

## Standards of Practice for the Use of Electronic Information

### CLIENT RECORDS: OBLIGATIONS FOR REGISTRANTS

1. The College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, pursuant to the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* is authorized to provide guidance to registrants as per the Objects of the College [3.(1) 1,4,5,8 and 10]<sup>1</sup>.
2. The present document accompanies the [CDHO Advisory: Clinical Information Practice Standard for Dental Hygiene](#) and should be read as an introduction to it.
3. The dental hygienist, regardless of practice setting, must
  - a. regard the privacy and security of client records as a principle fundamental to practice management
  - b. be in compliance with all relevant legal requirements<sup>2</sup>.
4. *CDHO holds that the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information is both an ethical and a legal matter. The ethical requirement is that the client should give consent prior to disclosure, with the understanding that his or her personal health information will not be disclosed outside of the circle of care without his or her express consent unless there is a law that permits or requires disclosure without consent.*
5. Dental hygienists who create client records whether in electronic or paper format must consider and apply as appropriate any guidance provided from time to time by the Information and Privacy Commission of Ontario [[www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca)] or the CDHO.
6. With respect to electronic record management systems, dental hygienists must
  - a. choose systems capable of securely accessing and exporting clinical and financial records pertaining to individual clients; and
  - b. understand that retention and disposal of electronic records is based on the same principles as those for paper records.
7. With respect to the creation and management of records, the CDHO's requirements<sup>3</sup> apply equally to electronic and paper records. Any electronic record system must be capable of producing copies of records in a format acceptable to the College.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_91r18\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_91r18_e.htm)

<sup>2</sup> RHPA, PHIPA, and other legislation identified by CDHO.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cdho.org/reference/english/RecordsReg.pdf>

8. Dental hygienists who are involved in the management of electronic records are required to:
  - a. Protect the privacy of identifiable individuals by ensuring the protection of personal health information in all identifiable client records;
  - b. Send and receive personal health information through appropriate physical and technical security measures, with the specific use of encryption recommended.

*Dental hygienists are urged to promptly report any possible breach of the security of personal health information to the CDHO and to the IPC.*

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October 2010  
Updated June 2011