Update on the Ontario Health Data Platform (OHDP)

Sponsor

Government of Ontario

Program

Ontario Health Data Platform

Description

The Government of Ontario has recently created the Ontario Health Data Platform (OHDP), a platform that organizes data from a variety of health sources to assist with better detection, planning and response to the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as future epidemiological trends.

While Ontario's universities support the goals and objectives of the OHDP, and its role in fostering further innovation, strengthening the economy, and advancing COVID-19-related research that benefits Ontarians, review of the research agreement and other elements related to this platform, have raised serious concerns for both the university sector and the research hospital sector, as well as industry stakeholders.

To utilize the platform, institutions are required to sign an institutional agreement with the Province, which is a normal business practice for provincial funding of University research projects. A primary concern for the current OHDP framework outlined by the government is that the OHDP institutional agreement would make the Province the owner of all newly created intellectual property (IP) generated through access to the OHDP, limiting commercialization and deterring private sector investment in research. There are also issues around how the agreement harmonizes with others in the sector, stipulations related to background IP, its alignment with the principle of preserving academic freedom, including timely academic publication, and the overall impact on researcher engagement.

Given the importance of COVID-19-related research and strong interest from the research community regarding this initiative, please be advised that the university sector has been communicating our serious concerns with the government, requesting to work collaboratively on a path forward that will work for all stakeholders. This is being done jointly across the sector, engaging both the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), and industry stakeholders.

The research community is an integral part of the University of Guelph and we recognize the concerns that you may have in relation to this initiative. Developments related to OHDP will be

communicated to the research community as they arise.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact adminovpr@uoguelph.ca [1] if you have questions or concerns.

Special Notes

Please note that research activities carried out in the context of COVID-19 need to adhere to the University of Guelph COVID-19 research principles, policies, guidelines and processes as they may be updated from time to time and communicated on the Office of Research web-page [2]
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