
INFORMATION BULLETIN

2009HSERV0006-000117
July 20, 2009

Ministry of Health Services

BRITISH COLUMBIANS GET OPTION TO MANAGE HEALTH RECORDS

VICTORIA – As of July 17, British Columbians can begin to apply disclosure directives to manage their Electronic Health Record (EHR) in advance of the system going live later this year and throughout 2010.

An EHR is a secure and private record of patient's health history and care within the health system.

Currently, health professionals face challenges in getting patient information from records held in different places and different electronic and paper formats. The EHR will unify patient information and give authorized health professionals electronic access to secure patient health records when and where they deliver care.

A disclosure directive allows a patient to decide which of their records can be accessed by a health professional who does not have the keyword provided by a patient. If a patient can provide their keyword to the health professionals caring for them, then their records can be temporarily accessed. However, if a patient does not remember their keyword, or a health professional involved with their care does not have it, disclosure directives may result in delays – except in case of an emergency.

eHealth will enable faster, safer and better health care by reducing delays, errors and test duplication and also improve the privacy and security of personal health records. The new regulation coming into effect is part of the legislative framework that governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information in electronic health records and comes from the e-Health (Personal Health Information Access and Protection of Privacy) Act, which was introduced in spring 2008.

British Columbians who wish to make a disclosure directive on their EHR can visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/ehealth/dd.html or call Health Insurance B.C. in the Lower Mainland: 604-683-7151 or elsewhere in B.C. at 1-800-663-7100.

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