



Circle of Care – Information Sharing Privacy Bulletin

Respecting an individual's right to privacy and ensuring the confidentiality of their personal information is critical to maintaining strong relationships with our clients and employees. In British Columbia, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or [FIPPA](#), defines how and when IH may collect, store, use and disclose personal information. Protecting the personal information in its custody is a legal requirement for IH, but also a professional standard, and an ethical obligation for our staff.



The term “circle of care” is commonly used to describe a group of internal and external health care providers supporting a specific person. Interior Health (IH) operates under FIPPA and shares personal information within a circle of care based on an implied consent model that we establish via [IH standard notification signage](#) posted at all points of registration and admission in IH facilities.



Collaborative practice and the definition of inter-professional care teams are evolving. A person's circle of care may include IH acute, community and allied staff as well as external partners such as: hospice coordinators; First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) care providers; First Nation community health staff, Urban Aboriginal care providers; community pharmacists; spiritual care providers; Public, Private Partnership (P3) residential partners; and others. IH staff can and should share information about the person with members of this circle of care as long as it is for the purpose of contributing to their health care plan and meeting the service needs for them and their family. Remember to share with the external partners only the amount of information necessary and appropriate to enable them to provide their specific care for the person.

Some health care professionals may be hesitant to bring external partners into a person's circle of care citing privacy legislation. In addition to obtaining implied consent, FIPPA also supports IH employees sharing relevant information about an IH client amongst a broader inter-professional health care team:

Section 33(2)(d) of FIPPA addresses the disclosure (i.e. sharing) of personal information for a consistent purpose. As health care practice evolves and public bodies rely increasingly on working collaboratively with external partners to collectively meet the health and service needs of clients, it becomes necessary for organizations to share information that is authorized, relevant and deemed necessary with those partners in order to plan and deliver integrated care and related services.

In summary, IH employees may share a person's personal and medical information with inter-professional health care teams and external partners to the extent necessary to provide individuals with care and treatment, without their express consent. However, IH employees must not share a person's personal information if they are capable and expressly indicate that IH cannot share information with a specific party. IH employees should document this refusal to share information in the client's record.



For more information please visit the InsideNet to review [Policy AR0400 – Privacy and Management of Confidential Information](#).

If you have questions or would like a consult, please contact the [IH Privacy](#) office.