 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		<b>NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS</b>	
		<b>Community Health Nursing</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>		<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>
Release of Information		Communications	06-003-00
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>REVIEW DUE:</b>	<b>REPLACES NUMBER:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PAGES:</b>
February 10, 2018	February 2021		3
<b>APPLIES TO:</b>			
Community Health Nurses			

## POLICY

**Client information collected and used by the health centre for client care, epidemiological studies, research, education and quality assurance will be released in accordance with the law and in the best interests of the client, health centre and other health care professionals.**

**All health centre staff, students and volunteers must adhere to the following guidelines regarding release of health information. Failure to comply is considered to be a breach of confidentiality.**

## DEFINITIONS:

**Client Information** is information in all media (paper, film, electronic, etc.) about an identifiable person that relates to their previous, current and future health and which is generated during the course of providing health services.

**De-Identified Client Information** is information that is in statistical format only, without any identifying client information.

## 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.

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:**

Policy 06-001-00	Confidentiality
Guidelines 06-001-01	Confidentiality
Policy 06-002-00	Transmission of Health Information by Facsimile
Guidelines 06-002-01	Transmission of Health Information by Facsimile
Guidelines 06-003-01	Guidelines for the Release of Information
Policy 06-004-00	Intra-Departmental Release of Information
Policy 06-005-00	RCMP Investigations

### **GUIDELINES 06-003-01**

#### **INTERNAL RELEASE OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

All staff of the Department of Health and Social Services and volunteers shall maintain complete confidentiality by recognizing that all information about a client in any form, is confidential and to be safeguarded.

Access to client information extends to all health-related information that health centre staff and volunteers learn through the duties of their employment. They shall only share client information with other internal authorized staff which is considered essential for care, epidemiological studies, research, education and continuous quality improvement. They will also ensure that the sharing of information is in the best interest of the client and that the recipient is qualified in every respect to receive the information.

Client Information may be released internally between health centres for the purpose of continued client care and in accordance with Policy 06-004-00 Intra-Departmental Release of Information.

#### **EXTERNAL RELEASE OF CLIENT INFORMATION**

Client information will only be released when a valid consent form is received. However, in some circumstances, information may be externally released without a signed consent:

- Requests from Territorial / Provincial hospital insurance agencies (e.g. T.H.I.S., O.H.I.P)
- Requests from Workers Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) for information related to WSCC claims
- Requests from a Coroner or from a Court of Law

When client consent is required, a Department of Health and Social Services' Release of Information Form must be used for the purpose of documentation and appropriately signed by the client or substitute decision maker.

A client consent form is considered valid when it includes the following: Name and Address of the client; Name and Address of the recipient; Description of information to be released; Signature of client or Substitute Decision Maker and; Date of Request.

Client information may never be released in its original form. It must be duplicated. Original radiology films may be released for client care purposes only, otherwise they must be duplicated.

**Note:** On presentation of a search warrant or at the request of a coroner, it may be demanded that original documentation be provided, in which case the health centre must comply.

Client Information may be released via fax, and in accordance with Policy 06-002-00 Transmission of Health Information by Facsimile.

A permanent record of the release of client information must be kept, including name and address of requestor, information released, and date released. The record may be stored as part of the permanent client health record.



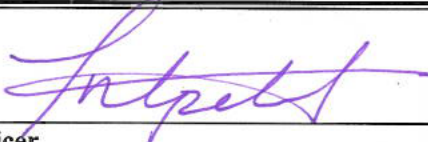

### RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE RCMP

Client information may be released to the RCMP according to Policy 06-005-00

### RELEASE OF INFORMATION FOR EXTERNAL DATABASE REPORTING

Aggregate client information may be released for external database reporting without prior consent of the client when the client information is de-identified.

Only external database systems approved by the Department of Health and Social Services will receive de-identified client information.

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

