

## **Kelowna Pelvic Health Privacy Policy**

At Kelowna Pelvic Health, we understand the importance of protecting your privacy. We are committed to following all guidelines on client confidentiality, as set out by the College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia, the province of British Columbia. All information is securely kept, and documents are released only with your written consent. Our privacy policy is as follows:

### **KELOWNA PELVIC HEALTH PRIVACY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION POLICY**

Privacy of personal information is an essential principle of Kingston Pelvic Health. We are committed to collecting, using, and disclosing personal information responsibly and only to the extent necessary for our goods and services. We also are open and transparent as to how we handle personal information. This document describes our privacy policies.

#### **WHAT IS PERSONAL INFORMATION?**

Personal information is information about an identifiable individual. Personal information includes information that relates to their personal characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, home address or phone number, ethnic background, family status), their health (e.g., health history, health conditions, health services received by them) or their activities and views (e.g., religion, politics, opinions expressed by an individual, an opinion or evaluation of an individual). Personal information is to be contrasted with business information (e.g., an individual's business address and telephone number), which is not protected by privacy legislation.

#### **WHO WE ARE**

Our organization, Kelowna Pelvic Health, includes one physiotherapist and two support staff. We use some consultants and agencies that may have limited access to the personal information we hold during their duties. These include computer consultants, office security and maintenance, bookkeepers and accountants, temporary workers to cover holidays, and lawyers. We restrict their access to any personal information we hold as much as is reasonably possible. We also have their assurance that they follow appropriate privacy principles.

#### **PRIMARY PURPOSES FOR COLLECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

##### **About Clients**

Like all physiotherapists, we collect, use, and disclose personal information to serve our clients. For our clients, the primary purpose for collecting personal information is to provide physiotherapy treatment. For example, we collect information about a client's health history, including their family history, physical condition and function, and social situation, to help us assess their health needs, advise them of their options, and provide the health care they choose to have. A second primary purpose is to obtain a baseline of health and

social information so that we can identify changes occurring over time in providing ongoing health services.

### **About Contract Staff, Volunteers and Students**

For people who are contracted to do work for us (e.g., temporary workers), our primary purpose for collecting personal information is to ensure we can contact them in the future (e.g., for new assignments) and for necessary work-related communication (e.g., sending out paycheques, year-end tax receipts). Examples of personal information we collect for those purposes include home addresses and telephone numbers. It is rare for us to use such information without prior consent. Still, it might happen in the case of a health emergency (e.g., a COVID-19 outbreak) or to investigate a possible breach of law (e.g., if a theft were to occur in the clinic). If contract staff, volunteers, or students request a letter of reference or an evaluation, we will collect information about their work-related performance and provide a report as authorized by them.

Like most organizations, we also collect, use, and disclose information for purposes related to or secondary to our primary objectives. The most common examples of our related and secondary purposes are as follows:

- To invoice clients for goods or services that were not paid for or to collect unpaid accounts.
- To advise clients that their product or service should be reviewed (e.g., to ensure a product is still functioning correctly and appropriate for their needs and to consider modifications or replacement).
- Our clinic reviews clients and other files to ensure that we provide high-quality services, including assessing the performance of our staff. In addition, external consultants (e.g., auditors, lawyers, practice consultants, voluntary accreditation programs) may, on our behalf, do audits and continuing quality improvement reviews of our clinic, including reviewing client files and interviewing our staff.
- Physiotherapists are regulated by the College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia, who may inspect our records and interview our staff as a part of their regulatory activities in the public interest. In addition, as professionals, we will report serious misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity of other practitioners, whether they belong to other organizations or our own. Also, our organization believes that it should report information suggesting serious illegal behavior to the authorities. External regulators have their own strict privacy obligations. Sometimes these reports include personal information about our clients, or other individuals, to support their concerns (e.g., improper services). Also, like all organizations, various government agencies (e.g., Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, etc.) have the authority to review our files and interview our staff as a part of their mandates. In these circumstances, we may consult with professionals (e.g., lawyers, accountants) who will investigate the matter and report to us.
- Third parties generally pay the cost of the goods/services provided to clients by Kelowna Pelvic Health (e.g., private insurance). These third-party payers often have your consent or legislative authority to direct us to collect and disclose to them certain information to demonstrate client entitlement to this funding.

