



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

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## **Disclosure of Personal Information**

Personal information is defined as any identifiable information about an individual.

### **Sharing Information outside the circle of care in Emergency Situations**

Protecting patient confidentiality is part of a Health Care Provider's responsibility and obligation towards their patient. Failing to protect patient confidentiality could result in the loss of trust, integrity, job (a health care provider could lose their license to practice) and would violate the regulations set out in the Privacy Legislation. If patients do not have the confidence that their privacy will be maintained, or that reasonable security safeguards will be in place to protect their personal information, they may do things to protect their privacy on their own (such as refrain from disclosing critical information, refuse to provide consent to use personal health information, or not seek treatment). In order to maintain existing trust and ensure all patients receive the continuous care from their Health Care Providers, access to patient information would need to be handled according to the set of rules depicted in the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and the Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

Disclosure of personal health records must only be for the sole purpose of providing/assisting direct health care to the patient. The disclosure of personal health care information can happen within the patient's direct Circle of Care. This would exclude administration decisions outside of the patient's direct health care provisions.

### **Sharing Information outside the circle of care for administrative purposes**

Under [Personal Information Protection Act](#), consent must be obtained for any collection, use or disclosure of an individual's personal information. If consent is obtained for the purpose it was collected for, then Health Care Providers have the authority to use it according to what was stated at the time consent was given. The clinic cannot share information they already have on community members for any reason other than what the personal information was collected for because the consent previously obtained is for a different purpose and use.

To use this information for a new purpose, new consent is required from community members. Clients must be informed of the following:

- the purpose for needing this information,
- what is being collected,
- how it will be used, and
- who it may be shared with.

Consent can be obtained verbally or in written form.

### **Suggested "Four Point Script" If someone is asking for information about a client (child, friend, family member) who visited the clinic:**

- Do not confirm or acknowledge that the client had indeed visited the clinic or has seen the nurse.
- Explain that accessing care, anywhere, not just at [X Community] that the health care provider is bound by patient/client confidentiality.
- Acknowledge their concern/frustration and that they understand that their intention is that they want to help, but that the HCP is unable to provide any information to them.
- Mention to the requestor that the HCP would provide this same confidentiality to them as a client.

Please contact us if you have any questions  
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