

	<b>Name of Manual:</b> <b>HEALTH INFORMATION  MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY</b>	<b>Number:</b>  <b>4-b-110</b>
	<b>Section:</b> <b>PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:  PROTECTION OF PERSONAL  HEALTH INFORMATION</b>	
	<b>Name</b> <b>USE OF TELEPHONE ANSWERING  SYSTEMS TO COMMUNICATE  PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION</b>	<b>Page:</b>  <b>1 of 3</b>

## PURPOSE

To ensure the confidentiality and security of personal health information in the custody or control of Central Health communicated through telephone answering systems.

## POLICY

Central Health must ensure that information is secured and managed in an appropriate manner to maintain privacy and integrity of the information.

Telephone answering systems must not be used for the purposes of collection, disclosure or retention of personal health information. This type of transmission is vulnerable to interception by non-authorized individuals and poses a potential threat to the privacy of individuals who are the subjects of voice messages.

Personal health information must not be disclosed through the use of telephone answering systems unless the individual whom the information is about has given authorization to do so. Any inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of personal health information through the use of telephone answering systems may be considered a privacy breach and will be managed through Central Health's Privacy Breach policy and Occurrence Reporting process.

Central Health recognizes that there are times where there are extenuating circumstances that require leaving personal health information on telephone answering systems. Individuals within Central Health may only disclose personal health information by way of telephone answering systems in **urgent and emergent** situations. Any information disclosed on telephone answering systems must be kept to the minimum required for the purpose of the communication.

Any individual receiving voice messages containing personal health information must listen to the messages in private and delete the messages as soon as possible.

Central Health has adopted *the [Guidelines for Leaving Messages Containing Personal Health Information on Telephone Answering Systems](#)* for use by all individuals within Central Health.

## PROCEDURE

1. Where there is a requirement for an individual to leave a voice message on a client's telephone answering system is it essential to follow the ***Guidelines for Leaving Messages Containing Personal Health Information on Telephone Answering Systems.***

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Collect</b>	To gather, acquire, receive, or obtain the information by any means from any source and "collection" has a corresponding meaning.
<b>Disclose</b>	To make the information available or to release it but does not include a use of the information and "disclosure" has a corresponding meaning.
<b>Personal Health Information</b>	Identifying information in oral or recorded form about an individual that relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• information concerning the physical or mental health of the individual, including information respecting the individual's health care status and history and the health history of the individual's family;</li><li>• the provision of health care to the individual, including information respecting the person providing the health care;</li><li>• the donation by an individual of a body part or any bodily substance, including information derived from the testing or examination of a body part or bodily substance;</li><li>• registration information;</li><li>• payments or eligibility for a health care program or service in respect of the individual, including eligibility for coverage under an insurance or payment arrangement with respect to health care;</li><li>• an individual's entitlement to benefits under or participation in a health care program or service;</li><li>• information about the individual that is collected in the course of, and is incidental to, the provision of a health care program or service or payment for a health care program or service;</li><li>• a drug as defined in the <i>Pharmacy Act</i>, a health care aid, device, product, equipment or other item provided to an individual under a prescription or other authorization issued by a health care professional; or</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the identity of a person's representative as defined in Section 7 of the <i>Personal Health Information Act</i>.</li></ul>
<b>Privacy</b>	The right of an individual to control the collection, use and disclosure of information about themselves.
<b>Privacy Breach</b>	A privacy breach occurs when there is unauthorized and/or inappropriate access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal of personal/personal health or business information. Such activity is "unauthorized" if it occurs in contravention of <i>ATIPPA</i> or <i>PHIA</i> . The most common privacy breaches occur when personal information of clients, employees or a corporation is stolen, lost or mistakenly disclosed. For example, a privacy breach occurs when a computer/laptop containing personal information is stolen or personal information is mistakenly emailed or faxed to the wrong person.
<b>Telephone Answering Systems</b>	Refers to a device for answering telephones and recording callers' messages. For the purposes of guidelines attached, this definition also includes voicemail, which is a centralized or networked system that performs a similar function as an answering machine.

## REFERENCES

Province of Newfoundland and Labrador: *Personal Health Information Act*, SNL 2008, c. P-7.01, s. 15

Information and Privacy Commissioner, October 1995, Privacy Protection Principles of Voice Mail Systems

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: Security and Storage of Personal Health Information, February 2008, pgs. 1-5

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Information Privacy Collaborative (HIPC), August 2011, Guidelines for Leaving Messages Containing Personal Health Information on Telephone Answering Systems

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**APPROVAL DATE:** 28/SEP/2011  
(R) 10/MAY/2013