

Protecting the Privacy of Your Personal Health Information

Your health care provider understands that your health information is personal and that it must be protected.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide you with information to help you understand how your personal information is collected, used and disclosed (i.e. shared).

WHAT IS MY “PERSONAL INFORMATION”?

In addition to information needed to identify you, such as your name, address, telephone number and health insurance number, your personal information also includes information about your health. Personal health information relates to health services you have received, past health conditions, current symptoms, medications prescribed, examination and test results, diagnoses, and treatment plans. This information is often referred to as your health record. Knowing what is in your health record and understanding how your personal information is used, helps you to:

- ensure its accuracy;
- better understand who, what, where, why and how others may access your personal health information; and,
- make informed decisions regarding disclosures to others.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- Any personal information collected will be used for your care and treatment.
- Your consent will be implied for the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information for care and treatment purposes if, once you know your personal information protection rights, you continue with care and treatment.
- Your personal information will not be disclosed to anyone who is not directly involved in your care and treatment unless you give permission. Those involved in your direct care may include nurses, other doctors, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, radiologists, dentists, psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists, nutritionists and other health care providers.
- Some of your personal information may also be disclosed without your permission to governments (Ministries of Health and others), where this is required or authorized by law.
- A high level of confidentiality around the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information is maintained. You are assured that your personal information is handled appropriately and with care.

- Your personal information should be accurate and will be stored in a secure location.

- Any personal information that is stored electronically will be protected by appropriate security measures.

- Your health care provider will be available to respond to your questions.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

- Your personal information protection rights include knowing why your personal information is collected, and how it is used and to whom it is disclosed.

- The right to request access to your personal information and to be provided with a copy of that information for a minimal fee.

- To ask how and to whom your personal information may have been disclosed.

- Assurances that your personal information is protected regardless of the format in which it is held (e.g. paper/electronic).

- Assurances that your personal information is safeguarded from unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, use or modification.

- The right to question the accuracy and completeness of your personal information and the right to seek amendment to that information.

- You have a right to complain. Your health care provider can advise you about complaint procedures and will refer you to the appropriate authorities.

