

MINISTRY OF HEALTH SERVICES SECURE WEB SITE FOR PHYSICIANS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

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The purpose of this document is to provide answers to commonly asked questions about the Ministry of Health Services secure web site for physicians.

What is the physician's secure web site?

The secure web site is an online web application hosted by the Ministry of Health Planning and Health Services. It provides the ability to securely pick up physician-specific data and reports from the Ministry of Health. Each physician requesting access to the secure web site is assigned his/her own "mailbox". The mailbox is a secure "dropbox." Files of interest to the physician can be sent, and temporarily stored in this dropbox. The physician, or a user authorized by the physician to access these files, can log on to the secure web site to pick up the files, and delete them from the mailbox when they have downloaded the files to their own computer.

This allows the Ministry of Health to send a variety of physician-specific reports and data directly to physicians while protecting patient privacy, and providing data in electronic file formats which physicians can then download and use for further analysis.

The secure web site also allows physicians to send files to the Ministry of Health. This functionality will give the ability to communicate securely with the Ministry (e.g. corrections to their CDM patient registers.)

Can the physician's secure web site be useful to me?

- Primary Health Care doctors, participating in Provincial Government or Health Authority (HA) funded Primary Health Care Organizations (PHCOs) and Networks.
- Family physicians who have been caring for patients with diabetes, hypertension, depression, COPD, kidney or congestive heart failure.

There is no information for other doctors, e.g. specialists. Users of the secure web site cannot "see" any secure information other than their own, or that of other physicians who have granted them access to their secure mailboxes.

How do I sign up for access to the site?

To request access to the secure web site complete the online application <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/cdm/reqaccess.html> and agreement <http://healthnet.hnet.bc.ca/has/regagree/4614fil.pdf>.

Use the "submit" button to send your request electronically to the Ministry of Health. Print a copy for your records before submitting the form.

The healthnetBC Access Services staff at the Ministry of Health will then process your request to become a registered user of the secure web site.

How long does it take for my registration form to be processed?

The healthnetBC Access Services staff has been processing registrations within three weeks of receiving the registration request. When you submit your registration form online, you see a confirmation message indicating that the form was received at the Ministry of Health. This confirmation provides a time limit for processing your registration. If you do not receive an e-mail from the Ministry within a four week window, please contact healthnetBC Access Services to determine the status of your request:

E-mail: hlth.hnetconnection@gov.bc.ca

Why do I have to agree to an indemnity agreement?

Under the *Medicare Protection Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the government is required to maintain strict confidentiality of all personal data. The Registration Agreement ensures that we have met our obligation under the Acts to maintain this confidentiality. As a physician, you are also under strict guidelines with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia privacy and confidentiality policy. Consequently, this agreement should not be a cause of concern for you.

Once I have my ID, how soon is my data available?

Once your user ID is set up, all the files currently available for you will be loaded to your mailbox. This can take up to two weeks. Each time files are loaded to your mailbox, you will receive an e-mail notification indicating that new files are available. The e-mail looks something like this:

```
From: HNFTP Production Account [mailto:hnftp@img09.hlth.gov.bc.ca]Sent: Thursday,
August 21, 2003 3:35 PMTo: Dr. X. J. Jones Subject: HNFTP - Files To Pick Up
```

The following file(s) are ready to pick up:

```
Senddr12345.12345diab_reg0102.csv 2003-08-21 15:35:09 136192 bytes - File
received from: Primary Health Care Project
```

These files may be found in:

dr12345/toclient

Yours Sincerely, Ministry of Health Encrypted File Transfer ServiceRunning on
img09.hlth.gov.bc.ca

Can I let other people access my data?

You may use the registration form to list other individuals whom you would like to have access to your data. For instance, you may want to delegate access to your Medical Office Assistant, nurse, or other physicians in your practice. These individuals will be set up as users of the secure web site, with access to your secure "mailbox" only. This will let those individuals see all the files in your mailbox.

If you have already submitted your registration form, and want to add additional users, send an e-mail to healthnetBC Access Services staff at hlth.hnetconnection@gov.bc.ca.

Provide your Organization ID and User ID, and the name, e-mail address, and practitioner number (if appropriate) of the individuals you would like to add to your mailbox. Your request will be processed and the new user ID information will be sent to you to forward to the individual(s) for whom you have requested access.

If I am a doctor with a funded Primary Health Care Organization (PHCO), what is available to me?

