



PRIVACY POLICY (Abbreviated Document)

PRIVACY RULES AFFECTING HEAMAN COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Heaman Communication Services (HCS) engages in commercial activities and is therefore governed by the Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (January 2001). HCS provides health care services and is therefore also governed by the Personal Health Information Protection Act. These acts mandate how HCS will maintain privacy of personal health care information and other personal information.

WHAT IS PERSONAL HEALTH CARE INFORMATION?

Personal health care information is oral or written information about an individual, if the information,

- relates to the individual's physical or mental health, including family health history;
- relates to the provision of health care, including the identification of persons providing care;
- is a plan for service for individuals requiring long term care;
- relates to payment or eligibility for health care;
- is the individual's health number; or
- identifies the individual's substitute decision-maker.

Any other information about an individual that is included in a record containing personal health information is also included in the definition.

WHAT IS OTHER PERSONAL INFORMATION?

Personal information includes information that relates to an individual's personal characteristics (e.g. gender, age, home address or phone number, ethnic background, family status), or their activities and views (e.g. religion, politics, opinions expressed by an individual, an opinion or evaluation of an individual). Business information (e.g. an individual's business address and telephone number) is not protected by privacy legislation.

WHO WE ARE

Our organization, Heaman Communication Services, includes both consulting Speech-Language Pathologists and support staff. We use a number of consultants and agencies that may, in the course of their duties, have limited access to personal information we hold. These include Speech-Language Pathologists, Bookkeepers, Accountants, Computer Consultants, Cleaners and Lawyers. We restrict their access to any personal information we hold as much as is reasonably possible. They also must enter into a privacy agreement with us.

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: PRIMARY PURPOSES

Like all Speech-Language Pathologists, we collect, use and disclose personal information in order to serve our clients. Our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to provide speech-language pathology services. For example, we collect information about your health history that will be relevant to communication or swallowing disorders and assist us in offering effective intervention options. A second primary purpose is to obtain a baseline of your communication or swallowing skills to track how that changes over time.

278 Main Street North, Suite 4, Uxbridge, ONTARIO L9P 1X4

P: 1-877-877-4757 F: 1-866-798-6782

info@heamancommunication.ca

www.heamancommunication.ca

WE COLLECT PERSONAL INFORMATION: RELATED AND SECONDARY PURPOSES

Like most organizations, Heaman Communication Services also collects, uses and discloses information for purposes related to or secondary to our primary purposes. The most common examples are as follows:

- To evaluate our services and the performance of our staff or contractors.
- To allow us to meet our regulatory obligations. The College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists may inspect our records and interview our staff as a part of their regulatory activities in the public interest.
- To provide information to third party payers (e.g. Community Care Access Centre) when they pay for the services you receive from us.

If you choose not to be part of some of these related or secondary purposes, please let us know so that we may take the appropriate measures whenever possible.

PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION

We understand the importance of protecting personal information. For that reason, we have taken organizational, physical and technological measures to ensure that your information remains secure. Our staff are trained to collect, use and disclose personal information only as necessary to fulfill their duties and in accordance with our privacy policy. External consultants must enter into privacy agreements with us.

HEALTH INFORMATION CUSTODIANS

"Health information custodians" are defined as persons who have custody or control of personal health information in connection with their powers or duties. They include

- health care practitioners, including social workers who provide health care and any other persons whose primary function is to provide health care for payment;
- service providers under the *Long-Term Care Act*;
- community care access corporations;
- persons who operate
 - hospitals, independent health facilities, psychiatric facilities and private hospitals,
 - approved charitable homes for the aged, homes for the aged, nursing homes, and care homes within the meaning of the *Tenant Protection Act, 1997*,
 - pharmacies,
 - laboratories and specimen collection centres,
 - ambulance services,
 - homes for special care, and
 - centres, programs and services for community health and mental health;
- placement coordinators for approved charitable homes for the aged, homes for the aged and nursing homes;

OBTAINING CONSENT FOR THE COLLECTION, USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Consent is a basic requirement for the collection, use and disclosure under the current privacy act, subject to limited exceptions. To be valid, consent must be knowledgeable, voluntary, related to the personal health information in question, not obtained by deception or coercion, and given by the individual concerned.

