

NEWS RELEASE

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New website will help public navigate mounting confusion over health privacy rights in BC

FIPA has created a website called “Health Information Privacy in British Columbia” to fill a serious lack of information available to the public about their health privacy rights as the province moves toward a universal system of government-controlled electronic health records. The website is at <http://www.healthinfoprivacybc.ca/>

British Columbia has launched a multi-million dollar program to create an electronic health record for every person in British Columbia who receives health care services. The resulting system will be the most ambitious program of personal information aggregation and sharing ever created in BC. It will radically change the way personal health information is accessed, managed and disclosed, and fundamentally affect everyone’s privacy rights regarding their most sensitive personal information.

The Canadian Medical Association recently released a policy called *Principles for the Protection of Patients’ Personal Health Information*, which includes the following requirement:

“Patients should be informed that the treating physician cannot control access and guarantee confidentiality for an electronic health record (EHR) system”.

While B.C. is now on track to spending \$222-million on its electronic system, the Auditor General has stated “It remains unclear how electronic health records will be deployed to users and what benefits will ultimately be realized.”

E-Health is a massive technical undertaking for the provincial government and the health care system. It is also a massive legal and procedural transition for individual citizens, health care providers, health care institutions and government ministries responsible for health care in BC.

The transformation to e-Health is being promoted by a government-funded advertising campaign but with very little information about how it will affect privacy rights. The Health Information Privacy website will help fill that gap. It will provide basic information about health information privacy rights, including:

- [when you can block people from seeing your health information](#)
- [how the privacy laws in B.C. work](#)
- [where personal health information flows within the health system](#)
- [what health care providers in B.C. are allowed to do with personal health information.](#)