

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC HEALTHCARE RECORDS FOR RESEARCH, IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY OR CASE STUDY PURPOSES POLICY[®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- Electronic Health Care records may be made available to a user within the constraints of this policy.
- Approval for requests will be in accordance with the [NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information](#).
- Restricted eMR or CCIS (Intensive Care System) access may be granted to persons applying to review electronic records for research, improvement activities or for case study purposes. In this situation, research or QI ethics approval must be obtained.
- Only SCHN staff may apply for access to electronic information to be used in presentations, meetings or as additional information for a case study. Research or QI ethics approval may be required.
- For neonatal data this document needs to be read together with GCNC Policy & Procedure “[Code of Practice for the use of GCNC Data Collections and Research Participants](#)”.

CHANGE SUMMARY

- Due for mandatory review: information updated where necessary.
- NETS information has been included in this document

Approved by:	SCHN Policy Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st October 2017	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Health Information Manager	Area/Dept: Medical Records

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- All staff requiring access to electronic health care records outside their job requirements should acknowledge the document.
- All staff, researchers, students and others requiring access to electronic health care records for purposes of research, improvement activities or case studies should acknowledge the document.

Acronyms

- **CCIS:** Critical Care Information System
- **CHARLI Database:** System used at SCHN to initiate, approve, monitor and report on quality improvement activities.
- **CHW:** The Children's Hospital at Westmead
- **CRIS:** Clinical Record Information System
- **CRIS PC:** Clinical Record Information System via PowerChart
- **DI:** Document Imaging
- **eMR:** Electronic Medical Record
- **eMR Unit:** Electronic Medical Record Unit
- **HIM:** Health Information Manager
- **HREC:** Human Research Ethics Committee
- **IT:** Information Technology
- **MSAU:** Management Support Analysis Unit
- **NETS:** Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service
- **OPD:** Outpatients
- **QI:** Quality Improvement
- **SCH:** Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick
- **SCHN** Sydney Children's Hospital Network

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	2
Background	4
Access to Electronic Records and Patient Privacy	4
Policy	4
Viewing SCHN electronic health care records in eMR (PowerChart) or orCritical Care Information System (CCIS)	5
Step 1: Before permission is granted to access electronic health care records.....	5
Step 2: Ethics approval granted.....	5
1) <i>If the applicant does NOT have access to PowerChart/CCIS.....</i>	<i>5</i>
2) <i>If the applicant has access to PowerChart/CCIS.....</i>	<i>6</i>
3) <i>If the applicant is aware of the MRNs they require</i>	<i>6</i>
4) <i>If the applicant knows the medical condition/s but not the MRNs.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Access to NETS health care records	6
Obtaining Electronic Health Care Record Information for Presentations	7
Further information	8
Accessing electronic records.....	8
Research Information and HREC Ethics & Governance approvals.....	8
Clinical Governance Unit – QI ethics approval.....	8
Reference.....	8

Background

The Sydney Children's Hospital Network (SCHN) comprising of Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW), Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and the Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS) scans health care records using the Clinical Record Information System (CRIS). Health Care documents are returned to the Health Information Unit (HIU), and undergo document imaging processes including all information within the patient's Electronic Medical Record (eMR). CHW and NETS (pre 2017) patient health care records, are accessible to staff access via the CHW eMR. For SCH patient scanned health care records are accessible to staff via the SESI eMR.

Paper notes are retained for a period of up to 1 week for checking purposes and then are securely destroyed in accordance with the [SCHN Destruction of Scanned Health Care Records Policy](#). SCHN provides access to patient health care records electronically.

Access to Electronic Records and Patient Privacy

Maintaining patient privacy is a priority and is mandated by the Health Records and Information Privacy (HRIP) Act 2002 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act 1998. [Management, training or research Health Privacy Principles \(HPPs\) 10 & 11 \(1\) \(d\), \(e\) & \(f\) / 15.14.4 Access to data collections](#).

As such, HIU is responsible for ensuring that records are only accessed by appropriate persons have access to the patient health care records.

Access to electronic health care records can be for the following reasons:

- research, improvement activities or case study purposes or
- information to be used in presentations or at meetings

HIU and the eMR Unit have established processes to ensure only the required information is accessed and released to requestors, while maintaining patient privacy and information integrity.

Policy

Access to specified electronic records may be made available to a user under the constraints of the [NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information](#), which is guided by the HRIP Act 2002 and the PPIP Act 1998. For more information refer to the SCHN policy:

- [Access and Amendment to Patient Information by the Patient, Parent, Guardian or other Parties](#).

Note: Generally, when using copies of electronic records for research presentations, they will be de-identified. If however, a patient can be identified by photograph or by other means, **consent** from the patient and/or parent/carer **must be obtained**.

For more information on consent for photography, refer to [Clinical Images \(Photography, Video/Audio Recordings\) of Paediatric Patients](#).

Viewing SCHN electronic health care records in eMR (PowerChart) or Critical Care Information System (CCIS)

The procedure below is applicable to all persons who wish to view electronic health care records for purposes of research, improvement activities or for case studies.

Step 1: Before permission is granted to access electronic health care records

Before access for Research is granted, the applicant MUST *apply for and receive Research Ethics and Research Governance approval*. Quality Improvement [QI] projects require approval from Clinical Governance. Once the appropriate approvals have been granted, the applicant is to contact CHW HIU on 9845 2356 or SCH HIU 9382 0021 to access the required patient health care records (electronic or paper).

