

Shared Electronic Health Information Systems and Your Personal Health Information

Why do health service providers share your personal health information?

CAMH and other health service providers across Ontario securely collect, use and disclose personal health information (PHI) using shared electronic information systems. These systems have many benefits, such as:

- ensuring health service providers have the most up-to-date and complete record of your health history
- improving the efficiency of planning and delivering care and treatment to you
- reducing the need for you to provide the same information multiple times
- reducing duplicate tests and procedures and improving the timeliness of care decisions.

Ontario has several shared information systems for different regions and types of information. For example, people receiving treatment in the greater Toronto area will have their information shared through the ConnectingOntario system. New systems will continue to be developed to improve care and treatment throughout the province.

To learn more about your information in the shared electronic health information systems, or to exercise any of your privacy rights speak with your clinician or contact CAMH Information and Privacy Office at 416-535-8501 ext. 33314 or by email at privacy@camh.ca.

What information about you will be shared?

Shared information can include details about:

- your personal health and mental health history
- the names of doctors or clinicians providing health care and services to you
- medications or results from lab tests
- the health care services you are receiving and how you respond to therapies and other treatments
- demographic information, such as your name, date of birth, health card number, address, phone number and medical record number.

How is your information protected?

Unless you specify otherwise, your health information is shared with individuals providing you with health care and services, also known as your “circle of care.” Your circle of care may include doctors, hospitals, and other clinicians or health service providers involved in your care.

Only those who provide health care and services to you are authorized to look at your health information, and only when they need it to do their jobs.

The privacy and confidentiality of your information in these shared systems is protected under Ontario’s privacy law, the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) and other applicable laws. Any access to your information is recorded in a log, which will be audited regularly for unauthorized access.

If you have concerns about the privacy of your information and how it is handled either at CAMH or in the shared electronic information systems, you have the right to file a complaint. To do so, contact:

Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario
2 Bloor Street East
Toronto ON M4W 1A8
Phone: 1 800 387-0073

Your privacy rights

If you do not want to share your information with other health service providers, you have a right to withdraw your consent and request that your information be “blocked” from access (sometimes called a “lockbox”).

However, your demographic information may still be searchable in the shared information systems. Under the law, there are exceptions for when your information may be accessed without your consent—even if it is blocked.

In addition to requesting a block on your information, you have several other privacy rights:

- You have a right to view or obtain a copy of your information in the shared health record system.
- You can request a list of all the health care professionals who have viewed your information in the shared system.
- You can request corrections to your information in the shared system if you believe it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- You can request the details of past lockbox requests
- (i.e., when the information was locked or unlocked at your request).
- You can ask questions about the shared information systems and how your information is handled.