

SOMERSET WEST COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CORPORATE

Title: CLIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES	
Approved By: Senior Leadership Team	Number: COR 1-03
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POLICY

Somerset West Community Health Centre is committed to recognizing the rights of individuals to participate in decisions that promote their optimal well-being in a manner that is equitable and free of prejudice and discrimination. Mutual respect, honesty and trust are critical in our dealings with clients. We are committed to creating culturally safe and inclusive environments, where providers and clients work together to provide services that respect the diversity of cultures, values, beliefs, and socio-economic circumstances of our clients.

POLICY

Clients' Care Rights

Whereby Client is defined as a recipient of primary health care and/or community health services from our Centre or satellite sites.

Clients have the right:

- to be treated with dignity and respect; without discrimination
- to privacy and confidentiality
- to expect that all care provided on their behalf will be conducted in a professional manner and in a safe and secure environment;
- to know about all available services the Centre or other agencies provide
- to receive information about the services available to them in the Centre and in the community
- to understand the nature of the care the provider proposes and its implications before receiving care;
- to refuse or discontinue treatment and to be informed of the consequences;
- to know when they will be receiving services from a student or in the presence of a student, and to refuse these services if they choose;

- to make a complaint about their care at the Centre or make a recommendation to improve services. If a client makes a complaint, the Program Manager/Director or Executive Director will formally address it (see [COR 3-02 Client Relations Process](#) policy).
- Clients have the right to request to be assigned another provider (see [PHC 4-02 Change of Primary Provider](#))

Clients' Privacy Rights

- clients' right to privacy will be respected by staff throughout the Centre. Staff will keep client information confidential
- clients should be made aware of the limits to confidentiality (i.e. harm to self/others, legal requirements (see [COR 5-02 Limits to Confidentiality](#));
- client records are the property of the Centre. Clients have the right to access their own files. Since the information may need some explanation, the provider should go over the information with the client and present it in a way the client can understand;
- clients have the right to request amendments to clarify previous entries on their record; clients have the right to appeal decisions to withhold or limit access to their records (see [COR 3-03 Access to Client Information](#) policy); and
- Clients are clients of the Centre, not of individual providers. Service providers will aim to respect the client's wishes about disclosing information. However, clients need to be aware that some disclosure between providers needs to occur in order to maintain/provide an appropriate standard of care (see [COR 5-02 Limits to Confidentiality](#) and [COR 3-05 Release of Client Information](#)).
- With the advent of virtual care, clients have the right to know that virtual care sessions are done in private settings with no one else present, unless discussed and consented to by both client and provider.

Clients' Rights on Disclosure of Personal Information

- A service provider must respect the client's wishes if s/he refuses to allow the disclosure of information to an external agency. However, the provider must inform the client that the restriction on disclosure may have a negative impact on the quality of the service provided and there may be mandatory disclosures related to legal or safety issue items
- the Centre has the right to refuse service should the restrictions on disclosure significantly restrict the provider from obtaining an appropriate level of consultation and/or supervision.

Note: Where a provider believes that releasing records or information will likely cause significant harm to the client or a third party, the provider must consult their Manager/Director before releasing the information (see [COR 3-03 Access to Client Information](#) policy).

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Clients' Responsibilities

Clients have the responsibility:

- to provide accurate and complete information about medical complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medications, pain, and other matters relating to their health,
- to engage in decision making related to their health care plan and follow it to the best of their ability,
- to recognize that providers will not provide any service or treatment that they consider is medically or ethically inappropriate,
- to be courteous and respectful of other clients, volunteers, and staff;
- to respect SWCHC's property and comply with the Centre's regulations and policies; and
- to understand that any damage or threat, whether verbal, physical or other is grounds for a service restriction or a termination of the relationship