Alberta Netcare
Newsletter

January 2026: Feature Edition — Privacy and Security

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Help shape the future of Netcare

Your feedback guides improvements that make Netcare more relevant and easier to use in supporting patient care. Take a few minutes to share your experience in our quick survey.

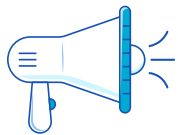Complete the Alberta Netcare Portal User Experience Survey.

Initiative Spotlight

Privacy by Design

The last week of January is Data Privacy Week—a timely reminder that privacy and security are everyone's responsibility when accessing Alberta's digital health systems, including Netcare.

Privacy by Design is a proactive approach that embeds privacy into everyday clinical and administrative practices, rather than reacting after issues occur. It means considering privacy early, reviewing it regularly, and making it part of routine workflows. For custodians, this includes role-based access, regular access and audit reviews, keeping Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) up to date, ensuring staff receive privacy and *Health Information Act* (HIA) training, and reinforcing daily best practices such as securing workstations and protecting credentials.

A proactive approach to privacy helps prevent breaches, supports HIA compliance, and builds trust with patients and the health system.

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Reminders

Real-Time Integration (RTI) Requirements for Pharmacies

Pharmacies that are not integrated with RTI/ImmARI by **July 1, 2026** will not be permitted to participate in the publicly funded immunization program.

- Verify that your pharmacy submits both medication and immunization data through RTI. Pharmacies using pharmacy batch are *not* submitting dispense or immunization data via RTI and are therefore subject to the July 2026 deadline.
- If you need to transition to RTI or are unsure of your current submission method, contact eHealth Services at 1-855-643-8649.
- **Don't wait!** Implementing RTI takes time – pharmacies are encouraged to review their current systems and processes as soon as possible to ensure there is adequate time to prepare for the 2026 flu season.
- Pharmacies must ensure their privacy documentation reflects the use of RTI/ImmARI by their go-live date. eHealth Services will provide guidance, and support any required privacy documentation needed for enabling RTI/ImmARI connectivity.

Netcare Declaration - Now in Effect

Paper-based Information Manager Agreements (IMAs) are now retired and replaced with the new Netcare Declaration, accepted digitally at first-time login. As of December 1, 2025, authorized custodians must accept the declaration to access Netcare. Accepting the Netcare Declaration does not change existing user access or permissions.

For more information about this update visit the EHR Regulation page on the Netcare Learning Centre.

Guiding Privacy Principle

The HIA requires custodians (either named health care organizations or named professions in the Health Information Regulation) and affiliates (employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorized people who work for a custodian) to only collect, use and disclose health information in the most limited manner, with the highest degree of anonymity possible and on a need-to-know basis.

Learn more about your roles and responsibilities under the HIA

Tips & Tricks

Understanding Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs)

PIAs are a required process that helps custodians identify and manage privacy risks when implementing new systems or practices that involve health information. It ensures that privacy risks are considered and appropriate safeguards are in place before anything is put into use.

Under Alberta's *Health Information Act* (HIA), custodians must prepare and submit a PIA to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) before introducing new systems, administrative practices, or changes that involve the collection, use, disclosure, or storage of identifiable health information. PIAs should be reviewed and updated regularly, particularly when there are changes to clinic operations, technology, user roles, or how health information is collected, used, or shared.

The PIA Update Self-Assessment is a short checklist that helps custodians decide whether their current PIA needs to be updated.

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Support & Resources

Authorized Approver (AA) Training

Netcare AAs play a critical role in safeguarding health information privacy and security and must clearly understand their responsibilities. Primary Custodians are automatically designated as Netcare AAs and may delegate this role to one or more individuals.

Core Training

These resources offer a refresher of Netcare AA roles and responsibilities, along with a review of how to use AHS IAM to manage community user access.

Live Webinars

➜ Tuesdays at 9:00 AM

➜ Thursdays at 12:00 PM

Self-Directed Training

➜ Netcare AA Learning Module

Job Aids

These resources provide step-by-step guidance — in video or quick reference format — to help you complete specific AHS IAM tasks, such as managing remote access or retrieving end-user reports.

➜ AHS IAM Learning Materials

Did you know… privacy breaches can occur even without malicious intent? Common examples include:

Leaving screens unlocked

- Lock screens when stepping away - even briefly.

Discussing patient details in public areas

- Avoid discussing personal health information, including phone numbers and emails, where you can be overheard.

Sending faxes or emails to the wrong recipient

- Double check recipient information before sending.

A few small precautions can prevent big privacy risks.

Netcare Policies

The Netcare Policies page on the Learning Centre is a key resource for anyone accessing Netcare. It consolidates current policies, standards, and guidelines for the safe, responsible, and compliant use of health information under the HIA.

The page provides clear guidance on authorized access, appropriate use, privacy and security requirements, audit and monitoring, and user responsibilities—useful for both new users and quick refreshers.

➜ Visit: Netcare Policies

Connect With Us — **eHealth Services Provider Support**

We offer privacy and security support, access and registration assistance, training for providers, health care staff, and students.

📞 **1-855-643-8649**

✉ eHealthProviderSupport@gov.ab.ca

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