



Team Name: Health Information Services Team Lead: Regional Privacy & Access Officer Approved by: VP - Corporate Services	Reference Number: ORG.1411.PL.407 Program Area: Health Information Policy Section: Privacy & Access
Issue Date: March 14, 2016 Review Date: Revision Date:	Subject: Transmission of Personal Health Information via Facsimile (Fax)

**POLICY SUBJECT:**

Transmission of Personal Health Information via Facsimile (Fax)

**PURPOSE:**

1. To ensure that Personal Health Information is protected when transmitted by facsimile (“Fax”) whether manual or auto faxed in accordance with The Personal Health Information Act (“PHIA”).
2. To ensure to provide Personal Health Information required in an effective and timely manner.

**BOARD POLICY REFERENCE:**

Executive Limitation (EL-02) Treatment of Clients

**POLICY:**

- All fax transmittal of Personal Health Information including Demographic Information must be in accordance with Southern Health-Santé Sud's policies on Access, collection, Use or Disclosure of Personal Health Information.
- When determining if faxing is the appropriate method to send and/or receive Personal Health Information, consider the sensitivity of the information, the number of documents that need to be transmitted, the Security of the transmission, and the urgency of which the information is required.
- When dealing with a request to fax Personal Health Information to a new fax number, reasonable measures should be followed to ensure the identity of the requestor and the appropriateness of sending a fax to that number.
- Any fax machine used to send or receive Personal Health Information should be located in a place that prevents unauthorized persons from seeing faxed Personal Health Information. Access to the machine should be controlled.
- Fax confirmation sheets may be retained with the original faxed documents if required.
- The Record of Access/Disclosure/Release of Personal Health Information form may be utilized as a fax cover sheet.

- All fax transmissions of Personal Health Information shall have a fax cover sheet containing the following information:
  - Intended recipient's name (including department or program), telephone, fax number, and address whenever feasible;
  - Sender's full name and telephone number;
  - Individual's Demographic Information and shall not contain any other Personal Health Information about the Individual;
  - Number of pages sent including cover sheet;
  - Confidentiality statement stating that the faxed material is confidential, is intended only for the stated recipient, is not to be Disclosed to or Used by anyone else, that if the fax is received in error or the number of pages is incorrect to immediately notify the sender and at the request of the sender to return or securely destroy the information;
- Personal Health Information mistakenly faxed to an unintended recipient is an unauthorized Disclosure resulting in a breach of Privacy of the Individual to whom the information is about. The breach shall be reported according to ORG.1810.PL.001 Occurrence Reporting and Managing Critical Incidents, Critical Occurrences, Occurrences, and Near Misses.
- At no time shall Personal Health Information be left unattended on the fax machine if in an unsecured area.
- A copy of ORG.1411.PL.407.SD.01 Transmission of Personal Health Information via Fax Checklist shall be:
  - Posted by all fax machines that are used to send or receive Personal Health Information; or
  - Made available to employees authorized to send and receive Personal Health Information.

**DEFINITIONS:**

See ORG.1411.PL.502.SD.01 PHIA  
Definitions

**PROCEDURE:** authorized to fax Personal Health Information shall:

- 1.1 Set up pre-programmed fax numbers (speed dial and auto faxing directories) for most commonly used fax numbers and regularly check to ensure that the fax numbers are accurate and up to date. Pre-programmed fax numbers shall not include numbers for media and discretion used for other non-health care providers.
  - 1.2 Confirm that the fax number for the intended recipient is correct;
  - 1.3 Check the fax number dialed to ensure it is correct (use visual check on the display) prior to sending the fax;
  - 1.4 When faxing Personal Health Information remain at the fax machine to ensure all materials were transmitted correctly removing the information that was faxed.
  - 1.5 Where possible, a Trustee using a fax modem (a fax generated or received by computer), shall adopt privacy enhancing technologies such as passwords or encryption.
- 2 Persons authorized to receive Personal Health Information via fax transmission shall:
    - 2.1 Check to ensure the number of pages received match the number noted on the fax cover sheet and that all pages are legible.
    - 2.2 Advise the sender of the fax when there is a discrepancy in the number of pages sent and received, or that copies are illegible and request another copy be sent;
    - 2.3 Check to ensure that the fax does not contain any material that should not have been sent or was intended for another recipient;
    - 2.4 Promptly notify the sender when material was sent in error and return or destroy the information as requested by the sender;
    - 2.5 Deliver faxes to the intended recipient in a timely manner and ensure faxes are not viewed by unauthorized recipients

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

[ORG.1411.PL.407.SD.01](#) Transmission of Personal Health Information via Fax Checklist

[ORG.1411.PL.502.SD.01](#) PHIA Definitions

[ORG.1411.PL.502.FORM.03](#) Record of Access/Disclosure/Release of Personal Health Information

[ORG.1411.PL.502.FORM.04](#) Record of Access/Disclosure/Release of Personal Health Information (Community)

**REFERENCES:**

*The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)*

*The Personal Health Information Regulations*

Manitoba Ombudsman Practice Note: *Privacy Considerations for Faxing Personal Health Information* WRHA

*Transmission of Personal Health Information via Facsimile ("Fax") Policy #10.40.130*

Southern Health-Santé Sud *Occurrence Reporting and Managing Critical Incidents, Critical Occurrences, Occurrences, and Near Misses Policy* ORG.1810.PL.001