



COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS FOR DIABETES ACTION

POLICY

Privacy & Confidentiality

Outcome: Information relating to individuals will be collected, stored and used according to current legislative requirements.

References: Privacy Act 1993

Health Information Privacy Code 1994

CODA Policies "Who to screen", "Safety Precautions in Screening",
"Interpreting Screening Values", "Competencies for Screening"

Recommendations:

In most cases identifiable information is not retained by CODA members when conducting 'Community Screening'. Some data is collected via carbon copy of screening sheet however unless consent is given for the information to be sent to the individuals GP, retained information will not be identifiable.

In a community setting it is difficult to maintain privacy while screening. It should be remembered that the answering of health related questions is voluntary in this situation and while care can be taken to minimise the risk of private information being overheard, (eg, careful phrasing of questions, suitable voice level, seating with back to others, allowing individual to pre-tick the risk assessment form themselves), it is noted that there may still be instances where information is overheard by others.

Where multiple organisations are working together at a particular event, a decision should be made prior to the event as to who will hold the data on completion. This will normally be the organisation who has instigated the event unless otherwise requested. Information is analysed and summary fed back to participating groups.

In the case of identifiable information being collected:

Health Information is normally collected only for the provision of care to or assessment of the person. All other information shall not be sought and if volunteered, shall not be recorded unless requested to do so by the person.

Where possible information should be collected from the individual themselves. If they are incapable however they may authorise the collection of information from an identified other source (eg, if language difficulty).

Information collection shall be clearly explained to the person. The right to refuse to supply information not required by law shall be respected.

Consideration is given to overcoming possible barriers to understanding, including culture/language, age, physical or mental impairment, reading difficulties.

Staff collecting information shall be informed of privacy issues which is the responsibility of their organisations.

Physical privacy shall be maintained when collecting information. The person from whom information is being collected may have members of whanau or family present or excluded as they wish.

Consideration shall be given to the fact that while all health information is sensitive some categories are particularly sensitive because any disclosure could be used to discriminate against the individual. Consideration also needs to be given where the individual may not wish others to be aware of such items as their weight, eating habits etc. Care must be taken to ensure that these details are obtained in a manner which facilitates privacy.

Identifiable Information is stored in an appropriate area when in use, out of casual sight and not left unattended.

Identifiable Information when not in use is stored appropriately

- Paper copies - under lock with access restricted to appropriate persons
- Electronic – in password protected computer, all disks to be secured.

The person about whom identifiable information is collected is entitled to have access to this information and may correct it or update it. Where possible a copy of the information collected should be held by the person which includes the date, person and organisation doing the collecting.

Information is to be checked for accuracy if an ongoing relationship is established.

Identifiable information is not to be used for any other purpose than what it was collected for without express consent of the person concerned.

Health records are retained for the required period of time and destroyed by shredding or burning.