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| **Subject:** Privacy Policy – Public | **Policy: 6.7.5**  **Pages:**  3 |
| **Section**: 6 - Privacy  **Original Issue**: New Mar 2017.  **Last Revision:** | **Reference: Personal Health Information Act (2004)**  **Authorized By**: Executive Director  **Approved By**: Board of Directors |

**PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Algonquin Family Health Team (the Corporation)➀ is dedicated to quality patient care and improving the health status of our communities. A patient’s right to privacy is balanced with the Corporation’s obligation to provide effective health care treatment. This policy specifies the Corporation’s information practices related to the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of the personal health information of all our patients that is in our possession and control.

This policy applies to the Corporation and its employees.

**POLICY**

The Corporation maintains privacy in compliance with the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) 2004, which establishes rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information about individuals and that protects the confidentiality of that information and the privacy of individuals with respect to that information while facilitating the effective provision of health care.

Protecting the privacy and the confidentiality of patient personal health information (PHI) is important to the Corporation. This policy reflects the Corporation’s compliance with fair information practices, applicable laws and standards of practice

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➀Includes Muskoka Community Health Hubs (Nurse Practitioners and Administrative/Registered Practical Nurse staff) at Dorset Health Hub and employees of the Algonquin Family Health Team Corporation (Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurse, Dietitian, Social Workers, Respiratory Therapist and Administrative Staff) at The Howland Building and The Wellness Hub.

The Corporation is responsible for the PHI under its control and will, in good faith, endeavour to ensure that all PHI be maintained private, confidential and secure.

The information practices adopted by the Corporation to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information collected, used, or disclosed are described below. These practices are closely interrelated and should be interpreted as such.

**1. Accountability:**

The Corporation is responsible for any personal health information in its possession. The privacy officer is appointed to oversee the compliance to this policy, related procedures, and legislation.

**2. Identifying Purposes:**

Personal health information related to patients and clients is collected, used, disclosed and retained for the purposes of:

* Providing patient care or assisting with the provision of patient care.
* Administration of the health care system.
* Research, teaching, statistics, and fundraising as permitted by law.
* To meet legal and regulatory requirements.

**3. Consent:**

The knowledge and consent of the individual is required for the collection, use or disclosure of personal health information. The Corporation will inform its patients and clients of the purposes for which the Corporation collects, uses or discloses their personal health information, and patient’s and clients’ privacy rights with regards to their personal health information in the Corporation’s possession, by posting this policy in each of its sites and posting this policy on the Corporation’s website. Patients and clients’ implied consent will be assumed for the collection, use and disclosure of the personal health information for the purpose communicated to the patients and clients. Express consent will be obtained for the collection, use and disclosure of the personal health information for any purposes other than those communicated, unless the collection, use and disclosure of the personal health information without consent is permitted by law.

**4. Limiting Collection:**

The Corporation will limit the amount and the type of personal health information collected to that which is necessary to fulfil the purposes identified. All information will be collected by fair, lawful and indiscriminate means.

**5. Limiting Use, Disclosure and Retention:**

Personal health information will not be used or disclosed for purposes other than those which it was collected, except with the consent from the individual or as required by law. Personal health information will be retained only for as long as is necessary for the fulfilment of those purposes or as required by law (i.e. legislative requirements with respect to retention periods of personal health information).

**6. Accuracy**:

The Corporation will take reasonable steps to ensure that personal health information is as accurate, complete and relevant as possible and as is necessary for the purpose for which it is intended, to minimize the possibility that inappropriate information may be used for a specified purpose.

**7. Safeguards – Protecting Patient Information:**

The Corporation has security safeguards in place to protect personal health information against loss, theft, unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, use, or medication regardless of the format in which it is held. Care will be used in the disposal or destruction of personal information, to prevent unauthorized persons gaining access to the information.

**8. Openness:**

The Corporation will make available to its patients and clients, information regarding the policies and practices relating to the management of personal health information in a format that is generally understandable.

**9. Access and Correction:**

Upon request, a patient or client will be informed of the existence, use and disclosure of personal information and will be granted access to that information, unless the primary care provider deems that access to that information could be harmful to the patient or a third party.

Patients and clients will be able to challenge the accuracy and completeness of the information and have it amended as appropriate.

**10. Challenging Compliance with the Privacy Policy:**

The patient and client can inquire and provide feedback about the Corporation’s privacy practices by first contacting the appropriate primary care provider. If the patient/client is not satisfied with his/her primary care provider’s response to the inquiry or feedback, the patient/client can submit a more formal inquiry/feedback using the Corporation’s Feedback Process posted at each site and the attached feedback form.

Algonquin Family Health Team Corporation website address is: [www.algonquinfht.ca](http://www.algonquinfht.ca)

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| **Feedback/Concern Information** | |
| **Date of Issue/Concern:** | **Time:** |
| **Location of Issue/Concern** | **Who/What is the subject of the issue/concern?** |
| **Summary of Issue/Concern** | |
| **What would be your preferred outcome?** | |
| **Your Name:**  **Contact Information:**  **Date:** | |