

Alberta's Data and Analytic Strategy: Leveraging Linked Data to Drive Innovation

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Background

The Province of Alberta, Canada, maintains a mature data environment with linkable administrative and clinical data dating back up to 30 years. Alberta has a single payer, publicly funded and administered, universal health system, which maintains multiple administrative data sets.

Main Aim

The main aim of the strategy is to fully maximize the data assets in the province to drive health system health system innovation, with a focus on improving health outcomes and quality of life.

Methods/Approach

The Alberta Ministry of Health has created the Secondary Use Data Access (SUDA) initiative to leverage its administrative health data. SUDA envisions strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors through two main data access approaches. The first is direct access to de-identified data held within the Alberta Health data warehouse by key health system stakeholders (e.g. academic institutions, professional associations, regulatory colleges). The second is indirect access to private and not-for-profit organizations, using a data access safe haven (DASH) approach. Indirect access is achieved through private sector investments to a trusted third party that hires analysts placed within the Ministry of Health offices.

Results

Staffing agreements and privacy impact assessments are in place. Indirect access includes a multiple stakeholder steering committee to vet and prioritize projects. Private and not-for-profit stakeholders do not have access to raw data, but rather receive access to aggregated data and statistical models. All data disclosures are done by Ministry staff to ensure compliance with Alberta's Health Information Act. Direct access has

been established for one professional organization and one academic institution, with access restricted to de-identified data.

Conclusion

The Secondary Use Data Access initiative uses a safe haven approach to leveraging data to provide a more secure approach to data access. It reduces the need to provision data outside of the data warehouse while improving timely access to data. The approach provides assurances that people's health information is held secure, while also being used to create health system improvements.

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