

A message from the
Saskatchewan College of Psychologists'
Ad Hoc Committee on Privacy

September 1, 2010

The adoption of Professional Practice Guidelines is a significant development in Saskatchewan psychology. However these guidelines are relatively silent on the equally important issue of privacy in the practice of psychology.

The Chief Privacy Officer of Saskatchewan would remind members of SCP that the Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) is the primary law for healthcare professionals in Saskatchewan and their patients. HIPA supersedes all other privacy legislation and ethical codes for health care professionals, with respect to legal responsibility in Saskatchewan.

To assist in understanding the differences among confidentiality, privacy, and security the 2009 COACH (www.coachorg.com) Guidelines for the Protection of Health Information defined these terms as follows.

“Privacy is the fundamental right of individuals to control the flow of their personal information, including the collection, use, and disclosure of that information. This is known as the right of informational self-determination. (p. 7)”

“Security is the process of protecting information by assessing threats and risks to information and taking steps to mitigate them, thereby protecting and ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and accessibility of the information. Security includes processes and controls for identification, authentication, and authorization of users, as well as non-repudiation services. (p. 7)”

“Confidentiality is the obligation of a healthcare organization to protect the information entrusted to it; to maintain the secrecy of the information, and not misuse, or wrongfully disclose information. Confidentiality is one of the three main goals of security-confidentiality, integrity, and availability. (p. 8)”

The SCP Ad Hoc Committee on Privacy will be making a recommendation to executive council to include an item within the professional practice guidelines making specific reference to HIPA.

In the meantime, all members are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the HIPA compliance checklist. Developed in 2005 by Saskatchewan Health, the checklist is designed to help health care professionals determine their compliance with the Health Information Protection Act. This document will soon be available on the College's website, but can be viewed at:
<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/hipa-checklist>