

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Statement of Information Practices

To ensure the proper oversight and promotion of the health and well-being of the people of Ontario, the Ministry collects, uses, and discloses the personal health information of individuals who use the health system in Ontario.

This written statement describes:

- How the ministry collects, uses, and discloses your personal health information
- How you can access and correct records of your personal health information
- Practices and safeguards that the ministry maintains with respect to personal health information
- How you can make a complaint

On November 1st, 2004, the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA)* came into force. This law:

- sets out the rules “health information custodians” must follow when collecting, using and disclosing your personal health information
- gives you the right to request access to and correction of your personal health records

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is a health information custodian under the Act.

Consent

Often, the Ministry will collect, use and disclose your personal health information with your consent. In cases where the Ministry will collect, use or disclose personal health information without your consent, it will do so only where it has clear authority under PHIPA.

Collection of Personal Health Information

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care collects your personal health information directly from you, from a person acting on your behalf, and from others, such as healthcare providers.

As a health information custodian, the Ministry will not collect personal health information if other information will serve the purpose. In addition, the Ministry will not collect more personal health information than is reasonably necessary to meet the purpose.

Uses and Disclosures of Personal Health Information

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care uses personal health information to:

- Process, monitor and verify claims for payment for publicly funded healthcare services (e.g., through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan)
- Determine or verify eligibility of individuals with respect to healthcare
- Plan, administer and evaluate programs and services funded by the Ministry
- Plan and manage the health system
- Conduct research in accordance with PHIPA
- Undertake specific activities as permitted or required by law (e.g., to comply with a court order)
- For purposes related to its statutory functions, including the administration of the laws for which it is responsible

The Ministry also may disclose personal health information for these purposes or other purposes such as:

- Facilitating the provision of healthcare
- Improving the provision of healthcare through registries

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care does not trade or sell personal health information.

Practices and Safeguards to Protect Confidentiality and Security of Personal Health Information

The Ministry has well-established administrative, technical, and physical safeguards and practices in place to protect the confidentiality and security of information in its custody and under its control. Many of these safeguards and practices apply across the Government of Ontario. For example, under the *Public Service Act*, civil servants are required to take an oath of secrecy. The Ministry maintains physical safeguards, such as facility/premises access controls and “clean desk” practices, in addition to technical safeguards, such as unique user identification for access to electronic systems and security features to protect information transmitted electronically. The Ministry complies with various policies, including those governing workstation use and security; confidential information; retention of recorded information; password protection; faxing procedures; and usage of electronic mail systems. The Ministry takes steps regularly to ensure that staff is aware of these policies. When relying on third parties for services, the Ministry addresses the party’s obligations with respect to confidentiality and security of information in written agreements.

Please contact the Ministry if you would like to review more detailed information about the Ministry’s practices and safeguards.

Accessing and Correcting Your Records of Personal Health Information

Under PHIPA, you have the right to request access to and correction of your records of personal health information. If you want to see or correct your records, you may make a written request to the contact person identified below.

Contact Person for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

For more information about the information practices of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, or to request access to and correction of your records of personal health information in the custody or control of the Ministry, please see the Ministry’s website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> or please contact:

Manager, Access and Privacy Office
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
5700 Yonge St.
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M2M 4K5

Complaints

If you have a complaint about the Ministry’s information practices or access to your record of personal health information, please contact the Manager of the Access and Privacy Office.

You may also make a complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC). The IPC can be contacted at:

Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario
2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400
Toronto, ON M4W 1A8
Telephone: 416-326-3333 or 1-800-387-0073
Fax: 416-325-9195
TTY: 416-325-7539
Website: www.ipc.on.ca