

PRIME Project Introduction

In 1995, the Ministry of Health introduced PharmaNet, a central information and claims adjudication system linking all pharmacies in British Columbia. Since then, PharmaNet has expanded into an integral clinical tool used across the health sector: in community and hospital pharmacies, emergency departments and hospitals, health authority facilities, and community practices. With so many users accessing from different locations, PharmaNet user management has become distributed and inconsistent.

In 2015, the Ministry of Health introduced the Information Management Regulation of the Pharmaceutical Services Act. This regulation introduced new requirements for how access to PharmaNet is granted and managed.

To implement the changes legislated by the Information Management Regulation and required by government policy and standards, the Ministry of Health has launched the PRIME Project (PharmaNet Revisions for Information Management Enhancements). The purpose of PRIME is to design and implement a solution for PharmaNet user management that provides access to information for patient care, satisfies the requirements of the Information Management Regulation, standardizes processes across the province, and ensures that all PharmaNet access is transparent and accountable.

At its core, PRIME will ensure that

- each person is accountable for their access to PharmaNet and their use of information
- the Ministry of Health determines who has access to PharmaNet and what kind of access they have
- all PharmaNet access is actively monitored

PRIME will also protect patient and practitioner information by preventing improper or fraudulent access to PharmaNet.

The PRIME project team began engaging with stakeholders in health authorities and pharmacies in the autumn of 2016. After capturing the current state of PharmaNet user management across the province, the PRIME team developed a concept for the PRIME solution and consulted with a larger group of stakeholders in the spring of 2017. In the summer and fall of 2017, the team worked with stakeholders to refine the future state vision of PharmaNet user management.

The effective date of PRIME is legislated in the Information Management Regulation, which specifies two dates:

- As of June 1, 2018, applicants without existing PharmaNet access must enroll using the PRIME system. On June 1, 2018, anyone who already has PharmaNet access will have that access grandfathered until they are required to enroll using the PRIME system.

- Before June 1, 2021, all existing users (who had their access grandfathered) will be required to enroll using the PRIME system. This will be done gradually, and the Ministry will provide ample notice of when existing users are required to enroll using the PRIME system.

After considering feedback from stakeholder engagement sessions held in August and September 2017, the Ministry determined that refinements to the PRIME solution and implementation plan are required, as is further consultation with affected PharmaNet users and organizations. As a result of this, the Ministry will seek to change the effective dates currently in the Information Management Regulation. The new dates are not yet known, but the work of PRIME is ongoing, and the new dates will not be pushed back significantly. The Ministry will continue with stakeholder engagement and the work required to bring PRIME into use in the near future.

The Ministry will inform all stakeholders of the new effective dates as soon as the change to the Information Management Regulation has been approved by Cabinet. We will be putting this forward for Cabinet consideration ahead of the current June 2018 date.

In 2017 and early 2018, the Ministry will be focusing on refining and finalizing the PRIME design and working with each organization to do the pre-work of site setup, site grouping, and the designation of site verifiers and provisioners.