If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this policy, please contact the Clinical Policy Department at clinicalpolicy@albertahealthservices.ca. The Clinical Policy website is the official source of current approved clinical policies, procedures, and directives.

PURPOSE
- The purpose of this policy is to support the accurate verification of Patient identity.

POLICY STATEMENT
- Accurate Patient identification reinforces the organization’s ongoing commitment to Patient safety.
- Two or more Patient identifiers and an Identification Source shall be used to verify the Patient’s identity prior to a Health Service being provided to verify that the correct person receives the correct Health Service.

APPLICABILITY
Compliance with this policy 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 services providers as necessary). This policy does not limit any legal rights to which you may otherwise be entitled.

POLICY ELEMENTS
1. Verification of Identity
   1.1 Verifying the identity of a Patient before providing a Health Service facilitates the provision of safe, quality care that verifies that the correct person receives the correct Health Service.

2. Verification Process Requirements
   2.1 Prior to a Health Service being provided, the verification process consists of:
a) requesting at least two Patient identifiers (see section 3) with the Patient and/or by using an Identification Source, and

b) matching and verifying the two Patient identifiers with the documentation outlining the Health Service to be provided.

2.2 Active Communication shall be used to verify the Patient's identity unless prevented by the Patient's clinical condition or other communication considerations such as language.

3. Alberta Health Services Approved Patient Identifiers

3.1 Health Services Provider(s) shall use at least two Patient identifiers from this approved list before the provision of a Health Service:

a) Patient’s first and last name;

b) date of birth (DOB);

c) Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI);

d) Personal Health Number (PHN);

e) Medical Record Number (MRN);

f) Patient identification barcode;

g) government issued identification number;

h) Patient address;

i) recent Patient photograph (use of a recent Patient photograph is restricted to settings with an approved photo identification process in place).

4. Emergency Situation

4.1 Alberta Health Services shall not refuse or delay a Health Service to a Patient in an Emergency Situation.

4.2 In an Emergency Situation, the Patient will be assigned to a temporary unique identity number for use until the Patient’s identity can be verified.

DEFINITIONS

Active Communication means that the person verbally states, spells and/or writes the identifiers (e.g., his/her name, date of birth) rather than confirming the identifiers as it is read to the Patient.
Patient means all persons who receive or have requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers. This term is inclusive of residents and clients.

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

Health Services Provider(s) means any person acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services who is providing a good or a service to a patient, inclusive of health care professionals, staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of or in conjunction with Alberta Health Services.

Health Service means actions performed for or with a Patient including medication administration, tests, procedures, or treatments that may have consequences if performed on the wrong Patient.

Identification Source means a document (e.g. health care card or driver’s licence) or a hospital generated label (e.g., identification arm band) or a person that can accurately verify that the two Patient identifiers used are accurate for that Patient.

Medical Record Number (MRN) means a unique number assigned at a health care delivery site for an individual’s Health Service delivery records. The number is utilized for filing of paper records and unique identification of electronic records.

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

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

REFERENCES
- Alberta Health Services Consent to Treatment/Procedure(s) Policy
- Adult Guardian and Trustee Act (Alberta)

REVISIONS
N/A