



**SOMERSET WEST COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**  
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## **CLIENT LOCKBOX INFORMATION BROCHURE**

### **How to Restrict Access to your Health Record**

You have a right to make choices and control how your health information held by Somerset West Community Health Centre is collected, used, and shared, subject to a few exceptions.

You have the right to ask that we not share some or all of your health record with one or more of our staff members involved in your care, or ask us not to share your health record with your external health care providers (such as a hospital or specialist). This is known as asking for a “lockbox”.

#### **What is a “lockbox”?**

Generally speaking, a lockbox means that all or part of your health information will be separated from our usual filing systems. If it is an electronic record, it will have additional restrictions of access. If it is a paper record, it will go into a sealed envelope. While all our health records are safely and securely stored, a lockbox will restrict the access to your health information from certain people or institutions.

#### **Are there risks to having a lockbox?**

There are some risks to putting your health information in a lockbox that you should consider before making your decision:

- Your health care providers may not have the information they need to give you the best possible care in a timely manner.
- Your health care providers may not have enough information to safely provide you with services and so may not be able to offer you care.
- It may be harder for your health care providers to share your information in an emergency.
- There may be errors in assessments, treatment or medications if the people providing care do not have enough information or do not have the right information about you.
- You may have to undergo duplicate tests, procedures and health history questions if existing information is unavailable.
- You may not benefit from the wide range of services we can offer you.
- There may be other risks specific to you and your request, which we will discuss with you.

You can ask us questions about the specific risks that could come up depending on your choices.

## Lockbox Exceptions

Under the law, there are times when we are allowed to or must collect, use, or share personal information about you — without your permission — even if your information is otherwise “locked”.

If your information is already in a lockbox, the “lock” may be broken and your information may be used or disclosed as permitted or required by law. We have provided some examples, but there may be other situations where the use or disclosure of your information is permitted or required by law. We may use or share your health information without your permission in order to:

- Report a child in need of protection to the Children’s Aid Society
- Make reports to the Ministry of Transportation or Public Health or other mandatory reports
- Protect you or someone else if we believe there is a significant risk of serious harm
- Obtain or process payments
- Plan our services
- Engage in quality improvement exercises
- Dispose of information
- Comply with a court order
- Defend ourselves in litigation
- Engage in research (as long as we have research ethics board approval)
- Teach our staff to provide health care

If you have questions about how we can use or share your health information, you can ask a team member or the Privacy Officer.

## How do you request a lockbox?

You can discuss any concerns regarding the privacy and confidentiality of your health information and your lockbox options with your physician, health care provider or the Privacy Officer. In some cases, you may not need a lockbox in order to protect your information and we can discuss alternatives or options with you.

To request a lockbox, there are three ways to do this:

- I. You can make this decision known during an encounter with your provider. Your provider will access the [Client lockbox request form](#), complete it and add to your record.
- II. You can call your provider and request a lockbox. Your provider will generate the Client lockbox request form and send it to you for completion. The form is added to your record.
- III. You can download the Client lockbox request form, fill and submit at the Centre or give to your provider during an encounter.

The completed form should be given to your physician, health care provider or the Privacy Officer.

Lockbox requests are processed on a case-by-case basis. The Privacy Officer will review and respond to lockbox requests and will speak with your physician or health care provider. We may not be able to accommodate every request – but we will explain any limits with you. We will tell you when your lockbox is in place. You can also request that your lockbox be removed at any time by contacting your health care provider or the Privacy Officer.

**Privacy Officer**

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