 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS	
		Community Health Nursing	
TITLE:		SECTION:	POLICY NUMBER:
Confidentiality		Communications	06-001-00
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DUE:	REPLACES NUMBER:	NUMBER OF PAGES:
February 10, 2018	February 2021		4
APPLIES TO:			
Community Health Nurses			

POLICY:

Client information shall be collected, accessed or disclosed only by authorized individuals in accordance with relevant policies, procedures and legislation. Personal, family and community information obtained in the context of a professional relationship is considered confidential and shall be respected, communicated and maintained in a manner that safeguards privacy.

Personal employee information shall not be released externally or internally without approval from the employee unless authorized by a collective agreement, legislation, or a Government of Nunavut Human Resources policy.

Immediate supervisors shall educate all new employees on methods of safeguarding information and necessary authorizations for the collection, use and disclosure of personal or health information. All employees will be required to sign an *Oath of Office and Secrecy* (See HR Manual) form.

PRINCIPLES:

Every individual has a basic need for privacy and a legal right to have control over the collection, use, access and disclosure of their personal information.

When health services are required, access to confidential information in the workplace occurs intentionally on a “need to know” basis among members of the health care team. Breaches of confidentiality occur when personal information is accessed without a “need to know” or disclosed without proper authorization.

Health centre staff will not abuse their access to information by accessing health records, including their own, a family member’s or any other person’s, for purposes inconsistent with their professional obligations.

Potential exists in all health facility premises for inadvertent breaches of confidentiality due to physical layout and space constraints. Staff must exercise care at all times to avoid a breach of confidentiality.

Any questions about the release of information should be referred to the immediate supervisor. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Coordinator for the Department of Health and Social Services may be consulted as required.

Proper keeping and handling of health records shall be in accordance with Nunavut’s *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. (S.N.W.T. 1994, c. 20, enacted for Nunavut).

RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND LEGISLATION:

Guideline 06-001-01 Confidentiality Guidelines

Canadian Nurses Association (2008) *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Ottawa, ON.

Nunavut Human Resource Manual *Oath of Office and Secrecy*.

REFERENCES:

Canadian Nurses Association (2008) *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Ottawa: On

Canadian Nurses Association (2001). Privacy of Personal Health Information Position Statement.
Ottawa, ON.

Government of Nunavut (n.d.) *Human Resource Manual: Oath of Office and Secrecy*.

Nunavut Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act S.N.W.T.

1994, c.20, enacted for Nunavut pursuant to the Nunavut Act, S.C. 1993, c.28.

Nunavut Nursing Act (S.Nu. 2003, c.17).



GUIDELINES 06-001-01

Much of the information health centre staff comes in contact with daily is considered confidential and may be generated from the health record, the computer system, reports, hospital correspondence, conversations, and normal daily operations.

Registered nurses collect, use and disclose health information on a need-to-know basis with the highest degree of anonymity possible and in accordance with privacy laws.

When the registered nurse is required to disclose information for a particular purpose, he/she is only to disclose the amount of information necessary for that purpose and to inform only those necessary. Under no circumstances may the aforementioned resources be accessed for personal or non-work related activities.

Suggestions for ensuring privacy and confidentiality is maintained include, but not limited to:

Verbal Communications

Client information should not be discussed where others can overhear the conversation, e.g. in hallways, on elevators, in the employee lounge, on any form of public transportation, and social events.

The Registered Nurse will ensure discussions of clinical cases are respectful and does not identify those persons receiving care unless appropriate.

Dictation of client information should occur in locations where others cannot overhear.

Written Information

Confidential papers, reports and computer printouts should be kept in secure areas and shall never be left overnight in an unlocked clinic room.

Client's health records to be closed when not in use or when the practitioner needs to leave the examination room.

Confidential papers should be picked up as soon as possible from copiers, mailboxes, conference room tables and other publicly accessible locations.

Confidential papers should be appropriately disposed of, e.g. shredded or deposited into the designated recycling and confidential containers.

Fax machines are the least controllable technology when one transmits client information. Please refer to Policy 06-002-00 Transmission of Health Information by Facsimile.

Computerized Information

Protecting your computer access is important to maintain privacy, confidentiality and your accountability for access to our systems. Please refer to Department of Community and Government Services *Acceptable Email & Internet Usage Policy*



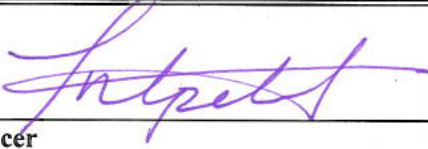

Employee Conduct

Staff members with access to information about clients, employees, or business matters may only obtain information that is necessary for their job functions. Regardless of the format in which this information is obtained, i.e. verbal, written, or electronic, it must be treated with the same level of confidentiality.

Policy 06-002-00 Transmission of Health Information by Facsimile
Guideline 06-002-01 Guidelines for Transmitting Information by Facsimile
Canadian Nurses Association (2008) *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. Ottawa: On

Department of Community and Government Services *Acceptable Email & Internet Usage Policy*

Government of Nunavut Human Resource Manual *Oath of Office and Secrecy*.

Approved by:		Effective Date:
Chief Nursing Officer	11 FEB 2011 Date	April 1, 2011
		
Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services	February 11, 2011 Date	

