

HDC Standard Code of Conduct & Acknowledgement | January 2018

HDC User CODE OF CONDUCT

The Health Data Coalition (HDC) is a not-for-profit organization working to provide trusted and meaningful access to health information that supports contributors and partners in the improvement and sustainability of health care. The goal of the HDC is to create a physician-driven, distributed data network with the potential to achieve the following:

- A set of tools aggregating data from across different electronic medical record (EMR) systems
- Provide data to drive and evaluate stakeholder initiatives and measure collective competence
- Enable clinical quality improvement activities and continuing medical education (CME) reflective practice
- Answer clinical and research questions of interest to frontline practicing primary care clinicians.
- Answer population health questions to assist with health system management and improve patient care.

Protection of patient and physician privacy is a core principle of the HDC. The HDC's guiding principles are based in **trust**, which includes ensuring that being committed to conducting our organization with **honesty** and **integrity**, in accordance with high ethical and legal standards, valuing **privacy and confidentiality**, and with **transparency and respect** for each other and those with whom we interact with.

Purpose:

This Standard Code of Conduct (the 'Code') sets out the basic rules and behaviors necessary to achieve the objectives. The Code is not a barrier to HDC activities, but rather it enables the HDC to continue to foster our mission and core values and grow the HDC community.

Our Code provides guidance to all HDC Users and assists HDC in carrying out daily activities within appropriate ethical and legal standards. The code promotes confidence in the HDC's commitment to **integrity, confidentiality and transparency**.

We have developed the Code to ensure we meet our ethical standards and comply with applicable laws and regulations. The standards are based on British Columbia's private sector privacy law, the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA), and guidance from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia.

The obligations outlined in this Code relate to all HDC personnel and their working relationships and extend to our user community. This includes clinician data contributors, their clinic support staff, and HDC Partner users that interact and support the others to use the HDC tool to promote a culture of practice reflection and quality improvement in healthcare delivery.

All registered Users must acknowledge their review and understanding of the Code and must report any situations of non-compliance with the Code to the HDC Privacy Officer or to privacy@hdcbc.ca.

Trust

The HDC is built on trust, privacy and respect – for our personnel, our users and our community.

HDC personnel, including staff, contractors, board and committee members and HDC Users must act responsibly and fairly with the care, diligence, loyalty, and prudence of a reasonable individual, and carry out their functions in line with our mission and values, and in such a way as to maintain confidence in the HDC.

All HDC Users are expected to display responsible and ethical behavior, to follow consistently both the meaning and intent of this Code and to act with integrity in all of our pursuits. Everyone is expected to take such action as is necessary and appropriate to ensure that our policies, processes and practices are in full compliance with the Code and report any non-compliance to the HDC Privacy Officer or to privacy@hdcbc.ca.

Compliance

The HDC is committed to full compliance and expects its personnel and its users to obey all applicable provincial, federal and local laws, to comply with HDC policies and procedures and to follow the guidelines within this Code of Conduct. A violation of the Code, HDC policies and procedures or any law or regulation will be handled through normal HDC disciplinary procedures and may lead to serious disciplinary action.

HDC Conduct

HDC personnel are held to a standard of conduct rooted in commitment, confidentiality, and relationships. Committed to a culture of reflection in primary health care, HDC recognizes our accountability and moral obligation to physicians, organizations and the public. HDC promotes the honest and integral use of data from clinician data contributor users. HDC personnel must respect all laws and refuse to participate in or conceal any unethical, false, fraudulent or deceptive activity.

HDC users' conduct is expected to follow high ethical standards, including the following:

- Carry out functions with integrity, independence, and good faith, and act in the best interests of the HDC;
- Act responsibly and fairly with the care, diligence, loyalty, and prudence of a reasonable individual; and
- Carry out functions in such a way as to maintain confidence and trust in the HDC.

Privacy

When handling personal information, information about or related to an identifiable individual, the HDC expects its

Users to fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Failure to comply with legal requirements can lead to serious disciplinary action and sanctions. Key privacy compliance documentation includes:

- *Personal Information Protection Act*, SBC 2003, c 63 (PIPA) – for private sector, non-profits, and employee information in British Columbia;
- Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia – Guidance documents;
- Doctors of BC Guidance (also refers to PIPA and OIPC guidance);
- Canadian Medical Association and College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC Guidance;
- Privacy by Design – Foundational Principles;
- HDC's Privacy Policy; and
- HDC's Privacy Breach Management Policy

Personal information at the HDC falls within the scope of BC's PIPA, and must comply with data protection principles. Personal information must be:

- Obtained and processed fairly and lawfully;
- Held only for specific purposes;
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- Kept secure and protected; and
- Processed in accordance with the HDC's policies and procedures.

Privacy Policy

HDC's Privacy Policy defines and documents HDC's personal information handling practices and applies to all HDC personnel. It is based on ten interrelated principles:

1. Accountability for Personal Information
2. Openness about Personal Information Policies and Practices
3. Identifying Purposes for Personal Information
4. Consent for Personal Informational
5. Limited Collection of Personal Information
6. Limiting Use, Disclosure, and Retention of Personal Information

7. Ensuring Accuracy of Personal Information
8. Safeguards for Personal Information
9. Individual Access to Personal Information
10. Challenging Compliance with the Privacy Policy

Each of the ten principles should be read in conjunction with their accompanying commentary, found in HDC's Privacy Policy: Internal privacy policies within a clinical practice will follow these same principles and should be familiar to HDC Users. [[HDC Privacy Policy](#)].

