

## Quality Improvement Project Involving HIC eReferral Data: FAQs

The eHealth Centre of Excellence is pursuing an opportunity with a third party to apply artificial intelligence (AI) to the eReferral data analytics export. This quality improvement initiative will bring benefit to providers by informing eReferral processes to optimize efficiency and improve patient access to care.

### Q1. Where can I find more information on this initiative?

- A. More information related to this quality initiative can be found [here](#).

### Q2. Whose data will be included in the project?

- A. One of the main goals of the project is to improve access to care for all patients (health equity as a focus) and, as such, your participation is very valuable for the initiative. We are seeking to use data from all eServices eReferral Participants (“SCA” Participants). That is, any HIC, non-HIC or LHIN who has signed a schedule of the Health Information Network Provider (HINP) Agreement.

### Q3. What is the process to opt-out from this initiative?

- A. Participants of the eReferral network may opt out of this quality initiative. If you choose to opt out, an analyst from the eServices Program team will extract the referral data from the solution and run a query for all referrals associated with you and/or your practice. Once that grouping of data is identified, it will be manually removed from the master data.

Participants may opt-out at any stage of this quality initiative. To opt out prior to the transfer of the data set to the vendor, you must opt out by September 10, 2021, and to opt out after the transfer of the dataset, please contact us to have the data set revised for no future use of your data.

To opt-out please contact [Privacy@eHealthCE.ca](mailto:Privacy@eHealthCE.ca).

### Q4. What are the date parameters for the eReferral data that will be shared with the vendor for this initiative? Is this a one-time project or an ongoing one?

- A. The date range for the data will be from August 17, 2017, which is the eServices (SCA eReferral) Program start date to the data extract date (projected mid-September 2021).

This is a one-time project where the data will be transferred to the vendor to allow the opportunity to improve the referral processes used by health care providers who

participate in the eReferral network managed by the Centre. A second phase of work is contemplated for this project. The eServices project team will be seeking full ethics board approval through the McMaster University HiREB process prior to a second phase.

**Q5. What process will be used to de-identify the data?**

- A. The analytic dataset does not include patient name, birth date, or OHIP number. However, due to the large volume of data elements in the dataset pertaining to the patient’s referral, some of these would be considered indirect identifiers. The Centre will be removing a large proportion of indirect identifiers prior to transferring the file to the vendor, only leaving those that are integral to the work the project team is focused on. Removal of these indirect identifiers from such a large dataset is not sufficient to ensure full anonymity or true de-identification.

**Q6. What is the full data set that will be shared with the vendor?**

- A. The full data set to be shared for the purposes of this project is outlined in the table below:

Referral creation date	Initial assessment date	Patient home city	Is a patient surgical candidate?
Referral resubmission date	Initial assessment site	Patient gender	Health Region of referral target
Referral urgency	Initial forward date	Patient age	Appointment date
Reason for referral	Assessment outcome (MSK RAC)	Patient body site for referral	Second appointment date
Initial health service offering	Decision to consult date	Unique patient id number (generated by Ocean)	Ocean site number
Date referral created in Ocean	Decision to treat date	Email notifications on for patient	Wait 1a
Referrer clinician type	Date referral was forwarded from RAC	Referral status	Wait 1b
Central Intake reference number	Number of days affecting readiness to consult for wait 1a	Health service offering (current)	Wait 1
Was referral received as complete?	Number of days affecting readiness to consult for wait 1b	Reason for declined referral	Wait 2
Date referral was forwarded	Number of days affecting readiness to treat	Professional Id of the clinician receiving the referral.	Reason to exclude from wait time
Original referral fax/eReferral			

Should you like to learn more about the dataset being shared, please reach out to Lori-Anne Payson, eServices Benefits Realization Lead, at [lori-anne.payson@ehealthce.ca](mailto:lori-anne.payson@ehealthce.ca)

**Q7. How will the results be shared with participant HICs?**

- A. The project team will explore various avenues for sharing the outcomes of this project, dependent on the applicability of the findings. This may include case studies, evidence briefs, stakeholder reports and communications one pagers.

**Q8. What assessments were completed related to this project?**

- A. A Vendor Assessment is underway, and a Data Sharing Agreement has been tabled with legal input on matters of privacy and intellectual property related to this project.

**Q9. What specific safeguards are in place for both the Centre and the Vendor to protect the indirectly identifiable information?**

- A. To protect the privacy and security of the eReferral data, the Centre adheres to requirements set out in the legislation, regulation and by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC). Safeguards include:
- The Centre and Vendor screen, select and/or train all Personnel that will be part of the Project Team on privacy laws, policies, and reasonable steps to ensure compliance through staff training, confidentiality agreements, and sanctions.
  - Only authorized personnel will have access to the Centre Data and only for the purposes of the project, and no other purposes. The Vendor will ensure that its Personnel who are terminated, resign, or no longer require access to Personal Health Information from the Centre return all Personal Health Information to the Centre and can, thereafter, no longer access applications, hardware, software, network, and facilities belonging to either the Company or the Centre.
  - The Centre will transfer the data in a secure manner including encryption protocols. The Vendor has software and hardware designed to protect the privacy and security of the data.
  - The Vendor will take reasonable steps to ensure that all Personal Health Information from the Centre is securely segregated from any information owned by the Vendor or third parties, including access barriers, physical segregation, and password authorization.
  - The Vendor will not store the Centre Data or any copies of it after Project termination or the termination of the Data Sharing Agreement, whichever date is earlier. The Vendor will securely dispose of the Centre Data by shredding all paper copies and deleting all electronic versions so that it cannot be reconstructed and will provide to the Centre, within 30 days of such destruction, a certificate of secure destruction and attestation that no copies were retained, signed by an officer of the Vendor.