

Background

The Health Sciences Placement Network of BC (HSPnet) is a secure web-enabled system to improve coordination of student placements within a province. The system has been used in BC since 2003 and is now being implemented in other provinces. The HSPnet database contains information about students to support coordination of their practice education experiences, plus contact information for instructors and clinical supervisors or preceptors. Each province's data resides in a separate database, and is therefore not shared across provinces except in the event of an out-of-province placement.

Student information, including contact information and status of their placement prerequisites such as immunizations or CPR certification, is considered the personal information of the student. As such, students are required to sign a consent form to authorize the use and/or disclosure of their personal information via HSPnet for purposes consistent with identifying, coordinating and evaluating practice education experiences. Student information such as name and educational or work history is released only on a need-to-know basis to individuals directly involved in their placements, and in general only upon acceptance and confirmation of the placement request. Certain information, such as contact information and specific status of placement prerequisites, is never released to the receiving agency.

The business contact information of instructors, clinical supervisors, and practicum coordinators, as staff members of the agencies involved in placing and receiving students, is considered the business information of those agencies. As such, no specific consent is required but it is assumed that the employer has provided notice of the data and those uses to staff when using their contact information. Business contact information is released only to authorized users of HSPnet.

Your Role as an Instructor

When HSPnet is first implemented, consent must be obtained from all new and existing students, regardless of their year of program, if any of their upcoming placements will be coordinated via HSPnet. Thereafter, consent is typically obtained at the time of registering new students into the Program.

The process for obtaining consent includes the following steps:

- **Distribute** the "Consent Form for Use and Disclosure of Personal Information" to students, accompanied by the handout entitled "Identified Purposes and Handling of Personal Information in HSPnet". Once the implementation period is over, we recommend these forms be included in student registration packages.
- Instructors or practicum coordinators **collect** the signed consent forms from students and submit them to a Placing Coordinator or Program Assistant for the program. Each student's consent will be tracked in HSPnet at the time of entering their identifiable information in to the system, and the consent form will be stored for a minimum of six years or as required by the school's records retention policy.
- **Respond** to student questions or concerns regarding the consent form or handout, the safeguards that protect their personal information, and processes available to them for viewing their personal information or challenging compliance. The student handout provides answers at a high level, or you may wish to direct students to the HSPnet website for detailed information including contact information for the HSPnet Privacy Officer.

For more information on HSPnet or privacy and security of personal information, please contact the HSPnet Privacy Officer via email to privacy@hspbc.net.