- Clients or other individuals we deal with may have questions about our goods or services after receiving them. We also provide ongoing services for many clients over months or years, for which our previous records are helpful. We retain our client information for at least ten years after the last contact to enable us to respond to those questions and provide these services (our regulatory College also requires us to retain our client records).
- If Kelowna Pelvic Health or its assets were to be sold, the purchaser would want to conduct a “due diligence” review of the clinic's records to ensure that it is a viable business that has been honestly portrayed to the purchaser. This due diligence may involve some review of our accounting and service files. The purchaser would not be able to remove or record personal information. Before being provided access to the files, the purchaser must provide a written promise to keep all personal information confidential. Only reputable purchasers who have already agreed to buy the organization’s business or its assets would be provided access to personal information, and only for the purpose of completing their due diligence search prior to closing the purchase.

### **PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION**

We understand the importance of protecting personal information. For that reason, we have taken the following steps:

- Paper information is either supervised or secured in a locked or restricted area.
- Electronic hardware is always supervised or secured in a locked or restricted area. In addition, passwords are used on computers.
- Paper information is transmitted through sealed, addressed envelopes or boxes by reputable companies.
- Electronic information is transmitted through a direct line, anonymized, or encrypted.
- Staff are trained to collect, use, and disclose personal information only as necessary to fulfill their duties and in accordance with our privacy policy.
- External consultants and agencies with access to personal information must enter into privacy agreements with us.

### **RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

We need to retain personal information for some time to ensure we can answer any questions you might have about the services provided and for our accountability to external regulatory bodies. However, we do not want to keep personal information too long in order to protect your privacy.

We destroy paper files containing personal information by shredding them. We destroy electronic information by deleting it, and when the hardware is discarded, we ensure that the hard drive is physically destroyed. Alternatively, we may send some or the entire client file to our client.

## **YOU CAN LOOK AT YOUR INFORMATION**

With only a few exceptions, you have the right to see what personal information we hold about you. Often, all you have to do is ask. We can help you identify what records we have about you. We will also help you understand any information you do not understand (e.g., short forms, technical language, etc.). If we do not know you, we will need to confirm your identity before providing you with access. We reserve the right to charge a nominal fee for such requests.

If there is a problem, we may ask you to put your request in writing. If we cannot give you access, we will tell you within 30 days and tell you the reason, as best we can, as to why we cannot give you access.

If you believe there is a mistake in the information, you have the right to ask for it to be corrected. This applies to factual information and not to any professional opinions we may have formed. We may ask you to provide documentation that our files are wrong. Where we agree that we made a mistake, we will make the correction and notify anyone to whom we sent this information. If we do not agree that we have made a mistake, we will still agree to include in our file a brief statement from you on the point and we will forward that statement to anyone else who received the earlier information.

## **DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?**

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our Information Officer. She will attempt to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

If you wish to make a formal complaint about our privacy practices, you may make it in writing to our Information Officer. She will acknowledge receipt of your complaint, ensure that it is investigated promptly, and that you are provided with a formal decision and reasons in writing.

If you have a concern about the professionalism or competence of our services or the mental or physical capacity of any of our professional staff, we would ask you to discuss those concerns with us. However, if we cannot satisfy your concerns, you are entitled to complain to our regulatory body:

COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL THERAPISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

200 Granville Street #900

Vancouver, British Columbia

website: [www.cptbc.org](http://www.cptbc.org)

email: [info@cptbc.org](mailto:info@cptbc.org)

This policy is made under the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. That is a complex Act and provides some additional exceptions to the privacy principles that are too detailed to set out here. There are some rare exceptions to the commitments set out above.

For more general inquiries, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees the administration of the privacy legislation in the private sector. The Commissioner also acts as a kind of ombudsman for privacy disputes. The Privacy Commissioner can be reached at:

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