



Background

Under the *Health Information Act* (HIA) custodians have a duty to notify patients about the purpose of collecting their health information.

The HIA also requires that providers consider wishes their patients express about how much of their health information is made available to CII/CPAR. Under CII/CPAR, “making available” means both:

- a) making patients’ information available to other health care providers via Alberta Netcare for treatment and care, and;
- b) making health information available to Primary & Preventative Health Services (PPHS) to be used for quality improvement, monitoring, audit, evaluation, reporting, planning and resource allocation, health system management, policy development and public health surveillance.

Custodians must consider their patients expressed wishes, along with any other factor they consider to be important, before making health information available to CII/CPAR.

If you decide CII/CPAR is the right fit for you and your patients, you must inform patients of this decision by displaying Health Information Collection Notices prominently in your clinic.

[Health Collection Notice](#)

[CII Patient Brochure](#)

Script

Primary Care Providers:

I am participating in CII/CPAR to make the information I have about my patients available to other health providers involved in their care. This decision will lead to improved healthcare for all my patients. For example, if you are admitted to the ER or the hospital, our clinic will be notified and can offer the appropriate follow-up.

Moreover, my clinic’s participation in CII will allow Primary & Preventative Health Services to better understand how healthcare is delivered through community physician clinics, and how improvements can be made to the healthcare system province-wide.

Specialist Physicians:

[See above]

I make my consult reports available to other healthcare providers through Alberta Netcare for the aforementioned purposes.

Your patient may express concerns about how much health information will be made available via CII/CPAR.

Listen patiently to the patient’s concerns. You are not obliged to follow the patient’s expressed wish or direction regarding how much health information to make available to CII. However, you must:

- Properly consider any wishes the patient expressed about how much information you intend to make available
- Use your professional judgment

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- Weigh the patient's concern with any other important factors, such as patient safety, legal requirements, professional college guidance or other
 - Make a decision and tell the patient what your decision is
 - Document your decision
 - Use confidentiality flags as needed in your EMR to restrict access to some or all of a patient's health information
 - Convey all information in a clear manner to your patients, e.g.,

To restrict access to some information about you in my Electronic Medical Record (EMR), I have used a confidentiality flag. This flag ensures the information in question will not be made available to Alberta Netcare and will stay within the clinic's EMR."

Further information on masking in Alberta Netcare and confidential flags in the EMR

As an alternative to the confidentiality flag, physician custodians can offer to use the masking of a patient's record within Alberta Netcare as a means to restrict access to health information. This would have less of a potential impact on continuity of care. The concept of "masking" in Alberta Netcare has been used for some time. When a patient has placed a mask on his/her record in Alberta Netcare, it requires that a user of Alberta Netcare must follow the unmasking procedure, which includes providing a reason to access the patient's record, if they would like to see more than the patient's first and last name, date of birth, gender and personal health number. The access of a masked record is logged and audited.

Masking in Alberta Netcare is different than using a confidentiality flag in a physician's EMR. Masked information in Alberta Netcare is available through the unmasking procedure described above. Patient information subject to a confidentiality flag in an EMR is NOT made available to other care providers. This is why providers need to weigh patient confidentiality concerns with the need to support continuity of care.

A masking form can be filled out if a patient is concerned about the information that is already available on the [Alberta Netcare Learning Centre](#).

Do you have additional questions? See [Patient FAQ](#) and or [LPR FAQ](#) depending on your question.

The above is intended as guidance and is not legal advice. Consult your own legal counsel before proceeding.