

# GUIDE



**Patient Privacy**  
Ours to Protect

## **Information Booklet**

## **Patient Privacy: Ours to Protect**



The Ottawa | L'Hôpital  
Hospital | d'Ottawa

***Disclaimer***

*This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified health-care provider. Please consult your health-care provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.*

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## ***What is Personal Health Information (PHI)?***

Personal health information includes any identifying information about your health or health care history, such as your medical history, details of visits to your doctor, test results or your health number.

## ***What is the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) 2004, and how does it relate to me?***

PHIPA is the Ontario law that protects the personal health information of individuals by regulating its use, collection and disclosure. PHIPA gives you the right to access or correct your Personal Health Information and to have related complaints reviewed by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario.

## ***Why does The Ottawa Hospital collect my Personal Health Information?***

In order to provide you with the most appropriate health care, we need to accurately identify you as a patient and maintain a complete medical record.

## ***How is my Personal Health Information used and disclosed?***

- To provide you with care;
- To monitor and evaluate the quality of care we provide you;
- To administer and manage the operations of the hospital;
- To do research, educate and collect statistics;
- To comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

As well, we disclose your contact information to our Foundation, so that they may conduct fundraising to improve our healthcare facilities, services and programs.

### ***What is consent under PHIPA?***

Generally, your consent is required to collect, use or disclose your personal health information unless PHIPA allows the collection, use or disclosure without consent. An individual's consent may be implied or express.

### ***What is the difference between implied and express consent?***

**Implied consent** means that we can infer from the surrounding circumstances that an individual would reasonably agree to the collection, use or disclosure of his or her personal health information. When you seek health care from us, we assume that we have your implied consent to collect, use and share your personal health information among those health care providers, who provide or assist in your health care. We may also give your personal health information to your physician or other health care providers outside the hospital so they can provide you with ongoing health care and follow-up.

For example, when an individual discloses his personal health information for the purposes of filling out a prescription, a pharmacist can reasonably assume consent to the collection of that information.

**Express consent** means that sometimes we are not allowed to assume we have your permission to give personal health information about you to others. For example, except where the

law allows otherwise, we must ask your permission to give your personal health information to:

- (a) people who do not provide you with health care, like insurance companies or your employer; or
- (b) a health care professional for reasons other than providing you with health care.

People outside the health system who receive your personal health information can only use it or give it out for the reasons that they received it or as allowed or required by law.

**Withdrawal of consent** means that you do not want us to use, share or give out some or all of your personal health information to provide you with health care. You should contact the Health Records Department to let them know if you want to withdraw your consent.

**Use without consent** means PHIPA allows or requires us to use or disclose your personal health information without your consent in certain circumstances. For example, we can use or disclose your personal health information to process payments through government programs such as Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

### ***Will you provide information about me to my family, friends or others?***

PHIPA allows us to disclose general information about patients, like their room number, and general health status (critical, poor, fair, stable or satisfactory). You can limit the sharing of this type of information. If you wish to limit the sharing of this type of

information ask a member of your Health Care Team. Here are ways you can do this:

- **Privacy Level Code**

We use different privacy level codes to restrict or minimize who can know that you are at the hospital. If you do not want anyone to know you are at the hospital, you or your substitute decision maker can request a **Privacy Level Code** to be placed in our patient registration system.

- **Warning Flag**

If you have concerns about your personal health information being accessed by particular TOH employees, you can request that a **Warning Flag** be placed on your personal health information in the electronic health record system. Accesses to **Warning Flag** files are investigated.

## ***How can I obtain a copy of my Health Record?***

You may obtain copies of your health record by contacting the Health Records Department.

## ***How can I correct my personal health information?***

Please submit a written request to the Health Records Department. Health Records will respond within 30 days. In certain circumstances, PHIPA allows us to extend this response time for up to an additional 30 days. However, if the record was not originally created by us, or if it consists of a professional opinion or observation that was made in good faith, we are not required to make corrections.

## ***How do you keep my Personal Health Information safe?***

- We have policies and procedures in place to protect personal health information based on the legal requirements of PHIPA and internationally accepted standards.
- We use physical, administrative, and technical safeguards.
- We hold Privacy and Information Security Committee meetings to monitor privacy-related activities at the hospital.
- We provide ongoing privacy training and education to our staff.

## ***Where can I find more information, provide suggestions or file a complaint?***

- **The Ottawa Hospital Privacy Officer**

☎ 613-739-6668

✉ [privacy@toh.on.ca](mailto:privacy@toh.on.ca)

[www.ottawahospital.on.ca](http://www.ottawahospital.on.ca)

- **Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario**

2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400

Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8

☎ 416-326-3333 or 1-800-387-0073

For access to your health record, or to request a correction, contact the Health Records Department.

### **Civic Campus**

1053 Carling Avenue

Ottawa ON K1Y 4E9

☎ 613-798-5555, ext. 18720

### **TOH Cancer Centre**

503 Smyth Road

Ottawa, ON K1H 7C4

☎ 613-737-7700, ext. 70274

**Riverside Campus**

1967 Riverside Drive  
Ottawa, ON K1H 7W9  
☎ 613-738-8400, ext. 82231

**General Campus**

501 Smyth Road  
Ottawa ON K1H 8L6  
☎ 613-737-8899, ext. 78800

**TOH Rehabilitation Centre**

505 Smyth Road  
Ottawa, ON K1H 8M2  
☎ 613-737-7350, ext. 75340