



TITLE

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION - REGISTRATION

SCOPE

Provincial: Registration

DOCUMENT #

PS-06-01

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice President, Quality and Chief Medical Officer

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE

May 28, 2014

SPONSOR

Health Information Management

REVISION EFFECTIVE DATE

March 3, 2020

PARENT DOCUMENT TITLE, TYPE AND NUMBER

Patient Identification Policy (#PS-06)

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE

March 3, 2023

NOTE: The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this document, please contact the Policy & Forms Department at policy@ahs.ca. The Policy & Forms website is the official source of current approved policies, procedures, directives, standards, protocols and guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

- To accurately and uniquely identify all **patients** presenting for registration within Alberta Health Services (AHS).
- To facilitate the provision of safe, quality care that ensures the correct person receives the correct health service and decreases the risk of a wide range of adverse events, including, but not limited to:
 - information being retained on an incorrect patient's **health record**;
 - actions or decisions made on information pertaining to an incorrect patient;
 - information inappropriately shared; and/or
 - medication adverse events, diagnostic testing adverse events, procedure adverse events, or discharging infant(s) to the incorrect family(s).
- To **verify** and validate patient identity at the point of registration which supports the integrity and accuracy of patient information in AHS **healthcare information systems**.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. Emergency Situation

- 1.1 In the event of an **emergency situation** where patient identification cannot be immediately verified, AHS shall not refuse or delay a health service to a patient.
- 1.2 In an emergency situation, the patient will be assigned a unique AHS system identity number for an unknown patient until the patient's identity can be verified.

2. Points of Emphasis

- 2.1 Accurate and correct patient identification is essential to reliably determine the individual as the patient for whom the health service is intended, and to match the health service to that patient.
- 2.2 **AHS representatives** must be aware of and apply the standards that support correct identification of patients.
- 2.3 This Standard is applicable, but not restricted to, registration functions where the patient has:
 - a) a face-to-face encounter with an AHS representative; direct verbal contact with AHS over the telephone, Telehealth, or video conference; or
 - b) for registering the patient using any paper processes, including referral letters and booking appointments.
 - (i) The original documentation shall include the patient's last name, first name, health care number, date of birth, gender, address, and contact number.
 - (ii) Verification of patient identity with two pieces of **identification sources** shall occur when the patient presents for the health care service.
 - (iii) Children under 18 shall present at least one piece of original supporting documentation to establish their unique identity when they present for service.

3. Patient Identification

- 3.1 All patients registering for a health service are required to identify themselves for the purpose of ensuring the patient presenting for registration is the correct patient and that any documentation belonging to that patient is linked correctly to their paper and/or electronic health record.

4. Patient Verification

- 4.1 Patients shall be asked for two identification sources on registration.
- a) All patients accessing AHS shall be requested to provide their health care card.
 - b) One other document is requested for patient identification, preferably original documentation containing the patient's photograph (see Appendix A: *Identification Documentation*).
- 4.2 To verify identity, the patient's personal information on the photographic identification and their health care card produced by the patient must match.
- 4.3 For registration purposes, the patient's identity shall be verified by positively confirming a match of the Patient's Minimum Data Set (Appendix B) with the two (2) identification sources and the health care information system(s).
- 4.4 Upon search of the health care information system, compare the demographic information:
- a) last name;
 - b) first name;
 - c) gender;
 - d) date of birth; and
 - e) **Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI)/Personal Health Number (PHN)***
- *The health care card number is matched with the Healthcare Information System where possible.

5. Confirmation of Identity

- 5.1 **Confirmation of identity** shall be used whenever possible, to verify/validate patient identity.
- 5.2 The patient or other individual(s) involved with confirming the identity of a patient (for example a parent verifying for their child) must verbally state or write the patient's name, address, date of birth, and other demographic information.

Do not use leading yes/no questions.

For example:

Use: What is your last name?
 What is your current address?
 What is your current phone number?

Do Not Use: Is your last name____?
Is your current address____?
Is your current phone number_____?

6. Digital Photographs

- 6.1 Digital photographs may be taken, validated, and uploaded to the patient electronic health record to be used as a form of positive person identification.
- 6.2 Patients shall be made aware of the management, use, and purpose of the patient identification photograph.
- 6.3 Digital photographs may be taken following verbal consent from the patient. At the discretion of the AHS representative, written consent may also be sought from the patient.
- 6.4 Digital photographs must be verified during a face-to-face encounter with the patient before being uploaded.
- 6.5 Digital photographs that are uploaded by the patient through a patient portal shall be validated at the time of registration prior to the photograph being accepted.
- 6.6 Discretion shall be utilized at time of registration to help determine if the request for a patient photograph is appropriate.
- 6.7 A photograph shall not be taken when the patient:
- is unconscious or is unstable requiring lifesaving interventions; or
 - declines to have a photograph taken or has previously declined to be photographed.
- 6.8 The patient's photograph shall be updated:
- if the patient's appearance changes;
 - upon the patient's request; or
 - every three (3) to five (5) years, or as individual programs may require, if the other criteria have not been triggered.
- 6.9 Once a photograph has been uploaded to the patient's health record, any copy of the photograph outside of the health record shall be considered a **transitory record** and securely deleted in accordance with the *Transitory Records Procedure*.
- 6.10 The following criteria must be met in order for the photograph to be used as a form of identification:

- a) The photograph must be clear, well defined, and in focus.
- b) The photograph must show a full front view of the head. The head shall be centred with a clear gap around the sides and top of head, including hair.
- c) The photograph must be taken against a plain white or light-coloured background with enough contrast between the background, facial features and clothing so that the patient's features are clearly distinguishable against the background.
- d) The photograph must show a full head without any head covering, unless it is worn for religious, cultural, or medical reasons. However, the head covering must not cast shadows on the face and the full face must be clearly visible.
- e) For newborn and infant patients, the photograph may be taken while the child is sitting in a car seat, as long as a light colored covering is placed over the seat behind the child's head. There must be no shadows on the face or shoulders, around the ears or in the background.

