

February 2025 Updates

Dear HDPBC User,

Welcome to this month's update! We are thrilled to introduce 'HDPBC in Action', where we spotlight the platform's latest services and resources. Your valuable feedback from last year's program evaluation with Health Research BC has been instrumental in shaping this update. As we finalize the evaluation summary to share soon, we're excited to give you a sneak peak in this newsletter. Stay tuned for more insights!

HDPBC in Action

Project and Processes:

- **Type of projects:** Health Data Platform BC (HDPBC) enables research projects, quality improvement (QI) initiatives, evaluation, or surveillance and streamline data management and analysis. These are currently supported through 2 project types:
 - **Organization projects** - Sponsored by health organizations, projects align with their organization's mandate. Project team members are required to have a formal organizational affiliation with the health organization, and all projects require approval from the organizational designate.
 - **Academic research projects** - Initiated by academic researchers affiliated to a post-secondary institution in Canada.
- **Application process:** Documentation requirements as well as the Data Access Request (DAR) form differ between organization and academic research projects based on the governance rules for each.

For more information on the process for each project type, refer to [Apply for Data Access](#) page.

Everything Data:

- **Geographical coverage:** Data in HDPBC is generally provincial in scope. Regional analysis is possible and requires filtering to the geography of interest.
- **Refresh frequency:** HDPBC provides data that is consistently refreshed. For updated schedules, visit the [Data Sets](#) section on the website.
- **Importing information into the secure environment:** Our Trusted Analysis Environment (TAE-BC) allows importing your own data for your project. This process, called 'Bring Your Own Data', enables you to integrate your datasets for use in analysis with holdings available to HDPBC. You can find detailed instructions in the [HDPBC Resources](#) section of our website.
- **Exporting data out of the secure environment:** Approved data analysis results can be exported from the TAE-BC, adhering to HDPBC policies and what was approved for your projects. These may include SQL scripts, tool syntax, tool outputs, frequency counts and statistical outputs. The process

of data export is called 'File Out'. To request a data export, select the 'File In and Out' shortcut icon from within the HDPBC desktop.

- **Data linkage and format:** Data holdings available through HDPBC are de-identified by the HDPBC team before providing it to the project teams. The de-identified data is linkable via relational databases using primary and foreign keys. Project teams can link the data available to them for their approved project as well as Bring Your Own Data. Code examples are available in HDPBC Code examples repository in GitLab shared project.

Resources and Support: There are a variety of self-serve resources as well support tools available both inside and outside the secure environment to the project teams during the project life-cycle.

- *When working inside the Secure Environment:*
 - The extensive GitLab How-to documentation which provides step-by-step instructions on navigating the secure environment, working with the data, code examples as well as data quality issues.
 - The GitLab Code examples provide guidance on coding and conducting data analysis in HDPBC categorized by programming language and data holdings.
 - Metadata can be found in Assets.
 - Have a question: "Submit an issue" feature in GitLab to get in touch with one of the support team members.
- *When working outside the Secure Environment:*
 - The [HDPBC website](#) has the most up-to-date information about program, application process, available data, metadata, etc.
 - The [HDPBC Resources](#) page has information about platform services and capabilities. The [FAQs](#) page answers the most common questions users have.

Data Updates

Data Updates:

- **Changes to data views:** As of January 30, 2025, several object names in the Vital Statistics Agency/Vital Events data have been changed. A detailed list of previous and updated names can be found under the [Data Sets](#). These changes might have impacted code that references the renamed objects. To manually update your code, we recommend using the Code Fixer tool. Instructions on how to use it can be found in GitLab under How-to Documentation, titled 'HDP-TAE Data Change & Code Fixer'
- **New data:** BC Stroke is now available as a data holding that can be requested by projects for access.
- **Data refreshes:** BC Cancer Registry (BCCR) data is now refreshed. If your project previously accessed this data set, the updated information will be automatically reflected for your project.

The above data sets are now available to be requested for new projects via [Data Access Request form \(DAR\)](#), or for the existing projects via [Project Amendment Form](#).

Other Updates:

- **Software update:** Since the beginning of 2025, we have implemented a few platform updates to enhance security, all of which had no impact on the user experience. We have also upgraded the login process to comply with security standards and continue working on further platform enhancements to improve your experience.
- **Updated GitLab How-to documentation:** Further updates have been made to the GitLab How-to Documentation, streamlining all user guides for the platform and analytics tools. Each document now includes an overview, jump-links for easier navigation, desktop snapshots, and walkthrough examples. The repository is available in GitLab under HDPBC How-to Documentation.
- **Mauro update:** The Mauro Toolkit is no longer available on the desktop and has been replaced by Assets for all data-related functions, including metadata management.

We believe these updates will significantly enhance your workflow and productivity. If you have any questions or feedback about these changes, please reach out to us at MoHAnalytics@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on the latest updates.