

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Update: Feb 22, 2022

If you have other questions or concerns, please contact the Privacy Officer.

Privacy Office for Imagus Inc. (Charlton X-Ray or Ancaster X-Ray):

Telephone: (905) 528-1465, Extension 26

E-mail: manager@imagusinc.com

What information do the clinics collect?

Our clinics collect both personal and health information. Your name, date of birth, address, Health Card Number are examples of personal information. Information relating to previous health problems, the record of your visits to the clinics and what exams we provide to you during those visits are examples of your health information

Why do the clinics need this information?

The information we collect from you is used:

- To provide you with quality health care. We need your information to make sure we can make the appropriate diagnosis so your physician(s) may provide appropriate treatment.
- To carry out quality assurance to help make us better. By reviewing the care we provide to patients, we can determine what strategies are most successful.
- To ask you how we are doing. You may be asked to participate in surveys by either the clinic(s) or by specific programs or departments in the clinic(s) that participated in your care.
- To comply with the law, e.g.:
 - The law requires clinics to disclose your personal health information if there is a legal investigation.
- For research. Hamilton is surrounded by talented healthcare researchers that use anonymous healthcare records. Where permitted by law, some research using anonymized information is conducted without the consent of the patient. Other forms of research require your permission to participate. You are under no obligation to agree to this research, and the care you receive will not be impacted in any way if you decline.
- For education. Your images may be included in our teaching files. Imagus Inc. is affiliated with McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences which trains health care professionals. Education is part of the mission of our clinics.

How do the clinics protect my information?

A few of the ways that Imagus strives to protect both your personal information and your personal health information are by:

- Educating our staff, physicians, fellows, and students on the importance of respecting your privacy rights and about their obligations to maintain confidentiality.
- Applying additional security measures to all electronic health records; e.g., user-specific log in names and passwords, encryption requirements, firewall and antivirus software.
- Password protected screen-savers are activated after a period of inactivity to prevent unauthorized access to your records.
- Locked doors - doors to server rooms are kept locked at all times with limited access.

- Motion detectors and alarm systems.

Do the clinics share my information with anyone?

We share some or all of your information with:

- Health care providers at other clinics, hospitals, nursing homes or other health care agencies who need information for your ongoing care in the community.
- Agencies that fund the clinics, e.g., OHIP, Interim Federal Health, UHIP, WSIB, Ministry of Health.
- Other agencies to whom we are required by law to provide information, e.g., for public health surveillance, Children's Aid Society.

Imagus Inc. is partnered with organizations in Southwestern Ontario in a shared electronic patient record system and in shared diagnostic imaging (X-ray) systems. These partnerships will help us provide you health care regardless of where you seek treatment.

What systems do you share and with whom?

See the website for the Regional Shared Service (RSS) and the RSS Privacy Page for more information on our partnerships across Southwest Ontario and how your information is protected.

Imagus shares the following systems with the IHFs (Independent Health Facilities) and hospitals listed for each system:

- Radiology Information System (RIS)
- Our RIS houses information about you and the services you receive at each site. Only those staff and affiliates who may need access to information about your visits to other sites are granted this broader level of access.
- Examples of information stored in the RIS are:
 - Demographic information, e.g., your name, address, phone number, Health Card Number, a list of exams you had at each site, the date of the visit, the type of service, the name of the technologist that provided your service and the radiologist that interpreted your images.
 - Reports that have been dictated through the clinic's dictation system. Examples: X-Ray report, Ultrasound report, etc...
- Picture Archive Communication System (PACS)
 - PACS is the system that collects demographic information about you, physicians' orders for the x-rays, the x-ray images and reports of the findings. Only those staff and affiliates who require this type of information have access to PACS, e.g., physicians, nurses, radiology technicians.
- Digital Imaging Repository (DI-r)
 - A DI-r is a system that collects a copy of x-ray images, demographic information, physician orders for the tests as well as the reports of the findings from each of the PAC systems from the partnered organizations. Only those staff and affiliates who require this type of information have access to PACS, e.g., physicians, nurses, radiology technicians.

Do I have to participate in research, teaching and surveys?

