eHealth Ontario

Health Information Access Layer

The Health Information Access Layer (HIAL) is a core element critical for sharing patient information among health care providers. It is a combination of technology components, which provide a single point of access to digital health records across the province by enabling different systems to exchange data in a standardized, secure, and reliable manner.

It allows organizations to connect to digital health services without having to invest in additional technology and therefore enables health care providers to securely share patients' health information, like lab results and dispensed drugs.

Privacy and Security Safeguards

Agency-wide:
- Strong authentication and authorization controls in place including a password management process, limiting access to sensitive information to include only those individuals who require it to perform their job function. All sensitive data is encrypted in traffic between external sources and eHealth Ontario systems.
- Data integrity controls are implemented as a quality assurance measure on the personal health information (PHI) provided to eHealth Ontario by health information custodians.
- Controls are in place to ensure that operating systems, databases and applications receive security patches and functional updates in a timely manner.
- The eHealth Ontario Privacy Office has established comprehensive policies to ensure privacy obligations are met.
- PHI is accessible on a need-to-know basis only. This applies to all eHealth Ontario staff and any contracted third parties.

Specific to the HIAL system:
- Prior to its launch, the HIAL was subjected to comprehensive privacy and security risk assessments.
- Security controls allow potential intrusions to be detected and potential threats to be mitigated.
- Role-based access ensures that PHI is provided only to those with a necessary and relevant business need.

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