



# Research vs Quality Improvement /Quality Assurance

## Requirements for Access to Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Patient Personal Health Information (PHI)

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Use of patient PHI held by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency must follow approved processes to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the data is maintained according to *The Health Information Protection Act* (HIPA) as well as the Cancer Agency's policies.

Adherence to these policies and processes will ensure data is used and/or disclosed appropriately, yet allow for as efficient a process as possible for the requestor(s).

**Any situation in which an external person will have access to the Agency's patient PHI will need a data access agreement signed, which will include a confidentiality agreement. This applies to students, residents or those completing practicum placements, etc.**

### Research Projects:

Research Definition: An investigation conducted through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation for the purposes of contributing to or developing generalizable knowledge (Department of Health and Human Services, 2009, Title 45 Section 46.102; TCPS 2, 2014, p. 15)." In most cases, these findings are published.

Research projects accessing PHI to form a conclusion which will be shared outside the Agency must be submitted to the Data Access Committee (DAC) along with an ethics approval. DAC will assess, adjudicate and track these requests. If approved, a data access agreement will be required.

### Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Improvement (QI) Projects:

QA/QI Definition: An investigation conducted for the purposes of planning, delivering and evaluating the programs of a HIPA trustee. These findings are used to assess, inform and improve the internal processes within the Agency.

1. QA/QI projects which are more complex and require linkages of patient PHI from more than one data source<sup>1</sup> need to be submitted to DAC for approval and will be logged.
2. QA/QI projects accessing patient PHI in which the initial intent or at a later stage the intent is to present or publish the results externally need to be submitted to DAC for approval of the release of the information and will be logged. If approved, an appropriate agreement will need to be signed.
3. QA/QI projects accessing PHI focused on using data to plan, deliver or monitor a program or process of the Agency in which the results will only be disclosed and used by Agency staff or those associated with the internal process, may be conducted through departmental approvals. These do not need DAC approval but need to be documented within the department. This will be reported in summary to the DAC regularly.

Projects needing to be submitted to DAC for approval may be e-mailed to [datarequest@saskcancer.ca](mailto:datarequest@saskcancer.ca)

#### <sup>1</sup> Data Sources

- ARIA MO/RO
- Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer NexJ
- Screening Program for Breast Cancer/Screening Program for Cervical Cancer ISIS
- Registry
- Pharmacy