



What you need to know about Patient Privacy

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 physician, who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information given your current situation.

P1458 EN (10/2023)

Designed and printed by
The Ottawa Hospital Print Services department

Do you have questions about patient privacy at The Ottawa Hospital?

In this brochure, you will find information regarding how we protect your privacy. We are here to help. Please contact us:

Information and Privacy Office

The Ottawa Hospital

Tel: 613-739-6668

Email: infoprivacyoffice@toh.ca



Your Personal Health Information

Personal health information (PHI) is any identifying information about your health or health-care history. It can include things like your medical history, details of visits to your doctor, test results or your provincial health insurance number.

The Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) 2004.

PHIPA is the Ontario law that protects your PHI by setting rules around how health information custodians can collect, use and share it.

PHIPA also gives you the right to get a copy of and request a correction to your PHI, and to have related complaints reviewed by the Information and Privacy Office or the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

Why your PHI is collected, used and shared:

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

- To maintain shared provincial electronic health record programs (i.e., ConnectingOntario ClinicalViewer).

As well, we disclose your contact information (name and mailing address) to The Ottawa Hospital Foundation, so that they may conduct fundraising to improve our health-care facilities, services and programs. You may opt out by sending an email to the Foundation:

info@ohfoundation.ca

Your consent under PHIPA

The Ottawa Hospital needs your implied or express consent to collect, use or share your PHI unless PHIPA allows us to collect, use or share it without consent (see Use without consent of this pamphlet).

What is implied consent?

Implied consent means that The Ottawa Hospital understands from the surrounding circumstances that you would have reasonably agreed to give consent. When you seek care from us, we assume that you give us your consent to collect, use and share your PHI among those health-care providers who give or help give you care.

These health-care providers include doctors, nurses, technologists, technicians, therapists, spiritual care practitioners, and other health professionals.

We may also give your PHI to your doctor or other health-care providers outside the hospital so they can provide you with ongoing health care and follow-up.

What is express consent?

Express consent is clear and direct. It may be given verbally, in writing or electronically, such as email. Sometimes we cannot rely on implied consent and must get express consent. For example, unless the law says otherwise, we must get your express consent to share your PHI with:

- People who do not provide you with health care, like your employer or insurance company.
- A health-care professional for reasons other than for providing you with health care.

Withdrawing your consent

You can tell us that you no longer want us to use or share some (or all) of your PHI to provide you with health care. Please complete the Consent Directive Request form, available at this [link](#) or in person at Health Records Services, if you wish to block access to your PHI. Submit the completed form in person to Health Records Services.

Use without consent

Use without consent means the law allows or requires the hospital to use or share your PHI without your consent in certain circumstances. For example, we may use or share your PHI to process payments through government programs such as Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

De-identified information

Many times, we can use patient information without knowing who the patient is. We “de-identify” it by removing information that identifies the patient such as name or address. We also use it to create “synthetic” data (made-up data about made-up people) to further protect patient identities. We do this for research or to test new technology or care processes.

When working with external organizations, we have contracts to protect the data and ensure value for our patients.

How to get a copy of your health record

You may obtain some of your personal health information through the MyChart Patient Portal. More information regarding MyChart is available by visiting [The Ottawa Hospital website](#). You may obtain some or all the personal health information contained in your health record at The Ottawa Hospital by making a request to Health Records Services. Health Records Services will respond within 30 days unless they request an extension. More information regarding Health Records Services is available at this [link](#).

How to correct your PHI

Please contact The Ottawa Hospital's [Health Record Services](#) to request a correction. Health Records Services will respond within 30 days. Sometimes PHIPA allows us to extend this response time for up to 30 days more. There may be circumstances in which we will decide that the requested change may not be made, such as a professional opinion, an observation

made in good faith and/or if it is a record not made by The Ottawa Hospital. If that is the case, you may add a statement of disagreement to your health record.

Sharing your information with family, friends and others

The law allows us to share general information about patients, like their hospital room number, and general health status (critical, poor, fair, stable or satisfactory). If you wish to set limits on sharing this type of information, please talk to a member of your health-care team.

How you can limit what is shared

- **Privacy Level Code:** If you do not want anyone to know you are at the hospital, you or your substitute decision maker may ask for a Privacy Level Code to be put on your health record.
- **Consent Directive:** If you want to know which hospital staff wants to access your PHI, you can ask for a Consent Directive (CD) to be placed on your PHI in Epic, the electronic health record system. Anyone who tries to

access a health record with a CD must first get your expressed consent unless consent is not required. The Information and Privacy Office monitors all accesses to electronic health records that have a CD..

Use of email

We ask for patients' email to send information such as appointment reminders or surveys about your experience. You can refuse to provide us with your email or change how we contact you. You can change your contact preferences in MyChart or by contacting us.

How we keep your PHI safe

- Privacy policies and procedures are in place.
- Physical safeguards (for example, locked filing cabinets and restricted access to offices).
- Administrative safeguards (for example, policies, training, limiting access on a "need to know" basis).
- Technical safeguards (for example, the use of passwords, secure computer networks, encryptions and audits).

- Privacy and Information Security Committee is in place to monitor privacy-related activities at the hospital.
- Ongoing privacy training and education to our physicians and employees.
- Privacy Breach Management Framework.
- Chief Privacy Officer is in place.

Note



The Ottawa
Hospital