DEFINITIONS

AHS representative means Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

Confirmation of identity means that the person verbally states, spells and/or writes the identifiers (e.g. their name, date of birth) rather than confirming the identifiers as it is read to the patient by AHS representatives.

Emergency situation means a circumstance which requires immediate health care that is necessary to preserve life, to prevent serious physical or mental harm, or to alleviate severe pain.

Health record means the collection of all records documenting individually identifying health information in relation to a single person.

Healthcare information systems means a transactional system used in health care organizations (for example patient admitting, accounting and receivables).

Identification source means an original document (e.g. health care card or driver's license) or a hospital generated label (e.g. identification band) or a person that can accurately verify that the two patient identifiers used are accurate for that patient.

Patient means all persons, inclusive of residents and clients, who receive or have requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers. Patient also means, where applicable:

- a) a co-decision-maker with the person; or
- b) an alternate decision-maker on behalf of the person.

Personal Health Number (PHN) means the Patient's health care insurance number assigned to the Patient by the province/territorial/federal government.

Transitory record means records that do not need to be retained to meet operational, legal, regulatory, fiscal or other requirements. Transitory records do not document client care, document a decision or transaction, support business activities, provide evidence of compliance with legislative requirement, nor have future business, financial, legal, research or archival value to AHS.

Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI) means a unique and permanent number assigned to all persons who receive Health Services in Alberta. ULI's are assigned to all Alberta residents, residents of other provinces/territories or other countries.

Verification or verify means a process by which patient information from two unique sources, as identified in this Standard, are compared and are confirmed as matching. In some cases, active participation of the patient may not be feasible and may be through an alternate person with responsibility for the patient (e.g. parent or guardian).

REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Identification Documentation*
- Appendix B: *Patient Identification – Registration Best Practice*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
 - *Consent to Treatment/Procedures Policy (#PRR-01)*
 - *Patient Identification Verification Policy (#PS-06)*
 - *Transitory Records Procedure (1133-03)*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
 - *Two Client Identifiers Required Organizational Practice (Accreditation Canada)*
 - *Health Information Act (Alberta)*
 - *Provincial Registration Standards and Practices (Alberta Health / Alberta Health Services)*

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Action Taken
March 3, 2020	Revised
Click here to enter a date	Optional: Choose an item

APPENDIX A

Identification Documentation**The preferred, acceptable list of original documentation includes:**

- Valid Driver's License (including out of province or out of country issued licenses)
- Valid Passport (including out of country issued passports)
- Canadian Citizenship Card
- Canadian Permanent Resident Card
- Certificate of Indian Status Card
- Valid Alberta Student Identification Card (including other Provincial and/or Territorial Government issued student identification cards)
- Valid Provincial/Territorial Health Care Card
- Federal, Provincial, and/or Territorial Government issued identification with a photograph

Other acceptable original documentation includes:

- Birth Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Legal Change of Name Certificate
- Final Divorce Certificate
- Citizenship/Immigration status document (Student Permit, Temporary Resident, Interim Federal Health Certificate of Eligibility)
- Certified Copy of the Court Order for Name Change
- Court of Queen's Bench Adoption Order

Source: Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual

Examples of acceptable original documents for photographic identification include:

1. Current driver's license.
2. Other government issued identification such as:
 - Passport.
 - Citizenship card.
 - Permanent resident card.
 - Other Federal identification card.
 - Government photographic identification for non-drivers.
 - Certificate of Indian Status Cards.
 - Refugee/Immigration Papers
3. Other photographic identification:
 - Other types of identification using photographs may be referenced; however, these sources may not provide a high degree of accuracy and should not be used as the sole source of information, if possible. Some examples of these types of photographic identification cards are work-related ID cards or student ID cards.



Canadian Citizenship Card



Permanent Resident Card

APPENDIX B

Patient Identification – Registration Best Practice

(Minimum data set - *minimum required standardized scope of information (data) to be collected about a specific subject*)

Data Element for Minimum Data Set	Definition	Source of Definition	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name 	A name is a word or phrase that constitutes the distinctive designation of a patient.	Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual	Name tokens included in the minimum data set are first and last name.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender 	For the purposes of identification, the gender, as declared by the patient, is the sexual category for the client portraying the behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex.	Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Identity 	Is each person's internal and individual experience of gender It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.	Alberta Health Gender and Sex Data Standard Draft - Dec 4, 2018	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of Birth 	A date of birth is the year, month and day that an individual was born.	Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique lifetime identifier (ULI)/Personal health number (PHN) 	Identifiers are one of the key data attributes used to uniquely identify an individual. Identifiers, such as Medical Record Numbers (MRNs), Personal Health Numbers (PHNs) and/or Unique Lifetime Identifiers (ULIs) are unique to each stakeholder	Provincial Registration Standards and Practices Manual	