

## **International privacy and data protection experts join Ontario Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian for key health privacy conference in Toronto Monday**

TORONTO – A number of Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners from around the world, and other prominent privacy experts, will be participating in a special one-day health privacy conference on Monday, organized by Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian.

The conference, *The Privacy Prognosis in an Era of New Health Information Technology*, is devoted to privacy issues in the context of emerging health information policy. It being held at the MaRS Centre, 101 College Street (southeast corner of College and University), from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Commissioner Cavoukian, who has designated Monday as *Health Information Privacy Day*, will deliver the opening keynote address.

“This is a crucial topic that not only needs to be addressed in Canada, but throughout the developed world,” said Commissioner Cavoukian. “The health sector will soon be undergoing a rapid transformation with the implementation of new information technology. During this conference, we will be looking at cutting-edge health information technologies and the potential impact on patient privacy.”

Among the discussion themes to be addressed are:

**Privacy-Enhancing Health Information Technologies:** New privacy-enhancing technologies are being developed that could minimize the amount of identifiable health information that is collected, used and disclosed. What are these new technologies and how can they be put to use in the health sector?

**Electronic Health Records:** Cradle to grave EHRs have the potential to revolutionize the ways in which health care is delivered. What are the privacy issues related to EHRs and what safeguards can be built into their design and implementation?

**Genetic Testing:** Advances in genetic testing are expanding the potential to predicting illnesses and individual characteristics. Blood relatives, spouses, insurers, employers and governments all have an interest in your genetic information. What are the privacy implications of genetic testing and what safeguards are needed to ensure genetic privacy?

**RFID Tags in the Health Sector:** Radio frequency identity tags have a broad range of potential applications in the health sector, from tracking wandering patients to preventing the counterfeiting of prescription drugs. What are these applications and what are their associated benefits and threats?



The 20 speakers and panelists come from Canada, the United States and various parts of Europe. The full program is available at: <http://www.governmentevents.ca/hpd2007/agenda.php>.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is appointed by and reports to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and is independent of the government of the day. The Commissioner's mandate includes overseeing the access and privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, and helping to educate the public about access and privacy issues.

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