All physicians participating in PHCOs (former Primary Care Demonstration Project sites and new PHCOs) are automatically registered for access to the secure web site.

In addition to the Chronic Disease Management (CDM) patient registers and performance reports available to all GPs who access the web site, PHCO physicians have real-time access to:

- Patient “roster” reports and transactions for managing their PHCO’s patient register for the blended funding model (e.g. list all registered patients and changes to the register);
- Client Registry transactions for common services such as: looking up patient PHNs, performing patient name searches and address updates, determining MSP coverage status (for payment of MSP-insured services), and requesting PHNs for patients.
- PHC quarterly reports, including funding estimates, projections and actuals under the blended funding model, and service summaries, e.g. outflow reports, changes to the patient register, service utilization patterns of patients, and service provision patterns for practitioners.

If I am not a doctor with a funded PHCO, what will be available to me?

All GPs with access to the physician’s secure web site have access to a number of Chronic Disease Management (CDM) reports. If you have been caring for patients with diabetes or congestive heart failure, there are likely to be three files for you, as of August 2003:

A file containing a listing of all patients attributed to you from the probabilistic register of patients with diabetes for 2001/2002.

A file containing a listing of all patients attributed to you from the probabilistic register of patients with congestive heart failure 2001/2002 with extension to March 2003.

A file containing your individual diabetes performance measures for 2001/2002.

Note that we have had two diabetes registers available – one for 2000/01 and one for 2001/02. We have discontinued the 2000/01 register, as it is now obsolete.

What do the chronic disease management file names mean?

For each of the three current types of data available, there is one file for each doctor – a total of over 10,000 files. For system security purposes, each file name is based on your unique MSP practitioner number (or, if applicable, your PHCO billing number). The file-naming convention is explained in the Help file available from the left hand menu once you are logged on.

A summary of the file-naming conventions is also provided here for clarity:

Sample File Name: senddr12345.12345diab_reg0102.csv

Senddr12345 = instruction to send the file to the particular physician’s mailbox. “Dr12345” is the name of the physician’s mailbox.

12345 = physician’s MSP Practitioner number for the physician who’s data is contained in the file.

Diab-reg0102 = a short description of the contents of the file. For instance, this file name represents the Diabetes Patient Register for the fiscal year 2001/02.

csv = the file format of the file “.csv”. Most software applications (e.g. Notepad, MS Excel, MS Word) can open this format. If you open this file using MS Excel, it will automatically convert the file to columns, so each patient shows up as one row of data in the file. You can then reformat the file, or use it for further analysis.

If there are chronic disease management files for me, what will they look like?

The file names and content for each of the current files are as follows:

CHF Register 2001/02

Sample File name: senddr12345.12345chf_reg0102.csv

Data Columns:

PRACNUM Practitioner number, of the practitioner most responsible for the diabetes care of this patient.
PHN The PHN of the patient. LASTNAME The last name of the patient. DOB The patient's date of birth. GENDER The gender of the patient.
(M=male/F=female/U=unknown)

Diabetes Register 2001/02

Sample File name: senddr12345.12345diab_reg0102.csv

Data Columns:

PRACNUM Practitioner number, of the practitioner most responsible for the diabetes care of this patient.
PHN The PHN of the patient. LASTNAME The last name of the patient. DOB The patient's date of birth. GENDER The gender of the patient.
(M=male/F=female/U=unknown)

Diabetes Performance Measures 2001/02

Sample File name: senddr12345.12345diab_perf0102.csv

Data Columns:

PRACNUM Practitioner number, of the practitioner most responsible for the diabetes care of this group of patients.
Patients Number of identified diabetes patients in this practitioner's practice. i.e. the number of patients on the MSP diabetes register for this practitioner, according to MSP's data for this fiscal year.
HbA1c Number of diabetes patients who have had HbA1c tests according to the clinical guidelines for treatment of diabetes.
HbA1c - % Patients % calculation: indicates the proportion of patients who have had HbA1c tests

	according to the guidelines, to the total number of identified diabetes patients in the practice.
Microalbumin	Number of diabetes patients who have had Microalbumin tests according to the clinical guidelines for treatment of diabetes.
Microalbumin - % Patients	% calculation: indicates the proportion of patients who have had Microalbumin tests according to the guidelines, to the total number of identified diabetes patients in the practice.
Retinal	Number of diabetes patients who have had Retinal tests according to the clinical guidelines for treatment of diabetes.
Retinal - % Patients	% calculation: indicates the proportion of patients who have had Retinal tests according to the guidelines, to the total number of identified diabetes patients in the practice.
Lipid	Number of diabetes patients who have had Lipid tests according to the clinical guidelines for treatment of diabetes.
Lipid - % Patients	% calculation: indicates the proportion of patients who have had Lipid tests according to the guidelines, to the total number of identified diabetes patients in the practice.

