



# PRACTICE ADVICE

## CIRCLE OF CARE

DATE: 2010

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## DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING THE “CIRCLE OF CARE” CONCEPT

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Many CASLPO members – as well as others in the health care sector - are confused as to the meaning and scope of the term circle of care. This may be in part because the term is not included or defined in the [Personal Health Information Protection Act \(PHIPA\)](#) 2004. Health professionals use the term to describe certain provisions in the Act that permit health-care providers to assume a patient’s implied consent to collect, use, and disclose health information with other health-care providers.

The Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner’s office recently released a booklet that assists health information custodians in determining whether or not they can assume a patient’s implied consent to collect, use or disclose personal health information. The publication, entitled “Circle of Care: Sharing Personal Health Information for Health-Care Purposes”, was developed with the collaboration of seven health organizations, including the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centers, and the Ontario Hospital Association. It refers to a fictional patient who is followed through the health-care system, and provides examples which give specific direction relating to when a health provider can assume implied consent.

The booklet is reproduced in its entirety in the following article [click here](#). We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario for permission to reproduce this timely and practical resource.

You can also access the booklet by visiting [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca).