

# Privacy and Confidentiality

## About CIHI

The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides essential data and analysis on health care in Canada and the health of our population. This information plays a key role in improving Canada's health system and the health of Canadians.

CIHI's reports and analyses are based on information supplied by hospitals, regional health authorities, medical practitioners and governments. Some data also come from Statistics Canada, professional associations and private-sector organizations involved in health care.

CIHI's data and reports focus on health system performance, health spending, health human resources and population health.

## Respecting Personal Privacy

CIHI is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and ensuring the security of their personal information. CIHI adheres to all applicable privacy legislation, including the Ontario *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, which authorizes CIHI to receive personal health information as a prescribed entity. This designation requires Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner to review CIHI's privacy practices and procedures every three years.

CIHI's rigorous privacy program ensures that it upholds the most effective and highest privacy standards.

Our privacy program's policies and procedures are based on the 10 privacy principles of the Canadian Standards Association's *Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information*.

## Collecting and Using Health Information

Most of CIHI's data holdings are derived from information provided by health organizations, which disclose data to CIHI under the authority of legislation in their respective jurisdictions.

This information allows CIHI to provide comparable data for facilities, regions, provinces and territories—enabling assessments of how well our health care system is performing. This process requires detailed clinical data, such as coded summaries of hospital stays, and comprehensive data on such topics as injuries, organ transplants and surgical procedures.

CIHI also analyzes and reports on trends in health expenditures and on the supply and distribution of doctors, nurses and other health personnel, using financial and health human resource data collected from a wide variety of sources.

## Limiting Disclosure of Information

- CIHI provides health information to hospitals, health authorities and provincial and territorial ministries of health for health planning, evaluation and monitoring.
- CIHI provides health information under agreement to Statistics Canada and to organizations such as Cancer Care Ontario for their mandated analysis and research activities.
- CIHI also provides data to researchers for specific projects, once it has taken steps to mask or encrypt the personal health number and other personal identifiers to minimize the risk of

identifying an individual. Researchers must sign a confidentiality agreement stating that they will manage the information in accordance with CIHI policy and applicable legislation.

- CIHI publications are reviewed to ensure that individuals are not identifiable from the statistical information disclosed.
- CIHI does not sell information about individuals, nor does it use such information for commercial purposes.

## Safeguards for Personal Information

- CIHI collects, uses and discloses health information in a responsible and appropriate manner, in accordance with its publicly available privacy policies and procedures.
- CIHI protects personal information by a number of physical, technical and administrative safeguards that follow or exceed industry standards.

## For more information

See *Privacy and Confidentiality of Health Information at CIHI: Principles and Policies for the Protection of Health Information*, available on our website, [www.cihi.ca](http://www.cihi.ca), under Privacy and Data Security. You can obtain print copies free of charge by contacting CIHI.

If you have questions about privacy protection at CIHI, please contact:

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