture in 2006.

Patient

The Patient was a patient of the clinic and Physician 1 was their family doctor.

Work site, equipment and materials

Work site

The clinic was located in a strip mall located in unit 22 at 6320-50 Avenue, Red Deer, Alberta (Figure 1). The clinic included a reception area, an administration office, a kitchen/break room, a supply room, three restrooms and 18 examination rooms. The clinic had three doors on the east side entry, the north most door was in use (Figure 1A) and the others were kept locked. Three exits were located on the west side of the building that led to an alley.



Figure 1. Entrance to Village Mall Medical Clinic
A. Public entryway

Sequence of events

On August 10, 2020, the clinic opened to the public at 8:00 a.m. At work that day were four physicians, an office administrator and three medical office assistants. The Patient arrived in the morning and requested a same day appointment with their family doctor, Physician 1.

At approximately 11:00 a.m., the Patient was shown to examination room three by a medical office assistant, and Physician 1 entered the room shortly after. At approximately 11:05 a.m., screams were heard coming from examination room three. Physician 2, a medical office assistant and a member of the public ran to the room and forced the door inwards, where they saw the Patient attacking Physician 1 with a weapon. Opening the door caused Physician 1 to fall from the examination room in to the hallway.

Physician 2 ran to the break room, retrieved a plastic snow shovel and returned to the hallway where the Patient continued to attack Physician 2 in the hallway. Physician 2 retreated when the Patient threatened them with a weapon

The clinic staff and members of the public called 911. Emergency medical services and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) responded to the work site.

Physician 1 succumbed to their injuries at the site of the incident.

Completion

A review for enforcement action was completed on January 19, 2022, and it was determined that prosecution or an administrative penalty were not appropriate based on the circumstances surrounding this incident.

This investigation was completed on February 10, 2022.

Signatures

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

Lead Investigator

February 10, 2022

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

Manager

February 10, 2022

Date