

Privacy Impact Assessment Summary

Central Waitlist Management eReferral Repository

December 2022

As required by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and by Ontario Health's (OH) Privacy Policy, a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) was completed for the Central Waitlist Management (CWM) eReferral Repository.

The following is a summary of the PIA and includes background on the CWM eReferral Repository. The summary also notes OH's progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the PIA.

This PIA summary was produced in December 2022. If/when an update is required, the update will be posted to Ontario Health or Cancer Care Ontario's website.

Background

The Ontario Health CWM eReferral Repository is a component of OH's Central Waitlist Management program. OH is promoting the CWM eReferral Repository as an enterprise asset that will collect referral information from a variety of health sources and health sectors in order to "paint the patient journey" starting with a patient's primary care physician or other health care provider (HCP), through referrals to specialists, culminating with surgical procedures and other health-related interventions.

In its initial implementation, the CWM eReferral Repository will target primary care referral pathways that are associated with surgical queues or may result in surgical queues. This includes collecting all eReferral data generated by HCPs and linking this data with existing Wait 2 data residing in OH's Wait Times Information System (WTIS).

CWM eReferral Repository data will also be employed to evaluate and report on the flow of patients designated as alternative level of care (ALC), and who are waiting to be discharged to home and community care support services (HCCSS). This initiative – and any other future initiatives involving the use of CWM eReferral Repository data – will be subject to separate privacy assessments.

The CWM eReferral Repository is expected to commence collecting personal health information (PHI) by March 31, 2023.

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For the CWM eReferral Repository OH - acting in the role of Prescribed Entity (PE) - will collect PHI from referring HCPs via the eHealth Centre of Excellence's (eCE) provincial eReferral service, which supports approximately 3500 HCPs. The purpose for this collection – and subsequent uses of the collected PHI – is to support planning, management, evaluation and monitoring of the health system. These activities are consistent with the purposes for which a health information custodian (HIC) may disclose PHI to OH as a PE under s. 45(1) of the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA), and for which OH as PE may collect and use PHI under s. 45(5) and s. 45(6) of the Act. The collected eReferral data will be linked with data in the WTIS and then aggregated and stored in the CWM Aggregate Database. Linkage and aggregation will be conducted in accordance with OH policies and procedures as prescribed by the

Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner (**IPC**). Note that the technical processes for linkage and aggregation are WTIS processes that are not in scope of this PIA.

No disclosures of eReferral PHI will occur. Internal and external end-users will have access only to aggregate data (non-PHI) from the CWM Aggregate Database and will not have record-level access to PHI.

Seven privacy risks were originally identified by the CWM eReferral Repository PIA, but three of these risks have since been entirely mitigated. Standard OH practice is to assess privacy risks as being low (**L**), medium (**M**) or high (**H**) severity. Of the remaining four risks, none were assessed as being high, two were assessed as medium, and two as low. These four risks are summarized below:

1. Agreements governing the CWM eReferral Repository are still in draft form (**M**).
2. Administrative tasks required by OH policy for approving and logging linkages between PHI data assets for the purposes of the CWM eReferral Repository have not been completed (**M**).
3. The legal authorities for querying the Provincial Client Registry (**PCR**) for the purposes of the CWM eReferral Repository are unclear (**L**).
4. Copies of patient demographic data are retained in both the WTIS database and the CWM eReferral Repository for linkage purposes; the IPC recommends “that linked records of personal health information are de-identified and/or aggregated as soon as practicable”. (**L**)

Implementation of Privacy Impact Assessment Recommendations

Risk #	Recommendation	Mitigation Status as of 12/2022
1	Finalize and execute the data sharing agreement (DSA) between OH and eCE.	DSA finalization is in progress, and the agreement will be executed prior to ‘go-live’.
2	Complete administrative tasks required by OH policy for the approval and logging of linkages of CWM PHI data assets.	In progress – no linkages of PHI data assets will be permitted until the risk has been fully mitigated.
3	Clarify the legal authorities for querying the PCR.	In progress – querying of the PCR will not be permitted until the risk has been fully mitigated.
4	Patient demographic data elements retained for linkage purposes should be replaced with a universal patient identifier wherever practicable.	For technical reasons this cannot be fully mitigated prior to go-live – mitigation will be part of a broader OH process for implementing a common universal identifier. Note that end-users will not have access to patient demographic data elements in the CWM eReferral repository.

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