Guelph Family Health and Member Clinics

Patient Lockbox Information Brochure: How to Restrict Access to your Health Records

You have the right to make choices and control how your health information at Guelph Family Health Team is collected, used, and disclosed, subject to a few exceptions.

You have the right to ask that we not share some or all of your health record with Guelph Family Health Team staff members or ask us not to share your health record with your external health care providers (such as a specialist). This is known as a "lockbox."

What is in your health record?
Your health record includes information such as your health history, your medications and results from lab tests and noted from your health care providers with the Guelph Family Health Team or your other health care providers. If you would like a copy of your health record, please contact your family physician.

Who sees your health record?
Our privacy policy protects all your health information. Only Guelph Family Health Team staff members, volunteers, students, or consultants who provide or support the provision of health care services to you are authorized to look at your health information, and only when they need to see that information to do their job.
We use your health information to make sure we can give you the best care. Your health information is shared only within your "circle of care" – meaning the doctors, nurses, dieticians, social workers, hospitals, home care and other people and organizations that help with your care – unless we are permitted or required by law. Guelph Family Health Team will not share your health information with anyone not involved in your health care – for example, your family or friends, spouse/partner, employer, or insurance company – unless we get your permission (known as "express consent") to do so or unless permitted or required by las (see "Lock=bob Exceptions" below).

What is a "lockbox"?
It's not exactly a "box" – and it doesn't have a lock. And a lockbox can mean different solution depending on your request. Generally speaking, a lockbox means that all or part of your health information will be separated out from our usual filling 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 stored to maximize patient confidentiality, a lockbox will restrict access to your health information from certain people.

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 care in a timely manner.
- Your health care providers may not have enough information to Safely provide you the 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 have at the Guelph Family Health Team.
- There may be other risks specific to you and your request, which we will discuss with you.

Lockbox Exceptions

Because your family physician is the health information custodian for purposes of PHIPA, a lockbox cannot be used to prevent your family physician from accessing your Guelph Family Health Team record. Also, under the law, there are times when Guelph Family Health Team must collect, use or disclose information about you – without your consent – 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 circumstances where the use or disclosure of your information is permitted or required by law. WE may use or disclose 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
- 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 disclose your health information, you can ask you physician or one of our Privacy Officers.

How do you request a lockbox?

You can discuss any concerns regarding the privacy and confidentiality of your health information and your lockbox with your physician or one of our Privacy Officers. In some cases, you may not need a lockbox in order to protect your information and we can discuss alternatives or options with you.
You can submit your lockbox request in writing using our "Patient Lockbox Request" form, which can be obtained from your physician or one of your Privacy Officers. The completed form should be given to your physician or one of the Privacy Officers.

Lockbox requests are processed on a case-by-case basis. Guelph Family Health Team Privacy Officers, in consultation with your physician, will review and respond to lockbox requests. You may not be able to accommodate every request – but will explain any limits with you. Guelph Family Health Team will send you confirmation in writing once your lockbox request has been implemented. You can also request that your lockbox be removed at any time.

Guelph Family Health Team Privacy Officer

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Guelph, ON N1G 4T7
Privacy.Officer@GuelphFHT.com
519.837.4444 (Office)
519.837.2202 (Fax)

Local Privacy Officer

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Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario
2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400 Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8 Canada

Resources:
Lockbox fact sheet: http://www.ipc.on.ca/images/REsources/up-1BrochFacility.pdf