

PRIVACY UNLOCKED

~ Your source for privacy best practices ~

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The ‘Need to Know’

It is a common misconception that being part of a patient/client/resident’s ‘circle of care’ at some point in time means you are permitted to access/use/disclose that person’s information at any time for any reason.

This is not the case and in fact is not permitted by legislation. The *Health Information Act* establishes a **‘Need to Know’** principle when it comes to collecting, accessing, using, and disclosing personal health information (PHI), rather than promoting the ‘circle of care’ concept.

What does this mean?

It means we need to adjust our way of thinking when it comes to PHI!

Consider the following to determine if you have a “need to know”!

1. Do I need to know this information for the purposes of my role with Health PEI?
2. What is the trigger or reason for my ‘need to know’?
3. Will I be taking action or making a recommendation or decision as a result of accessing this information?
4. Do I need this information at this time?

Available Resources

[Need to Know Guidance](#)

[ATIP Page](#)

For more information, contact the Access to Information and Privacy team at healthprivacy@ihis.org