Your Health Information and Your Privacy in Our Facility
This brochure is written for residents of long-term care facilities, or where the resident has a substitute decision-maker, for that individual.

Protecting your privacy has always been important. Now the Ontario health privacy law requires anyone that provides you with health services to protect your personal health information. They have to tell you what they do with it, and in certain situations, ask permission before they get it, use it or give it out. A health care provider is not allowed to collect personal health information where it is not necessary or to collect, use or give out more information than is necessary. The law also gives you the right to see the information and to ask for it to be changed or corrected if you think there is an error or inaccuracy in the record.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario has responsibility for educating the public about their privacy rights. The Commissioner also oversees compliance and hears and decides complaints.

As part of our privacy program, we have a Privacy Statement and this Privacy Brochure. This Brochure describes our privacy practices and tells you how you can exercise your rights.

For more information, please see our Contact Person whose name is at the end of this Brochure.
Implied Consent to Use and Give Out Your Information in Order to Provide You with Health Care

When you seek health care from us, we assume that we have your permission to collect, use and share your personal health information among your health care providers, including the doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, and other professionals or their support staff within our facility, who provide or assist in providing health care to you. We may also give your personal health information to your outside physician or other health care providers so they can provide you with ongoing health care and follow-up.

Staff in our facility who do not provide or assist you with health care are generally not allowed to see your health information.

You should let our staff know if 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.

Express Consent to Give out Your Information to Other People

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 a family member who does not have the legal authority to act for you, or to insurance companies; or
(b) to a health care professional who is not involved in your 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.

Limits on Using and Giving Out Your Personal Health Information

In some circumstances, you can tell us not to use, share or give out some or all of your personal health information to other people who provide you with health care.

If you choose to limit how we give out some or all of your personal health information, you should be aware that when we give out your personal health information to others, we are required to tell them when we think the information is inaccurate or incomplete, including when we think the missing information could affect your health care.

For more information, please speak to our Contact Person whose name is at the end of this Brochure.

When Your Consent is Not Required

We are allowed or may be required to use and/or give out some of your personal health information without consent in the following situations:

• to process payments through government programs, like the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (“OHIP”)
• to report certain information, such as health conditions that make you unfit to drive, or to report certain diseases to public health authorities
• when we suspect certain types of abuse
• to identify a person who has died
• to give the spouse or child of the person who has died personal health information to assist them in making decisions about their own care
• to reduce a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a person or the public
• to give information to certain registries or planning bodies that use personal health information to improve health care services or health system management, as long as strict privacy protections are in place
• to assist health researchers for research, as long as strict privacy requirements are met
• to improve or maintain the quality of care or any related program or service
• for risk management and legal purposes
• to allocate resources to our programs and services
to assess the ability of a person to make health care and other important decisions
• for administration or enforcement of laws about the practices of health care
providers, including to allow professional Colleges and other legal bodies to regulate
the practices of health care professionals
• for the purpose of a legal proceeding or complying with a court order, or other
legal requirement

Providing Information to Family, Friends, and Others

There are times when we may give out information about residents to their families,
friends, and others.

We are allowed to give out general information about you, like whether
you are a resident here, how you are doing (e.g., that your condition is stable or
improving), and where you can be found (e.g. your room number). Before doing
so, at our first opportunity we will ask you if you do not want us to give out this
kind of information.

You should let our staff know if you do not want us to give out this kind
of information about you. You may not want us to give such information out to
anyone, or you may only want to give the information to certain people who you
can name or describe. For example, you may not want us to give out informa-
tion about you to anyone other than your spouse or children.

We are also allowed to give out your name and location here to a repre-
sentative of a religious or other organization where:
• you have told us about your connection to the organization; and
• we gave you the chance to let us know that you
do not want us to give this kind of information to
the organization, and you did not object.

You should let our staff know if you do
not want us to give this kind of information about
you to religious and other organizations.

You may have other family or friends to whom you would like us to
give more detailed information about your health, like whether you are doing
well or how treatment is working. You can let our staff know that they can discuss
your health with family and friends. Let our staff know if you would like us to
give more detailed information about your health to someone.

People Who can Make Decisions for You

We will presume that you are able to make your own decisions about your personal
health information. If we determine that you cannot, another person, usually a
family member, will be asked to make decisions for you. The law tells us who to
turn to first on a list of “substitute decision-makers”. For example, if you have a
substitute decision-maker for treatment, that person will make decisions about
your health information that is related to that treatment. Since a substitute
decision-maker needs information about a person’s health to make these kinds of
decisions, our facility can give them that kind of information. Your substitute
decision-maker can also ask us to see your records and our staff will give him or
her information about your health.

We will ask for your consent, or your substitute decision-maker’s
consent, before giving your personal health information to your other family
members. You may also decide in advance who should act as your substitute
decision-maker when you are no longer capable to make these decisions.

Your Health Number

The number on the front of your Ontario Health Insurance Plan, or “OHIP,” card is
your “health number” and is a special kind of health information, with special rules:
• Only people and organizations that provide you with health care or goods or
services funded by Ontario, like health care covered by OHIP, can require you to
show your health card
• A health care provider can collect, use and give out your health number, in
order to treat you and to get paid by OHIP
• People outside the health system can only collect, use, and give out your health number as health privacy law allows. For example, they may collect and use a health number for a purpose related to providing health care or goods funded by OHIP. School boards and daycare centres may collect children’s health numbers for this purpose. They may also collect a health number from a health care provider and use the number for the purpose for which the provider gave the number.
• You can choose to use your health card as identification, for example, to identify yourself so you can get a library card.

