

May 19, 2021

The Hon. Ross Romano
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor, 438 University Avenue
Toronto, ON
M7A 2A5

The Hon. Christine Elliott
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Re: Ontario Health Data Platform Research Agreement

Dear Ministers Romano and Elliott,

Thank you for your continued leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am reaching out to share some concerns around the memo shared by Ministry of Colleges and Universities on April 26, 2021, which outlines the Ontario Health Data Platform (OHDP) Intellectual Property (IP) Policy and the research agreements that the university sector have been asked to sign to access this platform.

Announced in June 2020, the OHDP provides academics, researchers, and health system partners with access to anonymized health data. This data can in turn be leveraged by Ontario's universities to develop innovative responses to tackle COVID-19 and various health care issues facing Ontario.

There are concerns, however, with a particular clause in the research agreement that stipulates that any new IP generated by universities using the OHDP would be owned by the Ontario government. Wholesale government ownership of IP generated using this platform could have several unintended consequences.

To begin, this clause could deter the private sector from investing in innovative health and life sciences research being conducted in universities across the province. As outlined in the Council of Ontario University's [report](#), universities often partner with small, medium, and large enterprises to transfer early applied research to the private sector. The private sector not only provides capital, but management expertise and global distribution channels. This helps researchers get academic IP from discovery and invention to commercialization and into Canadian and/or international markets.

Second, this clause could deter Ontario's best and brightest from using the OHDP to its fullest capacity or pursuing university research, industry collaborations, and entrepreneurial opportunities. In the long run, this could impact future job creation, start-ups and spin-off companies in Ontario, and tax revenue that is generated through the commercialization of academic IP.

Consequently, rather than fueling innovation and sparking university-industry collaboration, the IP Policy could hinder research, innovation, and commercialization that is contributing or has the potential to contribute to COVID-19 recovery, improve Ontarians' quality of life and health outcomes, and support economic growth.

Accordingly, the OCC encourages the Province to reconsider this clause for the research hospital and university sector. Specifically, the province should bring together representatives from Ontario's universities, the private sector, and relevant ministries to develop a common research agreement template that meets the needs of all stakeholders without stifling university-industry collaboration. A collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach will be critical to driving research and supporting commercialization, as well as contributing to a competitive economy.

We would be happy to discuss this issue further and look forward to continuing to work with you and your government on solutions that support the health of Ontarians and our economy.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi
President and CEO
Ontario Chamber of Commerce

CC: The Hon. Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care