

Personal Information at the Centre

*Frequently Asked Questions*



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## Introduction

This booklet has been developed to help people better understand the handling of personal information by the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information (the “Centre”). It contains important information that members of the public can use to inform themselves about how their information is managed and shared.

## What information does the Centre have?

Most of the personal information handled by the Centre is health-related. The Centre supports the health care system by providing quality information to many groups, including:

- health professionals (e.g. doctors, pharmacists);
- health researchers;
- health system decision-makers; and
- the public.

Because of the important health care role played by the Centre, the Centre has personal health information about most of the people of our province. Specifically, it has some information about nearly everyone in the following groups:

- people who were born, died, or had a child in the province;
- members of the provincial Medical Care Plan (e.g. most residents); and
- anyone who has received health care in the province (visited a physician, had a hospital stay, had an emergency department visit, had a test or exam, etc.).

## Where is the information from and how is it shared?

Very little of the personal information collected by the Centre comes directly from patients. Occasionally, some is collected directly from people as part of research studies, but most comes from other sources, including:

- points of care (e.g. hospitals, clinics, pharmacies);
- government organizations (e.g. Vital Statistics, Medical Care Plan); and
- research organizations (e.g. Memorial University).

Some of the personal information collected and shared by the Centre flows automatically through electronic systems (e.g. the provincial Electronic Health Record, called HEALTHe NL). In other cases, the information requires manual electronic exchanges. As well, some information is in paper format (e.g. birth and death forms). Regardless, the Centre collects and shares the information securely.

The Centre always tries to collect, use, and disclose the least amount of personal information required, and share it only with those who absolutely need it.

## How is my information managed and protected?

The Centre strives to be open and transparent about all its practices, including those on the management and protection of personal information.

The Centre ensures that personal information is managed and protected in accordance with principles, best practices, codes of conduct, policy, legislation, and other relevant directives. Specifically, the Centre follows the *Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information*, which is a set of principles followed by organizations around the world. In adopting this Model Code, the Centre has established policies on many topics, including the following:

- privacy;
- information security;
- risk assessment;
- confidentiality in business relationships;
- acceptable use of information technology;
- information protection education; and
- information protection incident response.

Though the Centre works hard to protect personal information, this protection is never perfect. As such, the Centre has a protocol to quickly and effectively deal with information protection incidents, and to learn from them.

### **What information does the Centre have about me?**

You have the right to access the personal information the Centre has about you, though some exceptions apply. You also have the right to have this information corrected if it is wrong, and to know who has accessed your personal information. To access or correct your personal information, please contact the Centre's Information Request Coordinator by calling the Centre Service Desk at 1-877-752-6006.

To make a request for your personal information under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, contact [margaret.corcoran@nlchi.nl.ca](mailto:margaret.corcoran@nlchi.nl.ca) or by calling the Centre's Service Desk at 1-877-752-6006.

In some cases, your request to access your personal information will be directed to another organization (e.g. your doctor or hospital may be better able to provide information about a specific episode of care). In some cases, your request to correct your personal information will be directed to the organization where the information came from; when this happens, your request to correct your information will be noted along with the copy held by the Centre, as best possible.

### **What if I want the Centre to stop sharing my information?**

Health information must be shared to provide you with safe and effective care, and to support the entire health care system. Not all sharing can stop, and some sharing is required by law.

However, the Centre has developed processes to allow you to better control how your information is shared. To discuss these processes, or to make requests to control the sharing of your information, please contact the Centre at 1-800-752-6006.

### **How do I discuss a concern?**

If you would like to discuss a concern about how the Centre manages personal information, please contact the Centre's Privacy Manager by calling the Centre Service Desk at 1-877-752-6006. All complaints will be investigated and you will receive a response.

You also have the right to contact the Newfoundland and Labrador Information and Privacy Commissioner to discuss a concern about how the Centre manages personal information. You can contact the Commissioner at:

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 34 Pippy Place

P.O. Box 13004, Station A

St. John's, NL A1B 3V8

Telephone: 709-729-6309

Toll free in NL: 1-800-729-6309

Fax: 709-729-6500

Email: [commissioner@oipc.nl.ca](mailto:commissioner@oipc.nl.ca)

Web: [www.oipc.nl.ca](http://www.oipc.nl.ca)

### **How do I learn more about this topic?**

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact the Centre's Privacy Manager by calling the Centre Service Desk at 1-877-752-6006. The Centre's Privacy Manager is available to respond to any inquiries you may have about the Centre's protection of personal information under the *Personal Health Information Act* and the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information

[www.nlchi.nl.ca](http://www.nlchi.nl.ca)

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