

**September 21, 2022**

**Canadian Information and Privacy Regulators Urge Governments, Healthcare Sector to Strengthen Safeguards for Sharing Personal Health Information**

**VICTORIA**— Protecting sensitive personal health information is critical to maintaining Canadians’ trust in the health system.

Despite rapid digital advancements in the healthcare sector, using outdated and vulnerable technologies, such as faxes and unencrypted email, threatens to erode the public’s confidence that their personal health information is secure.

In a joint resolution released today, Canada’s federal, provincial, and territorial information and privacy commissioners and ombudspersons are calling for a concerted effort across the healthcare sector to modernize and strengthen privacy protections for sharing personal health information.

The joint resolution outlines measures for adoption by governments, health institutions, and health care providers. They include:

- Promoting the adoption of secure digital technologies and the implementation of responsible data governance frameworks that provide reasonable protection of personal health information against unauthorized access or inadvertent disclosures;
- Designing, adopting, and implementing responsible data governance frameworks that provide reasonable safeguards to protect personal health information, including constant monitoring of electronic systems, periodic audits of all sources of risks to privacy and security, and effective incident response plans and mitigation measures in the event of a breach; and
- Promoting transparency by completing privacy impact assessments and proactively publishing a plain-language summary in a manner that is easily accessible to the public.

“New technologies are so important to improving health care delivery in British Columbia and Canada. But if these new tools are going to be effective and accepted they need to be trusted by citizens. The issue is now especially acute with the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating health care technologies beyond anybody’s imagination. Virtual healthcare has become a norm and tools to fight the pandemic, like the digital vaccine QR code, being just a few examples — all involve the collection and use of sensitive personal information. It’s therefore more important than ever that we can trust how our information is maintained within the health system, and that it is properly protected and secured,” said BC Information and Privacy Commissioner Michael McEvoy.

**Learn more:**

Joint resolution: Securing Public Trust in Digital Healthcare:

[https://www.oipc.bc.ca/media/17458/final-fpt-resolution\\_securing-public-trust-in-digital-healthcare-english.pdf](https://www.oipc.bc.ca/media/17458/final-fpt-resolution_securing-public-trust-in-digital-healthcare-english.pdf)

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