



## Workshop 7: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Primary Health Care, and Privacy - Finding the Balance

### Presenters:

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### Description:

Behind the doors of a primary health care clinic - a medical scribe solution creates EMR-ready notes, ChatGPT writes sick notes, and an intake questionnaire is generated instantly. These examples of artificial intelligence are forcing us to examine potential privacy issues and to carefully consider AI needs for the future.

### Session objectives and learning outcomes:

- Examine the extent to which AI has been already applied in primary health care.
- Understand the privacy implications of using AI in primary care service delivery.
- Provide guidelines on privacy considerations for the use of AI-based technologies in primary health care.

## Full description:

### **Challenge:**

Artificial intelligence technology is revolutionizing health care in unimaginable ways, but if privacy were an animal, it may be the elephant in the room where AI and primary health care meet.

When a new electronic tool, including an AI solution, is being considered for a family medicine clinic, primary care providers may be challenged to find time and resources to properly assess privacy concerns and risks. Trust may be put in vendors that their AI tools are developed with privacy principles, such as transparency and limitation about the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information, and developed without historical biases against vulnerable populations.

Providers could also feel burdened to learn to use new AI technologies themselves and to have adequate informed consent discussions with their clients. Primary care organizations have fewer resources for such endeavours compared to hospital settings where AI has been advancing more rapidly.

These challenges underline the need for AI developers and regulators to consider privacy laws and principles to ensure these promising tools have safe and ethical adoption in primary care.

### **Action:**

Action is being taken in the right direction. AI solution vendors are making their own privacy impact assessments more available to potential clients. Some OHTs have the capacity to fund trials of AI medical scribe solutions for primary care providers and Privacy Officers are getting involved.

The digital health priorities of Ontario Health Teams include assessing and supporting primary care clinics' adoption of many digital tools to improve efficiency and quality of care. Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner has AI at the forefront of their strategic priorities as demonstrated in a recent panel discussion on AI in the Public Sector.

Canadian privacy regulators collaborated on the new Principles for responsible, trustworthy and privacy-protective generative AI technologies.

**Impact:**

The translation of guidelines, principles and trials into good privacy practice on the frontlines in primary health care settings will take time. The movement to include community members in decision-making groups who co-design our health care system is essential to meaningful and ethical progress.

An AI algorithm was used in hospitals to predict who was more likely to require extensive medical care until it was identified as being heavily skewed in favour of white patients over black patients. If patient personal information is being scraped for large data sets and generative AI, development must involve client consent for the collection and use of their data.

By addressing these and other privacy and risk issues, more equitable and accountable AI will be used in primary care.

**Trajectory:**

Ontario Health digital health priorities include “implementing digital products that will reduce the risk of delays in diagnosis and treatment, promote safer patient care, improve patient privacy, improve provider

and patient experience through equitable and seamless access to care and reduce administrative burden faced by providers.”

AI tools can facilitate these goals in primary care with EMR chatbots, AI enhancements to remote-monitoring, and more. We must remain privacy-vigilant, but we are on the right path!