SAULT AREA HOSPITAL
HÔPITAL DE SAULT-SAINTE-MARIE

DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Sault Area Hospital
Patient and Family Advisors

Title: Artificial Intelligence Policy		☐ Policy ☒ Policy & Procedure ☐ Procedure Only ☐ Protocol Only
Policy Type:		
Corporate		
Approval Authority Level: VP	Authority Area of Responsibility Medical Affairs Information Technology, and Privacy	
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Distribution: ☒ Hospital-Wide		
Related Policies: Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (7.10) Ethical Dilemma Resolution Policy (3.4)		
Keywords: Privacy, AI, Artificial, Intelligence, PHI, PI, CI, CCI		
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Purpose:

This policy outlines the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, and generative AI technologies within the Sault Area Hospital (SAH). To mitigate the risks associated with the use of AI, this policy outlines the procedures for using AI technologies. The policy emphasizes the importance of adhering to relevant privacy and confidentiality regulations, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) in Ontario, Canada.

Policy:

All SAH employees, credentialed staff, researchers, volunteers, students, contractors, and any other party must adhere to the AI Policy when using AI for any SAH business (including the provision of healthcare).

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ambient listening tools is restricted to Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, and Midwives use only.

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Background:
As healthcare technology rapidly evolves, SAH recognizes the importance of AI for improving patient care, operational efficiency, and all other aspects of SAH business. The integration of AI to healthcare presents both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a comprehensive policy to promote ethical practice and compliance with regulations, such as PHIPA.

SAH recognizes the benefits and risks associated with AI technologies, AI, and generative AI technologies. Terminology is described in the Definitions section below. Technologies such as ChatGPT or Ambient Listening AI, have the potential to increase productivity, support decision-making, and assist with care delivery. At the same time, significant risks and concerns exist regarding privacy, patient safety, ethics, etc., which must be taken into consideration when using these technologies.

This policy aims to establish clear procedures for the adoption, use, and monitoring of AI technologies within our hospital – prioritizing patient safety, privacy and confidentiality, and data security – while maintaining and enhancing high quality patient care.

This policy was developed with input from Information Technology, Medical Affairs and Research, Privacy, Ethics, Professional Practice, and Analytics departments. The policy will be updated to reflect the evolution of recommended practices by recognized authorities in the field.

Guiding Principles:
The following principles will guide the use of AI at SAH:

1. Adherence to Existing Policies.
2. Ethical and Acceptable Use.
3. Transparency and Accountability.
4. Data Privacy and Security.
5. Consent-Driven.

Adherence to Organizational Policies:
SAH privacy and technology policies apply when using AI. These include but are not limited to:

- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (7.10).
- Confidentiality and Acceptable use agreements.
- Ethical Dilemma Resolution Policy (3.4).

When using AI, individuals must not include confidential information, especially identifiable information about an individual. This includes:

- Corporate confidential information.
- Personal information.
- Personal Health Information.

Ethical and Acceptable Use:
AI and generative AI technologies must be used responsibly, with the primary objective of improving healthcare outcomes, enhancing patient care, advancing research, and supporting administrative functions.

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All users of AI must exercise sound judgment and critical thinking when utilizing AI-generated outputs, and consider the limitations and biases inherent in AI. Bias in AI can stem from various sources, including skewed training data, biased design processes, and biased implementation. AI systems may spread false, misleading, or potentially harmful information. AI bias could also lead to human rights violations, particularly as it relates to equality, equity, and non-discrimination. Concerted efforts to recognize AI-generated bias are expected and users must attempt to mitigate bias or avoid the use of AI altogether if unfamiliar with the limitations and biases that AI may generate.

Transparency and Accountability:
Transparency and accountability are crucial when utilizing AI for document drafting and medical documentation. Healthcare professionals are expected to take responsibility for the accuracy, legality, and appropriateness of AI-generated content, ensuring that it aligns with professional standards and organizational policies.

Data Privacy and Confidentiality:
AI and generative AI technologies have no obligation to comply with FIPPA and PHIPA regulations to ensure the protection of patient information, therefore it is our responsibility to ensure that we are not including information that could violate those regulations.

In private/proprietary AI all patient data including personal health information, personal information, or confidential data must never be used or disclosed. Any patient data/information must be de-identified or anonymized.

When utilizing AI and generative AI technologies, any SAH proprietary or confidential information, corporate data, or patient information must be protected. Do not include any information that is not publicly available when using AI.

Prior expressed consent should be obtained from relevant stakeholders before sharing any confidential information outside the hospital setting.

Consent Driven:
Patients or their authorized representatives must be provided with clear, comprehensible disclosure of the AI system's role, purpose, and potential risks when used in care delivery. Patients retain the unconditional right to opt out of AI technology use without any negative impact on their treatment. Consent must be expressed and documented.

AI Document Drafting Guidelines:
The use of generative AI for document drafting and/or medical documentation purposes must adhere to ethical use, privacy, and security considerations associated with this technology. This includes technologies known as Ambient Listening and AI Scribe. AI models, particularly generative models, can introduce biases, hallucinate, and misinterpret information, which undermines the reliability and accuracy of the medical record. These guidelines including consent also apply to administrative use including virtual meeting platforms.