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is central to HDC's data network.

Protecting Confidential Information

Users will be exposed to confidential information throughout their work with HDC. It is of the utmost importance that confidentiality is respected at all times. Every safeguard should be taken to ensure that information handled within the HDC application is kept confidential.

Unlike personal information, which is often defined in law and regulation, there is no single definition of confidential information. Any unpublished information generated within the HDC Application is private and confidential in the sense that it is collected, used, or maintained in the course of HDC business. Such information includes, but is not limited to, aggregate health data (HDC Data) viewed in the HDC application, reports generated within the HDC Application using HDC Data, User information, or clinic information. HDC Users must not disclose this information outside of their work with HDC and its partners, unless it is specifically required for the performance of their work or is otherwise authorized for distribution.

While working with the HDC, all Users must respect the confidentiality of information received in the performance of their duties as well as the confidentiality of the deliberations in which they participate. Furthermore, Users must respect the confidentiality of information on sensitive issues, especially issues discussed as part of supporting practice reflection amongst clinician users and their supporting staff, coaches and peer mentors.

All Users have a duty of confidentiality that is in effect during the term of their registration with the HDC. HDC Users may not use confidential information from HDC in a business or undertaking outside their current role, nor accept a gift directly or indirectly in exchange for disclosing confidential information.

Confidentiality Breaches

Any persons who for any reason deliberately access confidential information unnecessary for performing the job, is breaching confidentiality whether or not the information is disclosed to another person. Any person who uses confidential information for personal use or gain is breaching the duty of confidentiality and the duty to avoid conflicts of interest.

All suspected confidentiality breaches, intentional or accidental, must be reported to the HDC Privacy Officer directly or to privacy@hdcbc.ca. Anyone who reports a contravention has the right to keep their identity confidential. Individuals may fear expressing concerns in fear of reprimand; this policy encourages and enables individuals to raise serious concerns immediately within the HDC without feel of reprisal.

In signing this Code, all HDC Users are also signing an agreement to abide by these confidentiality provisions. This pledge will remain in effect throughout the relationship and indefinitely after the termination of the relationship.

Integrity.

HDC Users must maintain data integrity and personal integrity, ensuring there are no conflicts of interest.

HDC Users must carry out their functions with integrity, independence, and good faith, and shall act in the best interests of the HDC, the Clinician Data Contributors and other HDC Users in the network.

Data Integrity and Accuracy

HDC data is our organization's most important asset. It is essential that the HDC keeps the integrity of the data. In

order to do so, data must be kept accurate and up to date by HDC personnel and by HDC Users. HDC Users must follow all applicable registration and application use procedures to ensure that data is collected, organized, used, retained, and shared correctly and consistently. This includes complying with your local policies for data management and reviewing the following [HDC policies](#):

- Privacy Policy;
- Privacy Breach Management Policy;
- Privacy Notice and related agreements

Where data must be accessed by an individual, corrected, or disposed, HDC Users should ensure all policies and procedures are followed, including following all timelines required by law or internal policies, and ensuring that this process is well documented.

Training

HDC Users should complete [Privacy & Security Awareness training](#) to ensure they are aware of and accountable to their applicable obligations as set out in this Code, the HDC Registration and Data Sharing agreements.

Transparency.

The HDC is user-focused – those users expect transparency, openness and compliance with the highest standards.

Our Policies

The HDC makes all HDC policies and procedures available to HDC personnel. A number of policies are also available to the general public on the HDC website [hdcbc.ca/hdc-privacy].

Contact Information

HDC contact information is kept accurate and up to date at all times. It is the responsibility of each HDC personnel and each HDC User to maintain the availability and accuracy of their own contact information.

Any questions about the Code, or concerns about a particular situation, should be discussed with the HDC

Privacy Officer or communicated to HDC via privacy@hdcbc.ca. All questions and concerns will be treated with discretion.

Social Media

Social media is a powerful communications tool, and a way for the HDC to connect with our users and broader community. The HDC encourages HDC Users to feel engaged and empowered to share information and ideas using social media, but Users must do so in a responsible manner. Specifically, colleagues using social media must:

- Only participate in social media on behalf of the HDC where authorized;
- Use sound judgement and common sense;
- Adhere to the HDC's vision, mission, values, applicable policies and procedures as well as this Code; and
- Participate in a manner that protects the HDC's reputation, goodwill, confidential and proprietary information.

Communicating with the Media and the Public

The HDC is built from strong communication with the community. HDC Users are encouraged to share HDC's mission with the public in a positive, engaging way.

HDC Users should refrain from speaking on behalf of the HDC unless authorized to do so. Speaking publicly or to the media on behalf of the HDC should only be done with prior approval. This includes speaking at public events or trade conferences on behalf of HDC.

If you receive a request for comments from the media, please forward this request to HDC's Executive Director along with any other information received from the media. If you are authorized to speak publicly on behalf of HDC, always provide factual and accurate information.

good faith report of actual or suspected wrongdoing is strictly forbidden. Anyone who feels that they have been retaliated against should report this immediately, using any of the reporting methods described above.

Code of Conduct Acknowledgement

I certify that I have read and reviewed the Health Data Coalition's Code of Conduct, and fully understand the contents of this Code, including the Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest provisions. I understand that a breach of any part of the Code of Conduct may lead to discipline, including termination.

To the best of my knowledge, I am in adherence with the intent and provisions of the Code.