

PRIVACY POLICY
COLLEGE OF ALBERTA PSYCHOLOGISTS

Introduction

The College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP) is required to adhere to provincial privacy legislation, the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) that came into force in Alberta on January 1, 2004. CAP does not have a personal information code authorized under the PIPA Regulations that would allow for an exemption. Accordingly, CAP is committed to following the provisions in PIPA to ensure that the collection, use and disclosure of personal information about members and other individuals is protected.

Personal Information Collected by CAP

CAP collects the information that it requires in order to carry out its functions under the *Health Professions Act* ("HPA"), Regulations and Bylaws. The information that is collected is necessary for CAP in its role as a regulatory body.

Examples of personal information that CAP might have about its members include:

- Personal contact information, including home/email address and telephone number(s).
- Information originally submitted when applying for membership with CAP, such as written references, Security Clearance, educational history, and examination results.
- Financial information, such as credit card numbers if annual fees were paid by credit card.
- Information received and obtained as a result of a complaint.

Examples of personal information that CAP might have about other individuals include:

- Personal contact information, including home/email address and telephone number(s) collected in relation to the investigation of a complaint against a member.
- Personal health information about an individual relating to the investigation of a complaint against a member.

Method of Collecting Personal Information

Usually, CAP will collect personal information directly from its members or other individuals who come into contact with our member or the College. CAP will only collect information from a third party if consent is obtained, or is authorized to do so.

CAP may be required to collect information from third parties in certain circumstances. For example:

- Individuals who wish to be registered must provide the names of referees. Letters of reference are collected from these individuals.
- CAP also collects information from third parties if there is a complaint made against a member. In such circumstances, CAP exercises its authority under the HPA to collect information from individuals, such as the complainant, or potential witnesses.

Use of Personal Information

CAP uses personal information to fulfill its mandate to regulate the profession of psychology under the HPA, Regulations and Bylaws. Information will normally only be used for the purposes for which it is gathered. Examples of how personal information is used are:

- To assess whether applicants meet the initial requirements for registration with the College.
- For completion of the College's membership database.
- To assess whether applicants are eligible to have their practice permit renewed.
- To provide information, newsletters, and notices to members.
- To facilitate payment of fees.
- To facilitate complaints made pursuant to the HPA.
- For carrying out the College's regulatory duties under the HPA.

Disclosure of Personal Information

For the most part, CAP uses personal information for internal purposes. Therefore, it is primarily CAP's employees or Committees who will have access to personal information about members or other individuals. Access to personal information is on a need to know basis in order to fulfill statutory duties and functions under the HPA. An example of CAP collecting information for external purposes is to disclose demographic information to Alberta Health and Wellness Provincial Provider Registry.

CAP policy states that directories, mailing lists and mailing labels will be distributed only by Council motion or on the authority of the Registrar, and only when such distribution is deemed to hold regulatory or professional value to psychologists or the profession of psychology.

In some instances, CAP will be required to disclose information to third parties in a manner consistent with the uses described above. For example, information provided may need to be verified by the College. If so, information may need to be disclosed to a third party for this purpose.

External consultants or contractors may also have access to personal information, only if access is necessary. For example, CAP's accountants may have access to information about membership when they conduct their annual audit. In addition, the computer consultants may also be provided with access to personal information from time to time. If such access is necessary, and in cases where such access is provided, the contractual arrangement will contain a confidentiality clause.

CAP may also disclose personal information to an external party without first obtaining consent for disclosure, where such disclosure is required or permitted by legislation other than PIPA. For example, disclosure of information may occur during the complaints process. However, disclosure without consent can only occur if it is specifically authorized by another statute, regulation or Bylaw, such as the HPA. Under the HPA (*Sections 33 and 119*) and the Regulation (*Section 24 and 25(2)*), the public has access to the specific personal information identified in those sections.

Protection of Personal Information

One way that CAP protects personal information is by training staff to appreciate the importance of privacy and the confidentiality of personal information. A second way is by appointing a Privacy Officer. The role of the Privacy Officer is to ensure compliance with existing legislation.

In addition, CAP ensures the security of the personal information in its possession by taking such measures as (a) implementing technological safeguards to secure personal information that is stored in electronic form, (b) ensuring that the areas in which information is stored are reasonably secure and (c) restricting access to personal information stored in paper form.

Unless otherwise required by law and as outlined above, CAP will not disclose personal information without the express written or emailed consent of the person involved and of the person who provided the information.

Retention of Personal Information

Privacy legislation stipulates that personal information does not need to be retained longer than is reasonably required to fulfill the purpose for which it was collected. At the same time, such information must be retained for a reasonable period of time. CAP may, in its sole discretion, destroy duplicate material that exists in both paper and electronic form.

CAP will retain personal information during the entire period that a person is a member of the College. However, CAP may retain personal information for up to 10 years after membership ceases, consistent with statutory limitation requirements.

Access and Correction

Under privacy legislation, individuals have a right to access records containing their personal information. Upon request and subject to certain lawful restrictions, CAP will give individuals access to the personal information held about them. If a request is complex and requires an extensive or detailed search, CAP may, at its sole discretion, charge a reasonable fee.

If an individual requests a correction of an error or omission in the personal information CAP will, subject to legal limitations, correct the information as soon as is reasonably possible or annotate it with the correction that was requested.

CAP's privacy officer will make every reasonable effort to assist individuals asking for access to or correction of their personal information and will respond as accurately and completely as is reasonably possible within the time limits specified in privacy legislation.

All requests for access must be in writing and must set out in sufficient detail the scope of the request. Requests should be delivered or mailed to CAP's Privacy Officer.

Further Information

Persons wanting more information about CAP's privacy guidelines or wishing to make a complaint about the handling of a privacy issue should contact the Privacy Officer, Dr. Richard Spelliscy at (780) 424-5070.

November 2004
Revised: June 2011