New Data Access Model
For Health Research

What is the role of Alberta Health & Wellness?

AHW holds a large amount of administrative data relative to the provision of health services for Albertans. As custodian of this valuable asset, AHW is frequently asked to provide access to this administrative data to support health research and planning needs required by various users including health authorities, researchers and others.

What are the key principles behind the new model?

The proposed data access model aims to:
1. Build stronger, mutually beneficial, collaborative relationships with health services researchers;
2. Build improved capacity in the health research community to use and understand AHW administrative health services data; and,
3. Ensure reasonable data access and facilitate good research taking into account the regulations of the Health Information Act.

What has changed?

The single point of entry now takes your request to the Manager, Research & Knowledge Programs.
health.resdata@gov.ab.ca
A team of managers review the requests and identify a unique composition of members for a
Research Resource Team (RRT)
An appointment is made for an initial meeting between the research team and the designated RRT (in person or teleconference). The RRT is a virtual team of AHW cross-department staff matched to needs of the request (i.e., research experts and research analysts). Each RRT is unique to the research request. At the first meeting
data specifications are identified
Note: An application form is no longer required from researchers except on occasions when requested by the RRT to enable researchers to clarify needs.

What is the Business Intelligence Program (BI) and how does this link to data access for research?

The BI is established to provide integrated quality health services data that can be used to create meaningful information and knowledge resources to improve the understanding and performance of Alberta's health system. Currently data managed by the Decision Support Environment (DSE) is being transferred to a new state-of-the-art tool, the Business Intelligence Environment or BIE.

What opportunities are available to researchers?

A secure data lab will be set up at AHW. Workstations will be available during normal work hours. Internal and external researchers and their team can work with individual level, de-identified data in the secure area and with assistance from members of the RRT.

What is the expected outcome of the new model?

The expected outcome is that there will be greater satisfaction with data access through a participatory approach between research individuals and organizations and the AHW RRT. The interactive relationship will support continuous improvement of data sources in two ways:
1. External data user will identify data gaps; and,
2. Aggregated data produced by researchers in collaboration with AHW will add to the AHW data repository.

How do I work with AHW?

All requests can be made by E-mail to:
   health.resdata@gov.ab.ca
Provide a brief summary of the research question and attach available copies of proposals and ethics reviews. Requests are received and managed by:
Sylvia A. Wilson, MSc OT
Manager, Research & Knowledge Programs
Research & Evidence Branch
Health Accountability Division
20th Floor, TELUS Plaza North Tower
10025 Jasper Avenue NW
PO Box 1360 Stn Main
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 2N3
Tel. 780/415-2837, Fax 780/422-2880
sylvia.a.wilson@gov.ab.ca

Research for Evidence--Evidence for Policy