

PET Scans Ontario Web Application
Frequently Asked Privacy Questions
for Patients

About this Document

Cancer Care Ontario (**CCO**), an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (**MOHLTC**), is the lead organization in Ontario on matters related to cancer control and cancer services. CCO is the provincial government's principal adviser on cancer issues, with a mission to improve the performance of the cancer system by driving quality, accountability and innovation in all cancer-related services. In addition to cancer, CCO has other core lines of business including supporting and hosting the provincial Access to Care (**ATC**) which is part of the Government of Ontario's Wait Times Information Strategy.

CCO has created this set of "frequently asked questions" (**FAQs**) for patients receiving PET scan services by CCO as part of the PET Scans Ontario program. This FAQ provides patients with information on CCO's privacy roles and responsibilities with respect to the PET Scans Ontario program, and how CCO meets these responsibilities. It also describes the services and safeguards that CCO has put in place with respect to the PET Scans Ontario program.

CCO also makes available a public-facing plain language set of FAQs accessible to health care providers answering questions about the collection, use, disclosure, and protection of personal health information via the PET Scans Ontario program. For a copy of these FAQs, please visit the Privacy page on the PET Scans Ontario website.

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1. Who should read this document?

Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) has created this set of “frequently asked questions” (FAQs) to give patients and their families information about the services and safeguards CCO employs with respect to the PET Scans Ontario web application. This web application is provided to referring physicians to allow them to request PET scans for their patients and PET Centres to allow them to submit results from PET scans performed at their institutions.

2. Who is Cancer Care Ontario?

CCO, an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), is the lead organization in Ontario on matters related to cancer control and cancer services. CCO is the provincial government's principal adviser on cancer issues, with a mission to improve the performance of the cancer system by driving quality, accountability and innovation in all cancer-related services.

In addition to cancer, CCO has other core lines of business including supporting and hosting the provincial Access to Care (ATC) which is part of the Government of Ontario's Wait Times Information Strategy.

3. What is the PET Scans Ontario web application?

The PET Scans Ontario web application is an electronic referral tool which allows referring physicians and PET Centres to share data. Your physician can send a PET scan request electronically to the PET Centre of choice to book an appointment. After a PET scan is completed, the PET Centre inputs the PET scan results into the web application, which is accessible to the physician.

The benefits of the PET Scans Ontario web application include:

- Streamlined and simplified referral process to eliminate paper waste.
- Clinical point-of-care decision support, providing updates to referring physicians on patient's eligibility criteria at the time of referral.
- Standardized referral templates to ensure PET Centres and radiologists receive the required clinical and demographic information to conduct and report on a PET scan, and accurate data capture, enabling timely, consistent and comprehensive analysis on publicly funded oncology-related PET scanning.

CCO provides the PET Scans Ontario web application to referring physicians and PET Centres to allow them to disclose PET scan information to one another in its capacity as a “health information network provider” under the Ontario *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA).

The PET Scans Ontario web application is also used by referring physicians and PET Centres to disclose PET scan information to CCO. CCO uses this information to plan, manage, and improve cancer services in the province. CCO is permitted to collect and use this information under its authority as a “prescribed entity” under PHIPA.

4. What type of information is collected via the PET Scans Ontario web application and for what purposes?

Your health care provider collects your personal health information, for the purposes of requesting a PET scan, to provide it to a PET Centre via the PET Scans Ontario web application. This information may include your name, health card number, diagnosis, medical history and the selected PET Centre for your PET scan. Your personal health information is required by the PET Centre to book and complete your PET scan.

CCO collects the same information from referring physicians and PET Centres via the PET Scans Ontario web application to plan, manage, and improve cancer services in the province.

5. Can I have access to my personal health information in the PET Scans Ontario web application?

Yes. You can ask your health care provider for a copy of the personal health information held about you in the PET Scans Ontario web application.

6. Who accesses my personal health information and for what purpose?

The PHI retained in the PET Scans Ontario web application may be accessed in four ways:

- 1) By health care providers (referring physicians and PET Centres) through a secure website¹;
- 2) By PET Scans Ontario staff through a secure website to support the operations of the program;
- 3) By CCO technical support staff to support the application; and
- 4) By CCO informatics staff for the purpose of planning and managing cancer services in the province.

Health care providers enter or view patient information in the PET Scans Ontario web application through a secure website. Health care providers’ access must be authorized by a

¹ CCO’s Department of Information Technology (IT) currently provides a 128-bit encrypted, SSL website; security specifications are subject to evolve as IT security best-practices / technology evolve.

Registration Authority who validates the user's identity and confirms that the user requires access to the PET Scans Ontario web application.

PET Scans Ontario and CCO technical support and informatics staff have access to PET Scans Ontario web application in order to:

- support the operations of the program;
- support the application;
- carry out requests for changes to patient records (e.g. to correct errors); and
- extract information for the purpose of cancer care planning and management (i.e. based on CCO's "prescribed entity" status).

Technical support staff also have physical access to the PET Scans Ontario server, which is securely located in CCO's data centre.

7. How is my personal health information protected by CCO?

The PHI in the PET Scans Ontario web application is protected by administrative, technical, and physical safeguards.

- **Administrative Safeguards:** PET Centres using the PET Scans Ontario web application must sign a License Agreement with CCO which contains detailed Terms of Use to be accepted by its authorized users (employees, consultants and contractors) prior to accessing the PET Scans Ontario web application. Referring physicians must accept detailed Terms of Service prior to accessing the PET Scans Ontario web application. Both agreements require PET Scans Ontario web application users to keep confidential the PHI they access via the PET Scans Ontario web application and their user credentials. CCO staff with access to the PET Scans Ontario database are required to sign confidentiality agreements and regularly attend privacy and security training to ensure they understand the safeguards they must employ to protect PHI retained in the database.
- **Technical Safeguards:** PET Scans Ontario web application users are registered by a Registration Authority who validates the user's identity and confirms that the user requires access to the web application. Users access the PET Scans Ontario web application with a unique username and password and through a secure website.
- **Physical Safeguards:** The PET Scans Ontario database is located in CCO's secure data centre. Access to the data centre is limited to a small number of support staff and controlled by electronic access cards and monitored with video surveillance.

8. Who can I speak to if I have questions about the privacy or security of the PET Scans Ontario web application?

If you have questions about the privacy or security of the PET Scans Ontario web application, please contact the CCO Privacy & Access Office:

Mail: Cancer Care Ontario, 620 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2L7

Email: privacyandaccessoffice@cancercare.on.ca
Phone: 416-217-1816