How might the chronic disease management files be helpful to me?

These lists are an excellent starting place for developing your own practice registers of patients with diabetes or congestive heart failure.

The probabilistic register files contain the last name and PHN of each MSP beneficiary deemed to have either diabetes or congestive heart failure for whom you provided the majority of care during the year.

Note that the files will not be completely accurate. Some patients may have died or left your practice since the files were developed. You may also have newly-diagnosed patients who were not identified when the lists were developed.

Your performance measures allow you to compare your performance with other doctors in the province. The aggregate reports of performance are on the following web pages:

http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cdm/research/physician_testing_diabetes_2001.pdf

http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cdm/research/diabetes_care_2001-2002.pdf

How were patients identified as having a chronic disease?

Patients were identified using the administrative data provided to the Ministry. The method uses a case definition to identify individuals who have met the definition since 1992. The methods are described in detail on the page: <http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cdm/practitioners/registers.html>.

Some patients with the disorders will have not been recognized, and some on the registers will prove, on review, not to have the disorder. However, the registers should be about 90% accurate and provide a reasonable starting place to develop accurate practice registers, as well as give a reasonable indication of overall performance.

How were patients allocated to me?

Patients were attributed to the doctor who provided the majority of the patient's primary care during the year. The method is Method 1 as described in detail in the following document:

http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/cdm/research/diabetes_performance_physician.pdf

How often are the files updated?

The existing chronic disease management files for any one year are not updated. Each year, new files are produced and are added to, or will replace, the currently available files.

What should I do if I disagree with the file contents?

You may find some disparity between the register files and your records. Work is still being done to improve the accuracy of the registers, and your comments will be most useful. You can send your comments to:

hlth.cdm@gov.bc.ca

If you have corrections to your register which you would like to have included in the next year's calculations, you can send the corrections to the Ministry of Health as follows:

Email: teleplan@hibc.gov.bc.ca

NOTE: This is an insecure data communication mechanism and is not recommended for patient information. 3) In the fall of 2003, a new secure "Send File" utility will be incorporated into the physicians' secure web site. This will permit you to correct your register files and submit the corrected electronic file directly to the Ministry, for inclusion in the subsequent year's patient register calculations. 4) When the CDM Toolkit goes live, in the fall 2003, you can use the Toolkit to manage your chronic disease patient registers (e.g. maintaining their registers online and by completing flowsheet data for each CD patient). From this, the Ministry' registers will be automatically updated with the patient lists you maintain in the Toolkit.

Are improvements to the web site planned?

Several projects are underway to make the physicians' secure web site more user friendly, and to provide more useful services to physicians.

- 1) **"Send File"**: a new secure service has been added to permit authorized users (physicians and their designated staff), to choose to send files to the Ministry of Health.
- 2) **Changes to file formats and content for the Patient Registers and Performance Measures:** Several users of the current data files have suggested changes to the file format and content. In response to those requests, the Ministry of Health Services will be updating the file formats for the CDM Registers and Performance Measures files to:
 - Make the column names easier to understand
 - Add more descriptive information each file, so you can print the file and still know which chronic disease register or data it represents
 - Adding full patient names to each file. Currently the files only contain patient last names. If a

physician has more than one patient with the same last name it's difficult to tell which patient the file refers to, without looking up their PHN.

- 3) **CDM Toolkit implementation:** the CDM Toolkit has been implemented, permitting real-time updates to physician chronic disease patient registers, and tracking of chronic disease patients according to the clinical guidelines and protocols for the specific chronic disease. By submitting "flowsheet" data for a patient's chronic disease care, providers can update the MSP chronic disease patient registers automatically, and also generate reports showing changes in the patient's health status over time. These reports will also allow providers to track their outcomes and service patterns, and compare themselves to their peers across the province.

Your feedback is always welcome. If you have suggestions for making the physicians' secure website more user-friendly, or for other services we can provide, please contact:

Hlth.cdm@gov.bc.ca