



County Council

Meeting Date: April 22, 2025

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Subject: ClinicalConnect Privacy & Security Policies

BACKGROUND:

ClinicalConnect is a secure, web-based portal that provides authorized healthcare providers with real-time access to electronic health records (EHRs) from multiple sources. It is designed to improve healthcare delivery by giving clinicians a comprehensive view of a patient's medical history, enabling better-informed decision-making.

ClinicalConnect is managed by Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Health. Access to ClinicalConnect is restricted to authorized healthcare providers and organizations, requiring rigorous compliance with privacy and security protocols.

In 2024, Middlesex-London Paramedic Services (MLPS) secured access to ClinicalConnect for its Community Paramedicine (CP) program. This real-time access to health records has already demonstrated improved patient outcomes and enhanced operational efficiency by enabling proactive, informed interventions within the community.

With Strathmere Lodge's ongoing commitment to enhanced healthcare outcomes and its digital transformation through the implementation of its EHR, PointClickCare, integration with ClinicalConnect is a critical next step. Access to ClinicalConnect will provide the Lodge's clinical staff with timely and secure access to vital health information—such as hospital visits, diagnostics, laboratory results, and specialist consultations—enabling more informed clinical decision-making, minimizing avoidable hospital transfers, and supporting seamless transitions in care. ClinicalConnect access reinforces the County's commitment to integrated, person-centered care and supports the broader health system goal of improving outcomes through enhanced information sharing.

ANALYSIS:

As part of the ClinicalConnect onboarding process, specifically designed Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) privacy and security policies are required to

ensure compliance with the requirements for accessing, using, and disclosing personal health information through the ClinicalConnect portal. MLPS adopted these policies in 2024, and Strathmere Lodge will follow a similar process to ensure full compliance.

The PHIPA legislation governs the collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information by Strathmere Lodge. To align with these regulations and the requirements of ClinicalConnect, Strathmere Lodge has undertaken a comprehensive review and update of its privacy and security policies.

Key updates to the policies include:

- Detailed procedures for the secure access, use, and disclosure of personal health information obtained via ClinicalConnect.
- Mandatory reporting protocols for any security and privacy breaches involving information stored in the portal.

The Strathmere Lodge ClinicalConnect policies are attached hereto as Appendix 'A':

These policy updates provide clear guidelines for Strathmere Lodge staff to handle personal health information securely and in compliance with PHIPA standards. They also establish the necessary privacy and security processes required to meet ClinicalConnect's operational and compliance framework.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct costs associated with accessing ClinicalConnect; however, implementation will require internal staff resources to support system integration, user training, and ongoing privacy and security compliance. These requirements will be managed within the existing operating budget for Strathmere Lodge. Any minor costs related to IT support or administrative onboarding are anticipated to be nominal and absorbed within current departmental allocations.

Access to ClinicalConnect is also expected to contribute to operational efficiencies by reducing time spent obtaining external medical records, decreasing avoidable hospital transfers, and improving coordination with health system partners, which may lead to longer-term cost avoidance.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
<p>Cultivating Community Vitality</p> 	<p>Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and support community wellness
<p>Promoting Service Excellence</p> 	<p>Innovate and transform municipal service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations• Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the ClinicalConnect Privacy & Security Policies Report be received for information;

AND THAT Middlesex County Council, as the Strathmere Lodge Board of Management, approve the ClinicalConnect Personal Health Information Privacy Policy and Procedures and the Personal Health Information Security Policy and Procedures as presented;

AND THAT staff be delegated authority to maintain and update ClinicalConnect Personal Health Information Privacy Policy and Procedures and the Personal Health Information Security Policy and Procedures as required.