Consent may be express (verbal or written) or implied. Generally, custodians (HCS) engaged in the provision of direct health care may rely on the individual's implied consent for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information for the purpose of providing the health care where it is reasonable to assume that the individual knows the purpose of the collection, use or disclosure and their right to give or withhold consent.

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According to relevant privacy legislation, HCS can disclose your personal health information without your consent in the following circumstances:

- to other practitioners or facilities for the provision of health care
- confirming the presence, location and general health status of a client in a facility so long as the client has not objected when offered an opportunity to do so
- for audit or accreditation purposes
- to address a significant risk of serious bodily harm to another person or group
- in some health planning and management purposes
- to assist in the monitoring of public health funding

However, if a custodian discloses to a non-custodian (such as employers and schools), the individual's consent must be express. This means, for example, that the disclosure of personal health information by a custodian to an insurance company or a school must be authorized by express consent of the individual. Similarly, if a custodian discloses personal health information to another custodian for a purpose other than providing health care, consent must be express (written or verbal).

RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

The College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario requires that we retain our client records for 10 years past the last visit or in the case of a child, for 10 years past the child's 18th birthday. We destroy our files within three months of that time. These files include contact information.

YOU CAN LOOK AT YOUR INFORMATION

With only a few exceptions, you have the right to see what personal information we hold about you. Often all you have to do is ask. We can help you identify what records we might have about you. We will also try to help you understand any language you do not understand (e.g. abbreviations). We reserve the right to charge a nominal fee for such requests.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION OR CONCERN?

Our Information Officer, Heather Heaman, can be reached at:

4-278 Main St. North | Uxbridge, Ontario | L9P 1X4 | Phone (905) 852-0171 x 321

She will attempt to address any questions or concerns that you might have.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about our privacy practices, you may make it in writing to our Information Officer. She will acknowledge receipt of your complaint; ensure that it is investigated promptly and that you are provided with a formal decision and reasons in writing.

If you have a concern about the professionalism or competence of our services or the mental or physical capacity of any of our professional staff, we would ask you to discuss those concerns with us. However, if we cannot satisfy your concerns, you are entitled to complain to our regulatory body:

College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
Ordre des audiologistes et des orthophonistes de l'Ontario
160 Bloor Street East | Suite 1125 | Toronto, Ontario | M4W 1B9
Telephone (416) 975-5347 | 1-800-993-9459 | fax (416) 975-8394 | www.caslpo.com

This policy is made under the *Personal Health Information Protection Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. These acts are complex Acts and provide some additional exceptions to the privacy principles that are too detailed to set out here. There are some rare exceptions to the commitments set out above.

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For more general inquiries regarding privacy of personal health information, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario oversees the administration of the privacy legislation in the health care sector. The Commissioner acts as an ombudsman for privacy disputes. The Privacy Commissioner of Ontario can be reached at:

2 Bloor Street East | Suite 1400 | Toronto, Ontario | M4W 1A8
Phone (416) 326-3333 | **Toll-Free** 1 800- 387-0073 | **Fax** (416) 325-9195 | **TTY** (416)325-7539
www.ipc.on.ca

For more general inquiries regarding the privacy of other information, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees the administration of the privacy legislation in the private sector. The Commissioner also acts as a kind of ombudsman for privacy disputes. The Privacy Commissioner can be reached at:

112 Kent Street | Ottawa, Ontario | K1A 1H3
Phone (613) 995-8210 | **Toll-free** 1-800-282-1376 | **Fax** (613) 947-6850 | **TTY** (613) 992-9190
www.privcom.gc.ca

Last review for updates: December 2008

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