

7. Protection of Personal Information

7.1 Introduction

The Centre de santé Communautaire de l'Estrie (CSCE) is a nonprofit organization providing primary and preventative healthcare, health promotion and health education to the francophone population of Eastern Ontario.

The CSCE understands the importance of ensuring the confidentiality of our clients' personal information, which we collect as part of our activities. This is why we have put a policy in place that informs you of our commitment to ensuring the accuracy and confidentiality of personal information we obtain during the course of our activities.

7.2 What is considered personal information?

“Personal information” is understood to be information recorded on a form pertaining to either a person identified on the form or a person whose identity might be understood or determined based on this piece of information, excepting information related to business contracts (e.g., name, title, and business address).

7.3 Why does the CSCE collect and use personal information?

The CSCE collects and uses personal information provided verbally or in writing (including by electronic means) by its clients, members and other third parties for the following reasons:

- To provide healthcare services to clients
- To offer community services and programs to clients and other interested parties
- To provide mental health services to clients
- To manage our relationships with clients and members
- To provide clients and other interested parties with information on the wide range of services offered by the CSCE or by other organizations that they may find useful. This may be done through direct marketing methods.
- To obtain a reimbursement for services provided (e.g., through OHIP or a private insurance provider)
- To comply with legal and regulatory requirements
- For all other purposes in keeping with these objectives

The personal information we require depends on the healthcare services or products you request.

7.4 How does the CSCE collect and use personal information?

The CSCE collects, uses, and provides personal information exclusively under reasonable circumstances and for the sole purpose of providing products, services or information to clients. We engage only in information-collecting practices that are fair and in compliance with the law.

We use personal information only for the purposes set out in the current document, and we do not sell, trade or divulge, or exchange for gain, any of the personal information we collect.

7.5 When may the CSCE divulge personal information?

The CSCE may divulge your personal information:

- to other CSCE healthcare professionals in order to select procedures that will better treat you, and for other professional reasons;
- to professional consultants who review the files and assess the quality of actions undertaken
- to private citizens or organizations that help the CSCE inform you of its programs and services
- to private citizens or organizations who serve as our legal counsel or to service providers;
- to private citizens or organizations involved in the corporate reorganization of the CSCE, where applicable.

We will divulge personal information provided to us only when necessary.

When the CSCE divulges personal information to organizations that provide services in its name, it requires that these service providers use this information only for the purpose of providing services to the CSCE, the client, or the person in question, and that they have adequate measures in place to protect this personal information.

When personal information is liable to be transferred from one organization to another in the context of preparing for a projected consolidation or reorganization of the CSCE, we will carry out the transfer of information only if the parties have come to an agreement under which the collection, use, or divulgence of information (particularly personal information) is limited to the purposes of the transaction, including any decision pertaining to its execution, and if this information will be invoked by the parties only in order to undertake and finalize the transaction.

Please note that there are situations where the use and/or divulgence of personal information are justified and authorized, and where the CSCE is under legal obligation to divulge information *without* consent.

Such circumstances may include the following:

- a) when required by the law or by a decision or order of the court, an administrative organization or another government judicial body;
 - b) when the CSCE believes, with good reason, that it is necessary in order to protect the rights, private life, safety, or property of an identifiable person or group;
 - c) when it is necessary to set or collect fees payable to the CSCE;
 - d) when it is necessary to allow the CSCE to initiate proceedings or to limit damages it may suffer;
- 3) when the information in question is public.

If we are required or authorized to divulge information without consent, we will only divulge the information we are required to.

7.6 Consent

Except where authorized by the law, we will not collect any personal information without first obtaining consent from the person concerned by the collection, use, and dissemination of this information. However, we may request consent to use and divulge the personal information after it has been collected, when we wish to use this information for a purpose that is not identified in the present document or previously, or for which the person in question has not given prior consent.

By providing your personal information to the CSCE, you consent that your personal information will be collected, used and divulged in accordance with the current policy. (See the consent form, Appendix GG.) Moreover, from time to time, authorization or express consent may be obtained, when applicable.

In most cases and subject to legal and contractual restrictions, you are free to withhold or to withdraw your consent at any time by giving reasonable notice. Please note, however, that in certain cases, some of our services may only be offered if you supply personal information to the CSCE. Therefore, if you decide not to provide us with the necessary personal information, it is possible that we will not be able to provide you with the services you request. The CSCE will inform you of the consequences of a withdrawal of consent.

