

August 2026

## **Consensus Statement**

### **Support for Bill S-5: *The Connected Care for Canadians Act***

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the Government of Canada tabled Bill S-5, the proposed *Connected Care for Canadians Act*, before the Parliament of Canada. Aimed at legislating health data interoperability, the bill has now passed the Senate and is at second reading in the House of Commons.

Health data is the essential resource required to enable informed decisions across all domains of health service including research, innovation, management, population health and patient care. Fragmented or inaccessible health data can lead to the harm of individuals, populations and the health system. The comprehensive interoperability of health data is a core necessity of a high functioning health service. Health data interoperability is also required to realize legal obligations to patient access to personal health information, and Indigenous People's rights to sovereignty over their health data.

The portability of health care is affirmed in the *Canada Health Act* (CHA) as a core condition of publicly funded health service in Canada. Yet, in violation of the spirit and intent of the CHA, the absence of comprehensive digital health data interoperability impairs the capacity to deliver safe, portable care. In alignment with the CHA, the pan-Canadian Health Data Charter – endorsed by all but one jurisdiction in October 2023 – explicitly calls for “*common standards for terminology, health data design, stewardship, interoperability, access and portability*” of health data. These conditions remain largely absent in Canada.

The legislation of health data interoperability is a necessity for the sustainability of the healthcare system and the health and wellbeing of all residents of Canada. Health data interoperability must be person-centric, meaning that health data follows an individual both within a jurisdiction as well as across provincial and territorial health services. This is entirely achievable if a standards-based and cooperative approach is taken.

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, call upon the federal government – in cooperation with all federal parties and provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments – to support both the passage and the vision articulated by the *Connected Care for Canadians Act*. This Act will be an important first step toward comprehensive health data interoperability and can serve as a nexus for future health data governance and policy cooperation in Canada.