**Fundraising and Marketing**

In many communities, hospitals, long-term care facilities and other health care organizations raise funds for improving health care services, such as buying new medical equipment. To support these efforts, the law allows limited information about you to be shared for fundraising. Details about your health condition cannot be shared. But fundraisers do need your name and address, so that they can contact you or someone who is acting on your behalf.

You can tell us at any time if you do not want to be contacted. Otherwise, you may receive a letter about donating once 60 days have passed from the time you first became a resident at our facility.

The law also protects you by making sure your health information is never shared for marketing purposes unless you want it to be. For example, if your health care provider knows that a particular medical device could help you, he or she would have to ask you before giving your name to someone who wanted to sell you the device.

**Research, Education and Health System Planning**

**Research**

Your personal health information may be used for research projects, including those that are designed to improve health care. Sometimes, we will ask you before we give your personal health information to researchers. However, with some research projects, an independent ethics review board will look at the goals and benefits of the research, the safeguards for your information and whether it would be impractical to ask for your consent. If the researcher meets these and other tests, your consent may not be required. If that happens, researchers are not allowed to use your personal health information for any other purpose and will not contact you unless you have said they can. Sometimes, a research ethics board will require us to have your consent before we can give information about you to a researcher.

**Education, Planning and Management**

We are allowed to use your personal health information without your consent to educate our staff and students and to plan and manage the services and programs we offer. We use personal health information for risk management and error management and for other activities to improve or maintain the quality of the care we provide.

**Planning and Management of the Health Care System**

We are allowed to give your personal health information to certain organizations that are responsible for planning and managing the health care system. These organizations compile personal health information to help study and plan the delivery of health care. Currently, the law allows us to give your personal health information to:
• **Cancer Care Ontario**, the Ministry of Health’s principal advisor on cancer issues, which manages the Ontario Cancer Registry and other cancer care programs.
• The **Canadian Institute for Health Information**, an independent organization that maintains statistics and analysis about the performance of the Canadian health care system, the delivery of health care services and the status of Canadians’ health.

• The **Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences**, an independent organization that does research to improve health care and the delivery of health care services.

• The **Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario**, which works to ensure that all of Ontario’s children have access to advanced diagnosis, treatment and other cancer care services.

**Facilitating Health Care**

We are also allowed to give your personal health information to certain organizations that gather health information to improve and make health care delivery easier. These organizations carry out important work, such as keeping track of which people need special health care services, like treatment for a particular disease, to make sure they get the care they need.

If relevant, we can give your personal health information to:

• **Cardiac Care Network of Ontario**, an advisory body to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care which coordinates all advanced cardiac services for adults throughout Ontario, and maintains a registry of cardiac services for this purpose.

• **Inscyte Corporation**, an information system that manages health care services for cervical disease.

• **London Health Sciences Centre**, which maintains the **Ontario Joint Replacement Registry** to collect data on hip and knee joint replacements.

• **Canadian Stroke Network**, which maintains the Canadian Stroke Registry and conducts research and training to reduce the impact of stroke.

**Seeing your Information**

You have a right to see your personal health information and to get a copy of it by asking us for it, or by writing to us, and paying a reasonable fee.

Some exceptions may apply. For example, when the information is only about monitoring the quality of health care we provide, you will not get to see the record. We may not give you the record in a few situations, including if the record relates to law enforcement, legal proceedings or another individual.

We must respond to your request as soon as possible and within 30 days. There may be a delay if we have to ask others about the records or where it will take time to find the record. You have the right to be notified of such delays. If you require the record urgently, we must consider responding as soon as possible.

**Correcting Your Record**

Once you have seen your record of personal health information, if you believe it is inaccurate or incomplete, you may write to us and ask for a correction.

We must reply to your request within 30 days, or later if it is reasonable to do so. You are entitled to be told how long it will take to get back to you if it is longer than 30 days.

We may not correct a record that was created by someone else and we do not know enough about the record to change it or where, for example, the opinions or observations in the record were made in good faith. You are entitled to be told the reasons for not making a correction and of your right to have a statement of disagreement attached to your records. You can also ask to have this statement made available to those who see the record.

Where we correct a record, it must be done carefully so that the full corrected record remains visible or by ensuring that the corrected version is readily available.

If we do not respond to your request quickly enough, or at all, or if we do not give you access to the record, or charge more than is allowed, you may complain to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario and they will review the matter. You may also complain if we refuse to correct your records or attach a statement of disagreement, or if you believe that the correction was not done properly.
WHO YOU CAN TALK TO ABOUT YOUR DECISIONS OR CONCERNS:

Our Contact Person

- If you have a question about our privacy policies and practices in handling your personal health information
- If you would like to see our Privacy Statement that describes what we do and our safeguards in greater detail
- If you wish to talk to someone about your health information, or want to know more about how to consent, withdraw consent or withhold consent to part of your personal health information being given out to someone else
- If you want to see your personal health information or to correct it
- If you are wondering about something that may have happened to your personal health information, and want more detailed information

Please speak to our Contact Person whose name is at the end of this Brochure.

Please come to us first if you are not happy about something that has been done with your personal health information. If you wish to make a complaint, we want to resolve your concerns with you. To discuss your concern and see what can be done to fix the situation, please speak to our Contact Person.

Sometimes we may be unable to resolve all of your concerns about how your personal health information has been handled. In this case, you may wish to contact the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. The Commissioner is the person who has general responsibility for ensuring that the Act is followed.

You can make a complaint to the Commissioner about any decision, action or inaction that you believe is not in compliance with the Act, including
- if you are unable to resolve with us a complaint or concern about how your personal health information has been handled,
Acknowledgment

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