

Ontario Laboratories Information System –Health Sciences North

Privacy Impact Assessment Summary

Introduction

A privacy impact assessment on the Ontario Laboratories Information System (OLIS) – Health Sciences North (HSN) initiative – was completed as required under Ontario Regulation (O.Reg.) 329/04 under the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA), and by eHealth Ontario’s Personal Health Information Privacy Policy.

OLIS is an information system that connects hospitals, community laboratories, public health laboratories and practitioners across Ontario to facilitate the secure electronic exchange of laboratory test orders and results.

The following is a summary of the privacy impact assessment, including a brief background on the initiative and key findings.

Background

The OLIS-HSN initiative aligns with eHealth Ontario’s strategy to establish and maintain electronic health records for all Ontarians. eHealth Ontario and HSN are collaborating to make laboratory information from OLIS available to authorized users of Meditech Electronic Patient Record Application. Authorized users of HSN’s Meditech Electronic Patient Record Application include physicians, nurses, midwives, dentists, and other regulated health professionals or clinical support staff. The HSN Meditech Electronic Patient Record application combines essential elements of the patient record in a comprehensive electronic health record and provides a unique interface from which authorized health care providers can query and view patient information.

A laboratory information system for Ontario is an important component of electronic health records. The ability to share laboratory test information helps health care providers make fast and better patient care decisions. Implementation of OLIS will result in the following benefits:

- Ensures fewer gaps in patient information as patients move between hospital, practitioner’s office, health care and long-term settings;
- Reduces the number of unnecessary laboratory tests due to greater availability and sharing information;
- Enables timely access to information for improved decision making at the point of care; and
- Improves workflow for health care providers reducing dependency on paper-based systems.

As this project involves providing clinical access to Ontarians’ personal health information, it is guided by Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004.

Summary of Privacy Impact Assessment

The privacy impact assessment confirms that eHealth Ontario has the overall legislative authority under section 6.2 of O.Reg. 329/04 to make OLIS data available to clinicians at the participating sites for the purpose of providing or assisting in the provision of health care. Additionally, both eHealth Ontario and HSN, have robust infrastructures with strong privacy and security safeguards suitable for the processing and sharing of sensitive personal health information.

The PIA recommends measures that will ensure eHealth Ontario is in compliance with applicable legislation, as well as its policies, procedures and best practices.

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendation is summarized below:

1. eHealth Ontario to enter into agreements with HSN and participating health information custodians who will be accessing OLIS data as per eHealth Ontario privacy policy.

eHealth Ontario is currently in the process of implementing this recommendations

Glossary

HSN	Health Sciences North
O.Reg.	Ontario Regulation
OLIS	Ontario Laboratories Information System
PHIPA	Personal Health Information Protection Act

Contact Information

Please contact the eHealth Ontario privacy office should you have any questions about this summary:

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