Primary Health Care
Data and Information

About the Program

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) is leading several initiatives to improve primary health care (PHC) data and information across Canada. Working with stakeholders from across the country, our goal is to strengthen and improve PHC data available to providers and health system decision-makers. We help our stakeholders in their efforts to measure, manage and improve PHC by delivering standards, data, reporting and knowledge. The program provides national leadership, solutions and support, including

- PHC indicators for providers and policy-makers;
- PHC survey questions and tools;
- PHC Electronic Medical Record Content Standard (PHC EMR CS); and
- Analytical reports.

Data and Information Standards

We believe that data and information standards are the foundation of relevant and useful information. Standards ensure the consistent collection of data that can be used to measure and compare.

PHC Indicators and Survey Tools

In collaboration with experts, CIHI updated 51 pan-Canadian PHC indicators for policy-makers and health care providers to support PHC performance measurement across Canada. We have also worked with Canadian PHC researchers and survey experts to develop and test a suite of three pan-Canadian PHC surveys—patient, provider and organization—for use by PHC providers, researchers and jurisdictions. These products are available at www.cihi.ca/phc.

Information Sheet

PHC is the most common health care experienced by Canadians. High-quality data is essential to support quality improvement and health system management. Our goal is to establish pan-Canadian data sources and information that can be used to better understand PHC across Canada, report on PHC indicators and inform health policy and decision-making at various levels.

Our Vision

Our Mandate
To lead the development and maintenance of comprehensive and integrated health information that enables sound policy and effective health system management that improve health and health care.

Our Values
Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Excellence, Innovation
PHC Electronic Medical Record Content Standard (PHC EMR CS)

Working with key stakeholders, including Infoway, CIHI released the pan-Canadian PHC EMR Content Standard (PHC EMR CS) in 2011. Informed by consultations and environmental scans, CIHI is working with the pan-Canadian Jurisdictional Advisory Group to accelerate standards adoption by issuing a PHC EMR CS priority subset (from 106 to 45 data elements) and associated clinician-friendly picklists in 2014. When implemented at the point of care, the standard will increase the availability of structured coded data in EMRs and support quality improvement and health system management.

PHC Reporting and Knowledge

CIHI supports stakeholders through the analysis of, and by reporting on, PHC data sources, such as survey data and physician billing data. CIHI is also working with partners to expand Canadian and International PHC data sources, including the Canadian Community Health Survey and the Commonwealth Survey. CIHI will continue to use these and emerging PHC data sources to produce indicator and analytical reports that contribute insight and knowledge to our collective understanding of PHC in Canada. CIHI is releasing a report, *Chronic Disease Management in Primary Health Care: A Demonstration of EMR Data for Quality and Health System Monitoring* in February 2014.

Lessons That Inform Future Direction

The EMR offers a potential source of PHC data. CIHI worked with participating PHC clinicians across Canada to collect and analyze a subset of PHC EMR data in a privacy-sensitive manner using the prototype PHC Voluntary Reporting System (PHC VRS). Participating clinicians received comparative quality feedback reports on quality indicators, utilization and practice profile. The PHC VRS provided tremendous insight to the need for a priority subset of PHC EMR data standards. Currently, most EMR data is unstructured and free text, which makes extraction and analysis of the data labour intensive and unsustainable on a large scale. As a result, CIHI retired the PHC VRS and will focus near-term on supporting jurisdictions with the development and implementation of the PHC EMR data standards. CIHI is releasing a report, *Insights and Lessons Learned from the PHC VRS Prototype* in November 2013. The PHC VRS has been a valuable, informative tool for CIHI and PHC in Canada that will help inform the evolution of the EMR landscape across Canada.

For more information on any CIHI PHC products or services, please contact us at phc@cihi.ca or www.cihi.ca/phc.