In addition to the Research or QI approvals, HIU will require further documentation to be completed in accordance with the requirements of NSW Health and NH&MRC under sections 95 and 95A of the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988:

- http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/e26.pdf
- http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e43.pdf

Step 2: Ethics and Research Governance approval granted

The applicant's access to PowerChart is the accountability of the Principle Investigator.

1) If the applicant does NOT have access to PowerChart/CCIS

The applicant will be:

- Notified by HIU team that restricted access to PowerChart or CCIS has been granted to view the specified records according to the Research/QI ethics approval. Provided with a Study username and password to enable them to login to PowerChart (Electronic Medical Record [eMR]) or CCIS. A proxy account is created specifically for each application.
 - In this situation, a 'view only' list of specified patients is created by HIU, known as a proxy list. The applicant has access to the list via the proxy account."
 - Access to the CCIS is made through HIU.
 - Contingent worker status is required for the user to be provided with a username and password to enable them to login to PowerChart (Electronic Medical Record [eMR] Research Governance Authorisation ensures that applicants are employees or have been screened as contingent workers. If Governance Authorisation is not granted then they cannot access Medical Records for Research.

2) If the applicant has access to PowerChart/CCIS

The applicant must ensure that they do not access health care records, without gaining appropriate approval first. Once approved the applicant will:

- Be notified by the HIU team that restricted access to PowerChart or CCIS has been granted to view the specified records according to the Research/QI ethics approval.
- The requestor will log into PowerChart (eMR) using their normal login. For the CCIS a login and password will be created.

Note: CHW and SCH are teaching hospitals and students frequently demonstrate their development and understanding of clinical issues through presentations of case studies. The supervisor will need to apply for access for their student with at least 5 days' notice to HIU.

3) If the applicant is aware of the MRNs they require

If the applicant is already aware of the Medical Record Numbers (MRNs) of the health care records required for retrieval, the applicant should complete the **Records Retrieval Request form**:

- http://www.chw.edu.au/research/ethics/medical_records/record_retrieval_request.doc

4) If the applicant knows the medical condition/s but not the MRNs

If the applicant is unaware of the MRNs of the records required for retrieval, but are specifically interested in a particular medical condition/s, complete the **Adhoc Report Request form**:

- http://chw.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/o/forms/msau/adhoc_report_request.php

Note: If the applicant does not have a list of specific medical records, contact **CHW HIU** (9845 2356) or **SCH HIU** (9382 0021) to discuss the best way to obtain a list of valid patient health care records.

Access to NETS health care records

Please contact NETS (9633 8700) to discuss the best way to access the patient health care record, as records prior to 2017 are not all accessible via eMR. In order to access NETS records for research purposes, there must be at least one NETS staff member listed as an Investigator.

Obtaining Electronic Health Care Record Information for Presentations

Note: this process is for SCHN staff ONLY. Persons not employed by SCHN should contact HIU if specific information is required for presentations.

Approval is not required for case presentations of clinicians own patients within a clinical team handover.

When accessing electronically stored information required for the purposes of a presentation, meeting or a photograph (for example) the following should be observed. Approval for such access will be made on a case-by-case basis.

1. A request should be made to the Health Information Manager (HIM) (CHW 9845 2356 or SCH 9382 0021) for consideration.
2. The following will be considered (but are not limited to):
 - If the specified information is sourced from the applicants own patient or a patient from their team.
 - Clarification surrounding what the information will be used for and the purpose of the presentation/meeting.
 - If parent/patient consent is provided to use photographs.
 - Analysis of the request to include whether CRIS PC (CRIS via PowerChart) could be used for the request.
 - If the request is for a research/improvement activity presentation, Research or QI ethics approval or governance authorisation should be obtained For more information, refer to the following policies and the [CHARLI application](#):
 - Clinical Trials: see [Research – Ethical and Scientific Review of Human Research](#)
 - [Fees for the Review of Ethics and Site Specific Assessment Applications](#):
 - [Quality Improvement Activities – Initiation and Approval](#)

If approval is granted, the HIM records the name of the applicant and other relevant details on a SCHN Medico legal Request form and attaches it to the patients' healthcare record.
3. The required document /s will then be exported to the user as a PDF file or jpeg image in order to ensure data integrity (that is, changes and alterations cannot be made). This also allows control over which documents are being reviewed and used by the applicant.
4. It is the responsibility of the applicant to securely store data collected on SCHN Network Drives and use only SCHN branded USBs. SCHN branded USB's can be obtained by contacting the SCHN Health Information Units. Applicants must also ensure they

comply with the NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information in relation to storage and disposal of health information.

Further information

Accessing electronic records

Please contact:

- o Health Information Unit, CHW on 9845 2356
- o Health Information Unit, SCH on 9382 0021
- o Research and Development Unit on 9845 1253
- o eMR Unit on 9845 0735
- o IT Helpdesk Support on 9845 0333
- o CCIS Biomedical Engineer on 9845 1110
- o NETS on 9633 8700

Research Information and HREC Ethics & Governance approvals

Research Ethics Information	Research Governance Information
Email: SCHN-ethics@health.nsw.gov.au	Email: SCHN-Governance@health.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 9845 1253	Phone: (02) 9845 3011
Website: http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/health-professionals/our-research/ethics-research-governance	Intranet (internal use): http://intranet.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/research/research-governance Internet (external use): http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/professionals/our-research/research-governance

Clinical Governance Unit – QI ethics approval

- Contact the Clinical Governance Unit (9845 3442) for enquiries if QI ethics approval is required for the project or refer to the [Quality Improvement Activities – Initiation and Approval Policy](#) for details.

Reference

1. NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information (March 2015):
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/manuals/Pages/privacy-manual-for-health-information.aspx>

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