

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) RE: Privacy and Confidentiality of Health Information

The Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia (DCPNS) is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information contained in the DCPNS Registry. Management and protection of personal information in this database is under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the FOIPOP Act)* and other related laws.

1. Why does the DCPNS collect health information?

The DCPNS is a program of the Department of Health and has a role in helping health care professionals provide the best care possible for persons affected by or at risk of developing diabetes mellitus. We are authorized by law to collect health information from Diabetes Centres. We use this health information to measure and improve the health of Nova Scotians by setting standards of care and monitoring adherence to these standards, providing education, supporting research, and producing reports that identify important trends in health and health care (*provide link to DCPNS Annual Report*).

2. What information is in the DCPNS Registry?

The DCPNS collects select data points from Nova Scotia's Diabetes Centres on persons with diabetes who attend these programs. There are no narrative or clinical notes, nor interpretation of any of the data points. *See page 4 for a complete listing of the data points that may be collected.*

3. How does the DCPNS protect my health information?

The DCPNS has a privacy policy that describes the steps that must be taken to keep your information safe. These include staff orientation to principles of privacy and confidentiality, password protection of all computer files, restricting access to Registry data to DCPNS employees who need to use health information to perform their job functions; and additional security measures for all electronic files, including user names, passwords, firewall, and antivirus software. All uses of health information are governed by a set of Data Management Principles designed to protect the confidentiality of individuals attending the Diabetes Centre, health care professionals, and health care facilities.

4. How does the DCPNS use my health information?

The DCPNS uses your information, in combination with the information of many other people, to evaluate care provided, to plan education programs for health professional, in statistical reports, and approved research projects. If personal health information is used for research purposes, the research request must receive approval from a recognized Research Ethics Board and a Data Access Committee. Individuals will never be identified in any published reports.

5. Can I get access to my personal health information?

The DCPNS has a policy and procedures in place for managing requests. You will be asked to complete and sign a written request “Personal Information Request Form.” In this way, we know that you are requesting the information. You may also need to contact the Diabetes Centre where you received care/education as these records have more information than Registry records. If you have questions about the health information collected by the DCPNS, please contact the DCPNS Privacy officer at 902-473-3219 or email dcpns@diabetescareprogram.ns.ca. Your right to access your health information applies only to your own information. It does not extend to your family members. You must give your written permission in order for a family to request your health information.

6. Can I request that my personal information not be collected or be removed from the DCPNS Registry?

It is very important to the work of the DCPNS that health information about diabetes in the province is as complete as possible. There may be alternatives to removing all of your health information. Please contact the DCPNS Privacy Officer at (902) 473-3219 or email dcpns@diabetescareprogram.ns.ca to discuss your concerns.

7. How do I request a change of information?

To request a change to your personal health information you must submit a request to the Privacy Officer, or designate, of the Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia. The Privacy Officer, or designate, will assist you in the application process.