

NEWS RELEASE

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Ombudsman Releases Updated Fact Sheet, "10 Points to Know about eChart Manitoba"

On the first anniversary of eChart Manitoba becoming operational, Manitoba Ombudsman Irene Hamilton has released an updated fact sheet on the continuing development of eChart and the privacy protections available to the public.

The Ombudsman's role under *The Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) includes commenting on the implications for confidentiality of personal health information of government programs and of using information technology in the collection, storage, use and transfer of personal health information.

eChart is being developed and maintained by Manitoba eHealth on behalf of the Manitoba Government. It is part of Manitoba's electronic health record (EHR) system, specifically a tool through which authorized healthcare providers can view, print and search key health data of individuals.

The first phase of eChart, which was available to authorized healthcare providers at 3 sites last year, is now available at 34 sites and, over the past year, has had additional data made available to it. Regardless of whether a Manitoban is a patient at a site where eChart is available to healthcare providers, there is health data and demographic information available in eChart on all Manitobans.

Said Ombudsman Irene Hamilton, "A system like eChart potentially permits more healthcare providers to view more of every Manitoban's health and demographic information than previously. There are privacy protections built into the system, such as User Agreements and governance policies at each eChart site requiring users to view only the information needed to perform their functions. That being said, it is my advice that Manitobans assure themselves of the status of their personal health information privacy."

To control and obtain access to your own personal health information in eChart, you can:

- ask to see your own information in eChart
- ask to see who has viewed your information in eChart
- direct that your health information in eChart be "masked," or hidden, from view on the system except with your consent or in an emergency ("masking" does not hide demographic information in eChart, such as name, address, gender and date of birth)
- contact eChart Manitoba Services to find out how your demographic information can be specially handled

Information about eChart, including forms for requesting access to your own personal health information in eChart, a record of user activity, and a disclosure directive (masking) is available at <http://www.connectedcare.ca/echartmanitoba> or you can phone 1-855-203-4528.

The updated fact sheet is available by clicking on the publications link on the Manitoba Ombudsman website at:

<http://www.ombudsman.mb.ca/access.htm>

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