

Privacy & Security

The ConnectingOntario solution is a shared information system containing copies of personal health information from patients' visits to health care organizations across Ontario.

How is patient health information used and protected?

Patient's personal health information is made available to participating health care organizations for the purpose of providing the patient with health care and treatment, or to reduce a significant risk of serious bodily harm. All health care organizations involved in the ConnectingOntario program handle a patient's personal health information securely and confidentially, in accordance with Ontario's health privacy law (*Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*), as well as other applicable laws, the ConnectingOntario security policies and EHR privacy policies.

Who operates the ConnectingOntario program?

eHealth Ontario operates the ConnectingOntario program and provides services that allow personal health information to be shared electronically by:

- Managing and operating the ConnectingOntario program and information system;
- Assessing the privacy and security of the information system;
- Operating the ConnectingOntario privacy and security program in cooperation with participating health care organizations, including communicating directly with individuals making requests to access or correct their personal health information or individuals with privacy or security questions or complaints;
- Developing and managing the technology needed to support the information system; and,
- Managing service providers who built and support the information system.

When eHealth Ontario provides these services, it has access to the personal health information in the information system. It only uses personal health information to perform these services for health care organizations and does not disclose the personal health information to any other health care organizations.

Patient privacy rights

Patients can contact eHealth Ontario or any health care organization participating in ConnectingOntario for any privacy and security questions, complaints or requests. Please refer to the contact information at the end of this notice. A patient can contact us for the following privacy-related reasons:

Consent and blocking a patient record

Health care organizations may use and share patient personal health information for treatment and care. All health care organizations that use and share patient personal health information in the information system have signed agreements confirming that they follow EHR privacy policies and ConnectingOntario security policies and procedures and Ontario's health privacy law.

Patients can opt out of having personal health information used and shared by health care providers by putting a block on personal health information that is shared within the ConnectingOntario solution. The ConnectingOntario solution provides different blocking options, such as preventing certain health care providers from using or sharing personal health information or preventing all health care providers from using or sharing information.

Viewing or obtaining a copy of personal health information

Patients have a right to request to see or obtain a copy of the following:

- The patient's personal health information in the information system.
- A list of health care professionals who have viewed a patient's personal health information in the information system.
- A list of times that a patient has put or removed a block on personal health information.

Correcting personal health information

Patients have a right to ask that their personal health information be corrected if they feel it is out-of-date or inaccurate.

Questions or complaints about ConnectingOntario's practices

Everyone has a right to ask questions or make a complaint about how ConnectingOntario handles personal health information or privacy.

Keeping personal health information confidential and secure

The eHealth Ontario keeps personal health information safe with safeguards including:

Administrative safeguards

- eHealth Ontario has a chief privacy officer and chief security officer who are accountable for health information privacy and security.
- The ConnectingOntario privacy and security committee, made up of representatives from participating health care organizations, oversees the privacy and security programs.
- Health care organizations must ensure that their health care providers are informed of their duties through privacy and security training.
- Agreements, policies and procedures define each organization's role in protecting the personal information and personal health information. They also define the roles and responsibilities of any people working for the organization or service providers who provide the health care organizations with services.
- Privacy and security assessments are conducted to identify new risks to privacy and security when there is a significant change to the ConnectingOntario program or information system.
- eHealth Ontario as the program office for ConnectingOntario notifies health care organizations of any unauthorized access to personal information and personal health information that the health care organization contributed to the system.
- eHealth Ontario staff, consultants, suppliers and clients must promptly report any privacy and security breaches for investigation.

Physical safeguards

- The personal information and personal health information is stored in a data centre with cameras, restricted access, alarms, and 24/7 security.
- When servers are no longer needed, the hard disks storing the personal information and personal health information are physically destroyed or permanently erased.
- Information is not physically removed from the data centre.

Technical safeguards

- Only approved healthcare providers and staff that support them can view the information.
- ConnectingOntario users are authenticated each time they access the system.
- The actions of everyone who views the personal information and personal health information are recorded electronically.
- The personal information and personal health information is always encrypted when it is

transmitted to and from participating sites.

- Networks are protected by devices (firewalls and routers) which limit access to and from systems.
- All actions in the information system are logged so that the privacy officers of the health care organizations are able to monitor and audit their health care providers and staff who view personal information and personal health information in the information system.
- Security agents are installed on each system to protect ConnectingOntario from malware and detect intrusions.
- Vulnerability assessments of technical configurations and operational security practices are conducted periodically.

ConnectingOntario privacy & security policies and procedures

eHealth Ontario has developed policies and procedures to protect the privacy and security of personal health information. All health care organizations participating in the ConnectingOntario program must agree to the *EHR privacy policies* and *ConnectingOntario security policies* posted at <http://www.ehealthontario.on.ca/en/initiatives/resources>, as well as the EHR security policies, which are available by request to security@ehealthontario.on.ca.

Contact information

Contact **eHealth Ontario**:

- If you don't want to share your information in the ConnectingOntario solution
- To receive copies of your information from ConnectingOntario solution
- To request a correction to your information in ConnectingOntario solution
- To make an inquiry or complaint pertaining to the ConnectingOntario solution

Toll-free: 1-866-250-1554

Mailing address:

eHealth Ontario, privacy office 777
Bay Street, Suite 701 Toronto, ON
M5G 2C8

You have a right to make a complaint about eHealth Ontario's information practices by contacting **Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner** at:

Telephone: (416) 326-3333 or (905) 326-3333

Toll free: 1 (800) 387-0073 (within Ontario)

TDD/TTY: (416) 325-7539

Personal health information in the ConnectingOntario solution

The following types of information are stored in the information system. This list will be updated from time to time as new types of information are added into the information system.

Not all of the health care organizations in ConnectingOntario provide all of the information described below. Some may only provide some of the personal health information types.

Personal health information type	Description/examples	Purpose of storing personal health information
Patient demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify patients and link their personal health information from multiple health care
Visits/encounter details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason for visit Diagnosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Emergency department reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened to the patient during a visit to the emergency room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Consultation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes from specialists involved in a patient's care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Discharge summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of what happened to a patient during a hospital stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Cardiovascular reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctors' notes about tests related to a patient's heart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Neurophysiology reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctor's notes about tests related to a patient's nervous system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Respiratory reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctor's notes about a patient's lungs and breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Diagnostic imaging reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctor's notes on images such as X-rays or CT scans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Medication profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medications that have been prescribed to a patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Allergy information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allergies that a patient has 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Community notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes from the community care clinics about a patient's health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Laboratory results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results from lab tests ordered by a patient's health care provider Please note: this information is provided by Ontario laboratories information system (OLIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Infection control information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about infectious illnesses that a patient acquired in the health care organization or that the patient could spread to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing treatment and care
Consent directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A patient's instructions to block health care providers and staff from viewing their personal health information in the information system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Block a health care provider from viewing a patient's personal health information at their request