- You may be approached by your physician to participate in a clinical research trial. If you agree, the researcher would provide you with information about the research and ask if you would like to participate. Many research projects give participants access to new treatments and technologies. Many of these research trials require either screening x-ray images or surveillance x-rays. You

are under no obligation to participate in this type of research, and you can refuse when asked. The care you receive will not be impacted in any way if you decline.

- Imagus Inc. is a teaching facility. Our clinics provide clinical experience for student physicians (Fellows). A Fellow is a doctor (or radiologist in our case) that is taking additional training in a subspecialty such as Musculoskeletal ultrasound. The students work under the direction of a licensed practitioner. They will introduce themselves to you and identify themselves as students if they are to participate in your care. If you have concerns about the participation of students in your care, please speak to the clinic's manager. It is your right to refuse a students' participation in your care.
- Surveys help the clinics by allowing us to get your opinion on the care and services you receive as a patient. Participation in the surveys is appreciated, but not mandatory. You can decline participation and/or request to be removed from the clinic's survey list by contacting the Privacy Officer.

Will the clinics disclose my health information to outside companies or to my employer?

Unless the disclosure is permitted or required by law, Imagus requires your written permission or a court order to disclose health information to any organization or person not directly involved with the provision of your care.

Where is my health information stored and for how long?

Imagus Inc. is legally required to keep a patient's images for three years and reports for six years past the date of the examination. There are situations, e.g., health records of children, where the clinics are required to keep a record longer - specifically, the images of a child are to be retained for three years past the child's eighteenth birthday and the report six years past the child's eighteenth birthday. Retention of records associated with Research Studies are dictated by the research office. Contact the Business Manager or Privacy Officer for information about retention of records. The information (prior to July 17, 2020) is stored in our servers, which are kept on the premises. The information after July 17, 2020 is stored on Velox Imaging's data centre servers in according to all regulatory and legislative requirements.

How do I access or request a copy of my health information?

- You have the right to access your personal health record and the clinics have an obligation to make it available to you with limited exceptions.
- To inquire about obtaining a copy of, or about viewing your report and/or images, please contact the Health Record Services.

What if some of the information in my health record is incorrect?

Ontario Privacy law governs the right of a patient to request correction to their health information as well as situations when the clinic is not required to, or permitted to correct information. If you feel that your health information is incorrect or incomplete, contact the Privacy Officer.

Can my family see my health information?

Although you have the right to access your health record, this right does not automatically extend to family members and/or friends. If you provide written authorization for a friend or family member to see your record, then the friend/family member may access the part(s) that you have consented to let them see.

What if I am unable to give consent to release my health information?

Like consenting to treatment, if you are unable to give consent for access, use and/or disclosure of your health information, the consent decision falls to the appointed substitute decision maker, such as a spouse, parent, or guardian.

Will my family and friends be able to call in to get information about me over the phone?

Unless you request otherwise, we will provide limited information, e.g., to confirm that you are at the clinic if your family/friend inquires. We do not provide a lot of information over the phone because we have no way to verify who is calling and what their relationship is to you.

Can all clinic staff access my health information?

The only persons whom the clinic authorizes to access a patient record are the staff and physicians involved in a patient's care, or staff who need information from a patient record to conduct the business of the clinic, e.g., the Finance department staff that sends a bill to a patient's residence. All staff and clinic affiliates are bound by clinic policies and practices related to privacy and confidentiality. These policies aim to ensure that staff only access information on a need-to-know basis. Regulated Health Professionals are also bound by privacy and confidentiality requirements from their professional Colleges.

Can I find out who has viewed my clinic record?

Yes. If you have concerns about unauthorized personnel accessing your information, you can make a request to the Privacy Officer to audit your electronic record. An audit is a process that tracks every access to your electronic record by date and time. We can perform an audit on your electronic health record and a limited audit on your hardcopy health record. We will ensure that your concerns are investigated promptly and a response is provided to you in a timely manner.

If you would like to request an audit, please contact the Privacy Officer. You will be asked to verify your identity by providing a government-issued ID that has your signature.

Can my family physician and/or specialist access my health information?

Imagus sends reports to the physician that requested the exam and anyone else in the patient's circle-of-care that the referring physician included on the exam requisition. Your physician(s) may also access our PACS system and view your records electronically over the internet. This access, of course, is password protected.

What if I have concerns about my privacy?

Please contact the Privacy Officer if you have any questions or concerns.