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Individuals must abide by the following guidelines for appropriate use of AI for document drafting:

1. Accuracy and Integrity
   - Ensure that the AI-generated content is accurate, reliable, and consistent with the intended purpose of the document.
   - Cross-check information provided by the AI system with verified sources to ensure factual accuracy. Current commonly used generative AI does not fact check and can provide wrong information.
   - Exercise critical thinking and judgment to verify and validate the AI-generated content before finalizing the document.

2. Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirement
   - Familiarize yourself with applicable laws, regulations, and organizational policies regarding document creation, retention, and privacy.
   - AI-generated documents must adhere to legal and ethical standards, including patient confidentiality, data protection, and intellectual property rights.
   - Do not use AI to create documents that may violate patient privacy, disclose sensitive information, or breach any legal or regulatory obligations.
   - Confirm compliance with privacy legislation (PHIPA/PIPEDA) whereby custodians of the medical record must adopt reasonable safeguards to protect personal health information under their control Including compliance with data retention, de-identification of PHI, data residency within Canada, and use of encryption.
   - Notify patients if the data collected via AI can be used to improve algorithms (i.e. allow Ambient Listening/AI Scribe to “learn”).
   - Obtain informed expressed consent from the patient before using AI for document drafting.
   - The provider is responsible for documenting informed expressed consent was obtained.

3. Content Editing and Review
   - Review and edit the AI-generated content for clarity, coherence, and appropriateness.
   - Documents must align with organizational standards, guidelines, and branding requirements.
   - Remove or modify any potentially biased or discriminatory content generated by the AI system.
   - Review all information summarized by Ambient Listening/AI Scribe for accuracy and completeness.

4. Quality Assurance
   - Regularly evaluate and monitor the performance and reliability of the AI system used for document drafting.
   - Continuously improve AI system performance by providing feedback, suggestions for enhancements, and reporting any issues and concerns to the AI system support team.

5. Human Oversight
   - Maintain an active role in the document drafting process by providing critical input, context, and expertise.

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- Generative AI assisted content must be reviewed to ensure consistency with professional standards, organizational policies, and best practices.
- Regardless of AI assistance, the author of the document (ie Physicians) is ultimately accountable for the content contributed to the patient medical record.

6. Data Security and Confidentiality
   - Safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of patient information and sensitive data used during the document drafting process.
   - Adhere to SAH data protection and privacy policies, including proper handling, storage, and disposal of documents containing personal or confidential information.
   - Immediately report any data breaches or unauthorized access to the appropriate personnel.

AI Vendor Selection and Evaluation

To ensure alignment with SAH privacy, security, and procurement policies, all AI solutions utilized within the SAH environment must be vetted by the SAH Information and Technology (IT) department, Privacy Office, and procurement. The IT department shall maintain a list of AI technologies and platforms that have been approved and where sensitive information (as defined above) may be used.

To support education and compliance to the SAH AI policy, a learning module will be maintained within the SAH LMS environment. LMS module completion is a requirement prior to the use of AI at SAH.

Definitions:

Terminology	Definition
PHI:	Personal Health Information means identifying information about an individual relating to their medical history, provision of healthcare at SAH, plan of service, payment eligibility, health care number or the individual's SDM (as it is defined in the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA).
PI	Personal Information means recorded information about an identifiable individual (as it is defined in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)).
CI	Confidential Information means information that must be protected to ensure that SAH meets its own objectives or external obligations as required by law or business contracts. CI includes PHI, PI or CCI in all formats, as well as any information that SAH management or other authorized personnel has identified as requiring protection.
CCI	Corporate Confidential Information means information used for SAH management, business, or financial purposes, including, but not limited to: • information on salaries, benefits, and terms of employment; • information on SAH budgets, expenses or planning; • sensitive or privileged legal information; • information related to the management of personnel; • information that could expose SAH's reputation to damage;

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	• information regarding the physical security of SAH facilities or operational controls which, if exposed, could weaken the strength of those controls or create security risk; • information related to risk management and quality improvement; • information regarding the security of information assets and systems, including information assets which are CCI; and • Information representing trade secrets of SAH or in which SAH holds a proprietary interest.
AI	**AI** is information technology that performs tasks that would ordinarily require biological brainpower to accomplish, such as making sense of spoken language, learning behaviours or solving problems.
Generative AI	Generative AI is a type of AI that produces content such as text, audio, code, videos and images. This content is produced based on information the user inputs, called a "prompt," which is typically a short instructional text.
Public AI	Public AI environments have no expectation of privacy or security, or adhere to any SAH policies and procedures. An example of a public AI is ChatGPT.
Private/Proprietary AI	Private/Proprietary AI refers to methods of building and deploying AI technologies that respect the privacy and control of users' and organizations' data and policies. An example of private/proprietary AI is Nuance DAX CoPilot.
Informed Expressed Consent	Patient is able to understand the information that is relevant to deciding whether to consent to the collection, use or disclosure; and to appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of giving, not giving, withholding or withdrawing consent. The consent is written or verbally provided and documented.
PHIPA	The Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) is Ontario legislation and law that governs the collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information.
Ethics	Ethics is the disciplined study of morality. Medical ethics is the disciplined study of morality in medicine and concerns the obligations of physicians and health care organizations to patients as well as the obligations of patients

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Revision History:

Date:	Signing Authority: Name / Title
December 18, 2024.	Dr. Stephen Smith, VP Medical Affairs
May 20, 2025	Dr. Stephen Smith, VP Medical Affairs

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