

Frequently asked questions: Data sharing and PIP QI

What is the Primary Health Information Network (PHIN), and what does it have to do with PIP QI?

- The PHIN is Primary Health Tasmania's de-identified data-sharing and analysis program.
- The PHIN program provides analysis and reporting services and expertise for general practices to help them understand their data.
- Further information about the PHIN can be located in the PHIN Participation Agreement. If your practice has not already received or signed a PHIN Participation Agreement, a copy is available [here](#).
- By participating in the PHIN, practices are already submitting the PIP eligible data set and meet this requirement of the PIP QI.

What type of data is sent to Primary Health Tasmania under the PHIN program?

- CAT4 collects data on “active” patients in the clinical system only. Data for patients who are deceased or marked inactive/archived are not collected unless this option is enabled in CAT4.
- Only the most recent/last recorded patient demographic results are collected and used in the reports – such as Diagnoses, Pathology, Measures, Conditions, Medications, Immunisations, General Data, Diabetes Sip Data, MBS items, Assigned Providers and Digital Health.

What if my patients don't want their data included?

- As outlined in the RACGP *Secondary use of general practice data* guidelines, it is a requirement to advise your patients that their healthcare information may be de-identified and used for secondary purposes.
- If your practice does not already have awareness material, our support team has created posters for your practice to use for this purpose. You may request these by emailing providersupport@primaryhealthtas.com.au and letting us know the name of your practice and how many posters you required. Posters are A3 size.
- Patients who do not want their data included in the de-identified dataset can be opted out by your practice via CAT4.
- Once a patient is opted out, the software will remember this for all data extracts in the future.
- Instructions on how to opt out patients can be found at <https://help.pencs.com.au/display/CG/Patient+Consent+Withdrawn>.

How is the data de-identified?

- De-identification of data sent to Primary Health Tasmania occurs through the De-identify Dataset feature within CAT4.
- During the De-identify Dataset process, patients who have withdrawn consent to share data are removed from the data extract.
- To de-identify the data extract, all identifiable information such as name, address and date of birth are removed. The remaining personal information in the de-identified extract is gender, ethnicity and patient age in years.

More technical information about data de-identification

CAT4 is using a **Filtering and Anonymisation Tool** (FAT CAT) to de-identify the data extracts and to “certify” the extract as de-identified. Only “FAT CAT certified” extracts are uploaded to the **PHN Aggregation Tool** (PAT CAT) – non-certified extracts are rejected.

- The de-identified data file is an XML file format. CAT4 zips the XML and sends the zipped XML to PAT CAT. It uses a secure https webservice to send a zipped XML file with the sender organisation credentials. This needs to be initiated from within CAT4 by a logged-in user of the organisation.
- PAT CAT is only able to receive files that are de-identified and have been through the FAT CAT process. It checks the sender organisation’s credentials and will only accept a file from an organisation that is linked to the PAT CAT.
- PAT CAT stores the data received against a medical centre. It knows which dataset has originated from which medical centre.
- “Rare” afflictions:
 - Within CAT4 in the medical centre, the data is identifiable, and the medical centre has access to the medical records.
 - Within PAT CAT the data is de-identified – it is possible there could be a combination of data filters that would result in a small patient cohort being returned. If this data is displayed on a map, cohorts < 5 will not be displayed. There is no restriction on reports where the location is unknown. This data is for PHN use only.

Exactly what data is extracted, and can my staff view it prior to sending?

- Practices submitting data share a de-identified Clinical Audit Tool extract.
- Practices are able to view what they are sending to Primary Health Tasmania at any time by opening the CAT4 application, selecting an extract and choosing ‘De-identify Dataset’ from the Tools menu. See <https://help.pencs.com.au/display/CG/De-identify+Dataset> for further information.
- Further information about what is extracted can be accessed at <https://help.pencs.com.au/display/ADM>.

What is the ‘PenCS scheduler’ software and what does it do?

- The PenCS scheduler software automates the sending of de-identified data extracts to Primary Health Tasmania.
- The software itself doesn’t extract data; it simply instructs CAT4 to take a data extract, de-identify and encrypt it and submit it to Primary Health Tasmania.

Where is the data stored?

- Data sent is stored securely on Primary Health Tasmania premises with limited access controls in place.
- Data is held in compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles, security and privacy legislation and Primary Health Tasmania's Data Governance Framework.

Will the data be shared with the Department or the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare?

- The PHIN agreement signed by practices does not allow Primary Health Tasmania to share practice level data with any third parties or link this data to other datasets.
- National data custodianship arrangements for PIP QI are still being finalised.
- If national data custodianship arrangements are established for PIP QI data, Primary Health Tasmania must ask practices for further explicit agreement to share the PIP QI dataset with the national custodian.
- Only the PIP QI dataset will be provided and details of the scope of this will be outlined clearly in the agreement.
- If practices do not provide this further consent, their data will not be shared under any circumstances.

What is the PHN Exchange?

- The PHN Exchange is a data presentation tool.
- It can be located at <https://www.phnexchange.com.au>
- It has a public and a private area.
- The public area shows Tasmanian ABS and hospital health data at a state and local government area level.
- The private area requires a verified account to be set up and is where practices can retrieve their GP data report.
- Only the practice which submitted data is able to view its GP data report.
- Practices cannot see any other practice reports.

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