

**POLICY:** Secure Messaging for Patient Care

**Program Area:** Across Care Areas

**Section:** General

**Reference Number:** CLI.4110.PL.032

**Approved by:** Regional Lead – Acute Care & Chief Nursing Officer

**Date:** Issued 2024/December/30  
Revised

---

**PURPOSE:**

To outline the process for all Southern Health-Santé Sud (SH-SS) health care professionals (HCPs) using SH-SS approved secure messaging services for messaging and image sharing for the purpose of patient care.

**BOARD POLICY REFERENCE:**

Executive Limitation (EL-2) Treatment of Clients  
Executive Limitation (EL-3) Treatment of Staff  
Executive Limitation (EL-7) Corporate Risk

**POLICY:**

Use of a SH-SS approved secure messaging service requires that:

- Users are approved by the appropriate authority (i.e. Chief Nursing Officer, Program Director or Clinic Owner);
- Employees use a SH-SS computer or cell phone to access the service;
- Users are subject to a compliance audit of user activity;
- Only the user assigned a user ID and password is permitted to access the application and must follow the appropriate use of information and communication technology as set out in policy;
- HCPs using secure messaging comply with their own professional and ethical standards of conduct.
- HCPs do not use any abbreviations, acronyms or symbols listed in CLI.6010.PL.011.SD.01 DO NOT USE: Dangerous Abbreviations, Symbols, Dose Designations. The use of all other abbreviations and acronyms is discouraged.
- HCPs communicate patient care requirements clearly and respond in a timely way to prevent delays in patient care.
- Due to delays which may occur during the transmission of text messages, secure messaging is not solely relied upon for urgent communications.
- Staff, or their manager, report any and all actual or potential privacy breaches associated with secure messaging to their privacy officer, delegate or the Privacy and Access Specialist.
- Appropriate client identifiers are used when appropriate and in compliance with ORG.1410.PL.301 Client Identification.

A secure messaging service is an acceptable and safe method to communicate medication orders and therapeutic recommendations. All medication orders are transcribed to an order form and processed as directed by CLI.6010.PL.011 Medication Order Writing and Processing Policy. All therapeutic recommendations and patient care information are documented in the permanent patient health record.

## DEFINITIONS:

**Secure Messaging Service** – A secure communication platform for messaging and image sharing between HCPs from the user’s desktop computer or mobile device.

**Health Care Professional (HCP)** - Refers to all Health Care Professionals including those regulated by the Regulated Health Professionals Act (RHPA) engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health, including those who promote and preserve health, those who diagnose and treat disease, manage health and includes professionals with specific areas of competence.

## PROCEDURE:

1. HCPs contact [servicedesk@sharedhealthmb.ca](mailto:servicedesk@sharedhealthmb.ca) to request access to secure messaging service, complete the required information and submit request to their manager, supervisor or clinic owner.
2. The manager, supervisor or clinic owner approves and submits request to Shared Health Digital Services.
3. Authorized HCPs read and comply with directions for appropriate use and SH-SS policy direction.

## REFERENCES:

<a href="#">CLI.6010.PL.011</a>	Medication Order Writing and Processing
<a href="#">CLI.6010.PL.011.SD.01</a>	DO NOT USE: Dangerous Abbreviations, Symbols, Dose Designations
<a href="#">ORG.1410.PL.301</a>	Client Identification
<a href="#">ORG.1411.PL.507</a>	Texting with Clients, Natural Supports and other Staff

College of Pharmacists of Manitoba. (November 2014). Prescribing Practices: Doctor/Pharmacist Relationships.

College of Pharmacists of Manitoba. (January 2023). Updated Virtual Care Position Statement. Accessed March 2024. <https://cphm.ca/friday-five/friday-five-january-6-2023/>

Deer Lodge Centre. (May 2023). Processing Orders Policy.

Institute for Safe Medication Practices. (June 2017). The Texting Debate: Beneficial Means of Communication of Safety and Security Risk? Accessed February 2024. <https://www.ismp.org/resources/texting-debate-beneficial-means-communication-or-safety-and-security-risk>

Providence Health Care. (November 30, 2016). CPN0900: Texting Policy. Accessed September 11, 2023. [CPN0900 Texting policy \(November 2016\) FINAL.pdf \(providencehealthcare.org\)](#)

Southern Health-Santé Sud Collaborative Practice Council. Email Communication. September 13, 2023.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Pharmacy Working Group. Email Communication. March 11, 2021.