CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SAFEGUARDING HEALTH INFORMATION

This Code of Practice is for the guidance of all persons who handle and have access to health information and records. (Adopted from the Canadian Health Record Association recommendations)

The underlying principle is that all health information related to an identified individual must be treated as confidential. This information may be written, verbal or other form.

The primary purposes of the health records are:
- to document the course of an individual’s health care; and
- to provide a means of communication amongst health care professionals for current and future patient care.

1. The MICs Group of Health Services is responsible for maintaining, handling and processing health information on and therefore shall:
   - have written policies regulating access to, release of, transmittal and destruction of health information;
   - educate all Team Members with regard to maintaining confidentiality of information, and have them sign a pledge of confidentiality. This shall also apply to volunteers and contracted individuals.

2. Health Information shall be accessed or released only for:
   - Direct Care Use – when requested by a physician or health care facility responsible for the direct care of the individual
   - Individual Use – when authorized by the individual or substitute decision-maker
   - Secondary Use – when requested by properly authorized persons or agencies
   - Legal Use – when required by law

3. Requests for confidential information should be in writing however verbal requests are acceptable as outlined in the release of information policy.

4. Any authorization for release of information shall be an original and specific as to: source, content, recipient, purpose and time limitations. Reproductions of original signatures shall not be accepted
5. Information released to authorized persons shall not be made available to any other party without further authorization.

6. Health Information and records shall be kept in a secured area and not left unattended in areas accessible to unauthorized individuals.

7. In research, individual confidentiality shall be maintained in the handling of information and any reporting or publication of findings.

8. When health information is sent to any service organization for processing, the contact shall include an undertaking by the recipient that confidentially will be maintained.

9. The authorized destruction of health information shall be by effective shredding, burning or bulk erasure.

10. Any misuse of health information shall be reported to the Privacy Officer.