

Client Rights: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, has granted clients several rights concerning their health information. Prior to the law's enactment, clients had limited right of access to their medical records and limited control over the disclosure of those records. Thanks to HIPAA, clients can now review, request amendments to, and limit the disclosure of their personal Protected Health Information (PHI), as permitted by law.

Under the Privacy Rule, clients have several rights, and agencies that maintain PHI have several responsibilities. WCHD must promote these rights in their daily interaction with clients, in their use of PHI, and in their disclosure of PHI.

1. Clients must be given clear, written explanations of how WCHD may use and disclose their health information (Notice of Privacy Practices). WCHD will provide clients with clear explanation of their rights under HIPAA in regards to the use and disclosure of their PHI on or before the first date of service delivery. HIPAA requires that a Notice of Privacy Practices be given the first time a client comes for treatment after April 14, 2003. A written acknowledgment will be obtained of the receipt of Notice of Privacy Practices for direct care providers. WCHD will prominently post its Notice of Privacy Practices on the health district's web site.
2. Clients have the right to access their medical records (receive confidential information).
  - a. Wyandot County Health District requires that patients who desire their health information be communicated in an alternative manner or location than the agency would otherwise use, to specify the alternative location or other method of contact.
  - b. WCHD does not require that the patient provide a reason for the request.
  - c. WCHD does not refuse to accommodate the request unless it imposes an unreasonable administrative burden, or is contrary to the Plan of Care.
  - d. The patient may request confidential communication at any time during the course of their care.
  - e. The request may be made to any staff.
  - f. When a request is made, either formally or informally, the person receiving the request will document it in writing.
  - g. Written documentation of the patient's request, if granted, will be placed in the patient's medical record.
  - h. If WCHD is able to accommodate the patient's request, all staff who provide care to the patient will be provided with information regarding the communication requirements and be expected to adhere to them.
  - i. WCHD will provide prompt and reasonable access to a client's complete medical record as permitted under the law. There are exceptions to the client's right of access.