Purpose

The purpose of this self-assessment is to help you[1] determine whether your Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) needs to be updated[2].

Intended audience for this self-assessment

- You are a "custodian" as defined in section 1(1)(f) of the HIA, or work for a custodian.
- You have previously completed a PIA for a system that affects health information in your custody or under your control.
- You submitted the PIA to the OIPC for review and comment.
- The OIPC reviewed and accepted your PIA. In other words, you answered any questions the OIPC reviewer posed and received a letter from the OIPC stating, "I have reviewed and accept your PIA."

Background

Under section 64 of the *Health Information Act* (HIA), custodians of health information must submit a PIA to the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) of Alberta prior to implementing new administrative practices and information systems relating to the collection, use and disclosure of individually identifying health information. A PIA update must also be submitted before implementing any significant changes to those practices or systems

Not all changes trigger a PIA. If your PIA accurately reflects your current technical and administrative environment, you do not need to submit an update to the OIPC. The OIPC may consider the responsible custodian to be non-compliant with the HIA if the custodian fails to submit a necessary PIA update. This self-assessment is intended to help you determine whether you need to submit a PIA update.

Under the HIA, custodians are responsible for safeguarding the medical records and other health information they collect, use and disclose. Consequently, as per section 8(3) of the *Health Information Regulation*, custodians must periodically review the safeguards they have in place to protect privacy. This means that you must review your PIA regularly to ensure its included risk mitigation plans continue to protect against reasonably foreseeable risks to the privacy of health information.

Alberta Health requires that custodians demonstrate compliance with the PIA requirement before it allows custodians to participate in certain Alberta Netcare initiatives, such as Alberta Netcare Portal, Real Time Integration, Community Information Integration, PrescribeIT, etc. During the Alberta Netcare registration process, custodians must complete a Provincial Organizational Readiness Assessment[3] (pORA) that describes the site's technical, administrative and physical security controls. The pORA verifies the custodian meets minimum security standards. Where the custodian's system interfaces with an Alberta Netcare system (e.g. Real Time Integration, Community Information Integration, PrescribeIT), Alberta Health will only approve a pORA if the site also has a PIA accepted by the OIPC that reflects the custodian's current technical and administrative environment. If the custodian's PIA is out of date, the custodian must submit a PIA update to the OIPC before the pORA can be approved.

---

[1] In this self-assessment the term "you" refers to the custodian or someone who works for the custodian. However, the custodian is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the PIA requirement under the HIA.

[2] A PIA update may also be referred to as an amendment (a change or correction) or an addendum (something added). For simplicity, this self-assessment uses the term "update".

[3] The Provincial Organizational Readiness Assessment is required under section 3(1)(c) of the Alberta EHR Regulation.

PIA identification

PIA Name and OIPC file number:
Date PIA was accepted by the OIPC:
Information system or process (i.e. administrative practice) that is described in the PIA:

All questions relate to the system or process you have identified above. There are no right or wrong answers. If you don't know the answer, provide comments to explain the uncertainty. The potential PIA triggers listed here are the most common changes that require a PIA update, but the listing is not exhaustive. You may have implemented other changes that require a PIA update.

Potential PIA Update Triggers	Yes/No	Comments
1. Have you replaced the system or process identified above with a different system from a different vendor? • This does not refer to adopting incrementally updated versions of the same system from the same vendor that fix bugs or improve performance without introducing new functionality.		
2. Have you moved your system from a locally hosted system (i.e. located in your office space) to a system hosted in a data centre or in the cloud? • Also known as software as a service (SAAS).		
3. Have you introduced new user access roles or groups? • For example, you may have decided to add administrative support users, where you previously only allowed health professional users.		
4. Are you granting access to your system or exchanging information with another organization that was not mentioned in your original PIA? • Examples could include joining a Primary Care Network, participating in a new evaluation or quality improvement project, or joining an insurance provider's adjudication system.		

Potential PIA Update Triggers	Yes/No	Comments
5. Have you added new ways of communicating with patients? • Examples could include communicating via email, text/SMS messages, adding a patient portal or patient mobile app.		
6. Have you added wireless access to your system?		
7. Have you added remote access to your system? • For example, allowing users to access your system via a virtual private network (VPN) portal, or mobile app.		
8. Have you allowed access to your system via mobile devices, such as laptops, tablets, or smartphones? • This is of particular interest if these devices store or keep a local copy of any health information.		
9. Have you updated your privacy policies to reflect changes to legislation since your PIA was submitted? • The older the PIA, the more likely you need to consider incorporating legislative changes into your policies and procedures. • There were major amendments to the HIA or its Regulations in 2006, 2010 and 2018 and many minor amendments since the HIA was proclaimed in force in 2001.		
10. Have you conducted a review of your privacy policies within the previous two years? • Best practice is to conduct a review every 12-18 months.		

"Yes" answers to questions 1-8 trigger the PIA update requirement.

"No" answers to questions 9-10 mean that you should review your policies and make changes where necessary. The OIPC does not expect custodians to submit PIA updates for incremental policy changes. Attach the revised version of your policies to your next PIA update submission, or when you send a letter to the OIPC endorsing an Alberta Health PIA for a provincial imitative (e.g. CII/CPAR, PrescribeIT, RTI, etc.)