Overview of Administrative Health Datasets

Purpose
This document provides an overview of Alberta Health administrative datasets available for research, planning, policy development, and quality improvement projects. Requests for data can be made using the Request Application Form. Disclosure of data is subject to the Health Information Act (see Data Disclosure Guidelines for more information).

Datasets Available
- **Ambulatory Care** (includes Emergency Department and Day Surgery)
- **Inpatient** (Discharge Abstract Database (DAD)/Hospital Morbidity)
- **Practitioner Claims** (Fee-For-Service claims)
- **Population Registry** (includes basic demographic and geographic information)
- **Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Claims** (seniors and their dependents, and persons on assistance only)
- **Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) Dispenses** (no financial information)
- **Other Datasets** (including Vital Statistics births and deaths, with authorization)

Dataset Descriptions

**Ambulatory Care: Available from April 1, 1997 to present**
- Facility-based ambulatory care information (same-day surgery, day procedures, emergency department visits, and community rehabilitation program services occurring in publicly-funded facilities).
- Contains information on recipients, services, diagnoses, and procedure interventions.
- Also includes information on providers and derived elements (e.g., groupers).
- Coded in ICD-9-CM (prior to April 2002); ICD-10-CA/CCI (April 2002 to present).
- Updated annually.

**Inpatient: Available from April 1, 1993 to present**
- Morbidity data and Alberta version of the CIHI Discharge Abstract Database (DAD).
- Contains information on recipients, services, diagnoses, and procedure interventions for those who have been discharged from a hospital inpatient bed.
- Also includes information on providers and derived elements (e.g., groupers).
- Coded in ICD-9-CM (prior to April 2002); ICD-10-CA/CCI (April 2002 to present).
- Updated annually.
Practitioner Claims: Available from April 1, 1994 to present

- Fee for Service (FFS) claims (including shadow billing) information for physicians and other providers for insured health services. The codes for fee payments (Schedule of Medical Benefits) are updated over time when changes occur.
- Contains recipient, provider (medical and allied) and service data.
- Privacy of providers is highly protected and must be absolutely de-identified prior to disclosure.
- Coded in ICD-9-CM/Schedule of Medical Benefits (modified CCP).
- Updated weekly, but accuracy and completeness of claims data improves as time from date of service increases. A six month payment lag is typically used.

Population Registry: Available from April 1, 1993 to present

- Includes basic demographic and geographic information of Albertans who are registered with the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP).
- The registry is used as a base for Alberta population counts.
- Updated quarterly and annually.

Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Claims: Available from April 1, 1994 to present

- Includes information about prescription drugs, prescribing information, ambulance, prosthetics/orthotics and palliative care services for those Albertans that Alberta Health pays Alberta Blue Cross (ABC) premiums (primarily senior citizens).
- Contains recipient, provider, and service data.
- Updated monthly and annually.

Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) Dispenses: Available from April 1, 2008 to present

- Includes information on Dispense Event and associated information on patient, prescriber, dispenser, facility and drug.
- No information on the cost of the drug dispensed or the reason for the prescription
- Dispensed information only – not prescription information
- Accuracy and completeness of data improves over time (currently, about 95 per cent of all pharmacists submit records to PIN).
Other Datasets

- Alberta Vital Statistics with identifiers (with authorization). Death records available from 1999 to present; birth records available from 2005 to present.
- Financial information related to health costing: Actual cost information related to medical services is submitted from limited facilities in Calgary and Edmonton. Groupers are used to cost ambulatory and inpatient care.

Other data sources held by the Ministry are not currently disclosed because they are: highly aggregated, not collected consistently over time, incomplete across geographies, and/or of substandard quality.

Limitations

1. Virtually all data collected for the Ministry is for administrative purposes, such as management of the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan.
2. For some data, only a portion of the data collected is submitted (no source records) to Alberta Health (e.g., costing data).
3. Data elements collected may change over time. Some data elements currently available may be unavailable in early years (and vice-versa).

The Ministry collects information about publicly-funded programs and services. There is no information on activities outside the public system.

Further Information

Metadata on commonly requested data elements from the datasets described above is available in the document Commonly Requested Data Elements.

Contact

Alberta Health
Health Analytics Branch
Customer Relationship Management and Data Access
health.resdata@gov.ab.ca
health.inforequest@gov.ab.ca