

Personal Health Number (PHN) Quick Reference Card

Accurate PHN assignment is vital to quality patient care. It ensures that a patient's accurate, complete and up-to-date health information is available to all BC health care providers. It also provides accurate demographic data that enables the Ministry of Health, health authorities, hospitals and clinics to target patient services where they are needed most.

If the patient is not a resident of B.C., ask if they have:

- lived in B.C. previously
- had a prescription filled or used a publicly-funded health service in B.C. before

If the answer to either of the above is "Yes," the person probably already has a Personal Health Number (PHN). Perform a search for the PHN as described below.

If the patient does not have a CareCard:

- Request positive identification to determine the patient's documented name, correct spelling of the name and correct date of birth.

Search for the PHN using the TPN transaction and inputting the following:

- Last name
- First initial
- Gender (M or F)
- Date of Birth

If no matches are found:

- Ensure that the patient identification belongs to the patient.
- Confirm documented first and last names.
 - ⇒ **Ask if the patient:**
 - Has changed last name, married, or divorced.
 - Has a hyphenated last name (with spouse).
 - Has embedded spaces in the last name (e.g., van der Ham).
 - Uses their middle name as a first name.
 - Uses a nickname or alternative spelling of their first name, which might begin with a different letter (e.g., Bob for Robert).
 - ⇒ **Try:**
 - Switching first and last name or middle and last name, especially for patients from cultural backgrounds in which the surname traditionally comes first (e.g., Chinese).
 - If the patient is from a different cultural background, ask if they go by an English first name.
 - Using "baby" as the first name if searching for a newborn.
 - Using closely related names (e.g., Mac vs. Mc).
- Confirm the Date of Birth
 - Use year of birth only, as this expands the search to +/- 5 years.
- Contact the physician to get the PHN.
- Call the PharmaNet HelpDesk for assistance with a search.

If more than one match is found:

- Historical changes associated with a PHN are displayed, so there may be multiple matches with the same PHN.
- Use the full name and address information to select an exact match.
- If there is more than one exact match with different PHNs and you are satisfied they are for the same person, contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk to request a merge. They will advise you which PHN to use. Ensure the correct PHN is also entered on your local system.
- If there is no exact match, ask the patient if they have lived at any of the addresses.

If information needs to be updated, ensure you are satisfied that:

- There has been a change of address for this PHN. If so, update the address using the TPA (Update Patient Address) transaction.
- You have viewed a document (e.g., birth certificate) that supports that there is an incorrect date of birth, name or gender on file for the PHN. In this case, fax the correct information, including the PHN, to the PharmaNet Help Desk (see contact information below).

Other notes about PHNs:

- If the patient is a newborn, it is possible that the PHN exists but under a different surname. Ask for any other name under which the newborn may be registered.
- If the client is incarcerated (in prison), the warden brings in the prescription and there is a PHN match with the address of the correctional facility, use that PHN.
- PharmaNet regularly checks for duplicate PHNs and merges them. If a duplicate is suspected, contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk.
- PHNs are assigned only to humans. When filling a prescription for an animal, use the PHN of the pet owner, the veterinarian's license number as the Practitioner ID and the Reference Code V9.
- PHNs created by pharmacies do not entitle a patient to Medical Service Plan or PharmaCare coverage. Claims submitted with pharmacy-assigned PHNs adjudicate to \$0.00.

FOR ASSISTANCE contact the PharmaNet HelpDesk at Health Insurance BC (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Victoria.....250-952-2867
Vancouver and Lower Mainland.....604-682-7120
Elsewhere in BC (toll free)..... 1-800-554-0225
Fax.....250-952-2861