7.7 Accuracy and retention of personal information

The CSCE does its utmost to ensure that personal information provided and in its possession is as accurate, complete, and up-to-date as is necessary for its designated use. If we judge that the personal information is no longer accurate, complete, or up to date, we will modify it and, when applicable, do our utmost to advise third parties who have received erroneous information so they may correct their files.

The CSCE retains personal information only for the period applicable to its designated use. The period of information retention varies by department and the nature of the information. We may extend this period beyond the end of our relationship with any and all persons, with the sole purpose of allowing us to adequately respond to any questions that may arise at a later date. As soon as we no longer need your information, we use our established procedures to destroy, delete and erase this information or convert it into a format that guarantees anonymity.

7.8 Protection of Personal Information

The CSCE will do its utmost to maintain the physical, technical, and procedural security policies applicable to its offices and information storage facilities in order to avoid the loss, abuse, unauthorized access, divulgence or modification of personal information. This vigilance also applies to the elimination or destruction of personal information.

The CSCE also protects personal information by limiting access to this information exclusively to employees who, according to CSCE management, require access to this information in order to provide services or information to the client or the person in question.

If a CSCE employee makes inappropriate use of personal information, this inappropriate use constitutes a serious offence that can entail disciplinary measures up to dismissal. If a person or organization makes inappropriate use of personal information gathered for the provision of services to the CSCE, or on the CSCE's behalf, this inappropriate use is considered a serious offence that can entail measures up to the annulment of any agreement between the CSCE and the person or organization in question.

From time to time, we review our procedures in order to ensure that they remain effective and relevant.

7.9 Access to your personal information

The CSCE allows access to and reasonable perusal of the personal information it holds on a person, and will do its utmost to provide the information in question in a reasonable time frame, normally within 20 days of a request. In order to prevent fraudulent requests, we may require adequate proof of the identity of the person making the request before granting access or making changes. Clients wishing to consult their records must do so in the presence of a CSCE health professional.

We will provide the information we hold on file in a reader-friendly format.. The CSCE reserves the right to refuse to modify any personal information, but also reserves the right to add any alternative information deemed appropriate by the person in question.

The CSCE reserves the right to refuse access to personal information when the information requested does one of the following:

- a) divulges i) personal information, including opinions on another person or a deceased person, or ii) other business information of a confidential nature liable to compromise the CSCE or a third party's competitiveness;
- b) impedes contractual negotiations or other negotiations engaged in by the CSCE or a third party;
- c) is subject to professional privilege relative to a litigation or client-attorney privilege;
- d) is difficult to recover and liable to incur fees or charges disproportionate to their nature or value;
- e) does not exist, is not retained by or cannot be found by the CSCE
- f) can reasonably cause i) a serious harm to the treatment or recovery of the person in question ii) serious emotional harm to the person in question or another person iii) serious bodily harm to another person;
- g) can hinder or interfere with maintaining order and the rule of law, or any other investigative or regulatory functions of an organization legally authorized to exercise its functions;
- h) can be concealed or whose concealment is required under an applicable law.

In the event that information may not be divulged, the person requesting the information will be provided with reasons for this non-divulgence.

The CSCE will not charge any fees for the verification or correction of your information, but, within the limits of applicable law, may charge minimal fees for file copies.

7.10 Website

As an internet user, you should become familiar with a technology known as “cookies.” These cookies are files or information components that can be saved on the hard drive of a computer when a user visits a website. Most web browsers are configured to accept cookies. If you do not wish to accept cookies, you will have to configure your computer in such a way as to block cookies or advise you of their presence.

“Session cookies” are temporary information components that are erased when you close your browser window or shut down your computer. Session cookies are used to improve navigation on the website and collect static aggregate information. “Persistent cookies” are more permanent information components placed on a visitor’s computer hard drive and remain there until they are deleted. Persistent cookies memorize the information on a visitor’s computer for a variety of reasons, such as recovering certain previously provided information (e.g., passwords), helping determine the parts of the website the visitor most appreciates and personalizing the website according to visitor’s preferences. Currently, the CSCE website does not use cookies.

7.11 Questions on the protection of privacy

If you have questions concerning i) access to personal information ii) our collection, use, management, or divulgence of personal information, or iii) our current policy, please contact the program coordination office, either by email at info@cscestrie.on.ca or by phone at 613 937-2683.

The CSCE will investigate all complaints and, if they are found to be justified, take all the necessary measures to resolve the situation.