



# Better Data, Better Health

## VIGNETTE: MONIQUE RASMUSSEN

Monique Rasmussen is a health information management (HIM) professional and a member of the Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA). She is committed to ensuring the privacy and security of patients' data in Canada.

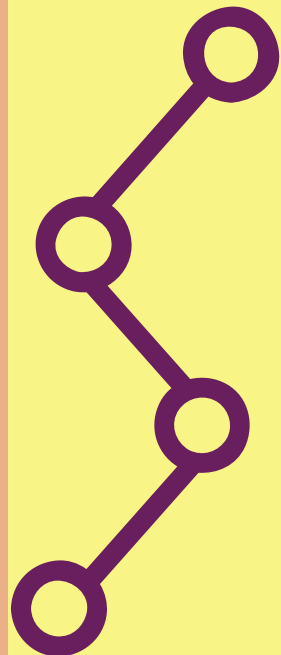
Every time we visit a family doctor, have bloodwork done, undergo a surgical procedure, fill a drug prescription at the pharmacy or generally interact with the health system, data is being collected, analyzed and stored.

As the amount of data being collected through the healthcare system grows, so do concerns about our privacy. Fortunately, there are more than 5,000 highly educated and trained health information management (HIM) professionals like Monique who work diligently every day to ensure that Canadians' data are collected, analyzed and stored according to strict guidelines.

The Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) serves as the national professional association aimed at advancing the health information management profession and working towards a healthy Canada through quality health information. Monique Rasmussen, a member of CHIMA and the Regional Director of Coding and Informatics Services for Health Information Management, is responsible for a team of more than 150 HIM professionals in Lower Mainland British Columbia. She describes the role that she and her team play in ensuring that our health data are protected.

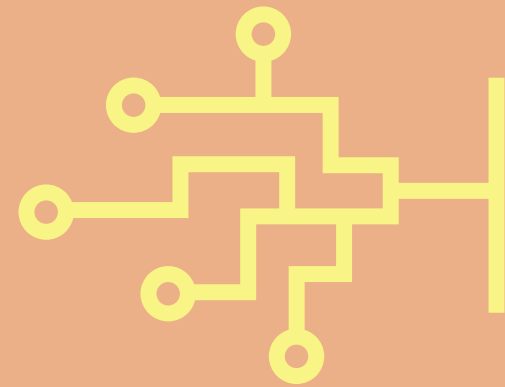


**"I want to advocate for the health information management profession. Many people do not know about the multiple roles in HIM areas because the majority of our work happens behind the scenes. A tremendous amount of training and education is involved and the work is extremely detailed as we touch every piece of the patient's health information as part of their journey through the healthcare system."**

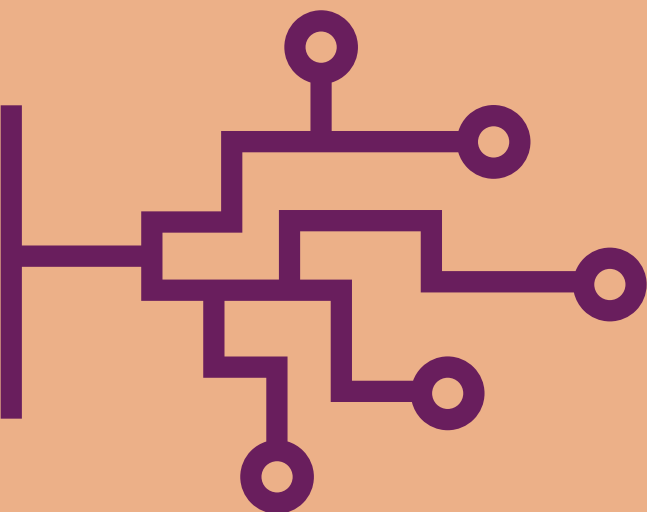


Monique explains that patients are at the centre of all decisions around health data. For instance, patients themselves consent to have their information collected, used and shared with others to make decisions about their care and treatment.

When appropriate, health data can also be used in a number of other ways. For instance, hospitals use health data to support funding and infrastructure planning decisions. Medical researchers may also rely on health data to conduct research and generate new insights. Importantly, data is also playing a critical role in decision-making with the current COVID-19 pandemic. Patient data are being used by hospitals to improve care and also to identify patterns in COVID-19 infections across the country.



**"Health data can help the health system to move in a faster way. It helps by informing a better understanding of trends, gain insights into the management of various diseases and facilitate strategic redevelopment. The COVID-19 data will definitely change many ways healthcare is delivered in the future and how a lot of things are done in care."**



HIM professionals, among many others, are dedicated to patient privacy. Health data can be used to transform how care is delivered and how diseases are prevented and treated. We need to build on this strong foundation of data protection established by HIM professionals and others across Canada and foster a future where health data plays a critical role in healthcare decisions.

**Every Canadian needs to be part of the conversation and help build a responsible, transparent approach to sharing health data that protects our privacy and enables the best healthcare possible.**

**"The protection of privacy starts at the beginning of the data journey. At every point, the patient's data is protected. Staff are educated on confidentiality as we are handling the most sensitive information. All HIM professionals have that professional ethic ingrained in them to always protect patient health information."**

