

## **Healthcare Provider Secure Text Messaging Using the Signal© App and Personal Devices**

### **What is Signal© App and why should I switch from my regular texting?**

SMS texting, the typical type found on smart phones, is not a safe and secure texting. The Signal© App has end-to-end encryption and your data is secure in transit. The use of texting is simple and safe, but should include two patient identifiers to avoid misidentification.

### **Was there a Privacy Impact Statement and /or a Threat Risk Assessment completed?**

A privacy impact assessment (PIA) has been completed. Included in the PIA is a section on technical safeguards. The Chief Information Security Officer did review several 'Apps' that promote secure text messaging. Signal© is superior in encryption. At this time an additional Threat Risk Assessment is not required unless Signal© changes its privacy policy in the future.

### **Is it really safe for me to send my patient's information?**

Yes you can send your message. It will be required that you identify your patient appropriately to avoid misidentification of the patient to the receiver.

Signal ©:

- Is equipped with open end-to-end encryption, messages are only viewable by the writer and the intended audience recipient
- Cannot decrypt or access the content of the messages
- Will queue encrypted messages on its servers when devices are temporarily offline (ie. battery dead to receiver)
- Does not store information otherwise

### **Do I have to chart/document this message?**

Yes. If you are sending or receiving a consult by text you should document in the patients' record the same way as you would if you received a telephone consult

### **The directions state that the privacy setting is to be set for 'disappearing text within 24 hours'. Can the text receiver screen shot?**

No. You cannot store personal health information on your personal phone at any time.

### **What is acceptable use of texting information?**

Texting should be reserved for quick consults or sharing of information regarding shared patients. It would replace the 'quick question' asked via telephone.

### **Wow! Can I get nursing to text ECGs, screen shots etc??**

Nursing staff are not permitted to carry their personal cell phones during their work day nor store personal health information on their personal device. There may be exceptions to this is regards to certain areas such as wound care and home care; as approved by Directors in their respective areas.

### **Is there help available?**

In acute care, Informatic leads can assist. There is information on the Staff Resource Centre available to all staff. Other departments outside acute care will need to identify resources available to assist.