

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC HEALTHCARE RECORDS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OR CASE STUDY PURPOSES POLICY®

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- Restricted eMR access may be granted to persons applying to review electronic records for quality improvement or case study purposes. In this situation, research ethics/governance and/or Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) CHARLI approval must be obtained.
- Access to the Electronic Health Care records for research purposes please refer to the SCHN Procedure –[Clinical Research - Access to electronic health care records for inspection purposes](#) and consult with SCHN Research Ethics and Governance, as required.
- Approval for requests will be in accordance with the [NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information](#).
- 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 ethics/governance and/or Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) 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](#)”.

Approved by:	SCHN Policy Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st December 2020	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Health Information Manager	Area/Dept: Medical Records

CHANGE SUMMARY

- Due for mandatory review: information updated where necessary.
- Accessing records for research has been removed from this policy and has been added onto a new Research specific policy. This new policy is referred to in this document.

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 quality improvement or case studies should acknowledge the document.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background3

Patient Privacy.....3

Viewing SCHN electronic health care records in eMR.....4

Step 1: Before permission is granted to access electronic health care records4

Step 2: Post Obtaining Relevant Approvals4

1) *If the applicant does NOT have access to eMR.....4*

2) *If the applicant has access to eMR (which would be the majority of requestors)5*

3) *If the applicant is aware of the patient’s health care records they need to review5*

4) *If the applicant knows the medical condition/s but not the MRNs5*

Access to NETS Health Care Records pre 20175

Obtaining access to electronic health care records for presentations purposes.....5

Contacts and additional information.....6

Accessing Electronic Records.....6

Research Information and HREC Ethics & Governance Approvals7

Clinical Governance Unit – QI Approval.....7

Approved by:	SCHN Policy Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st December 2020	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Health Information Manager	Area/Dept: Medical Records

Background

The Sydney Children's Hospital Network (SCHN) is comprised of The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW), Sydney Children's Hospital (SCH), Randwick, and the Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS).

The SCHN Health Care record is predominantly an electronic record populated via direct entry into the SCHN eMR. Some paper documents still exist and are returned to the Health Information Unit (HIU), for digitisation and inclusion in the SCHN eMR.

From June 2019, all health care records for SCH patients are available in the SCHN eMR. Prior to June 2019, health care records for SCH patients are available to staff via the SESI eMR. For access to the SESI eMR please refer to

<https://intranet.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/emr-emm-ict/2-emr-system-requests-and-access>

Paper medical records 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 to requestors.

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 patient health care records are only accessed by appropriate persons for appropriate reasons.

This policy outlines the process for requesting access to electronic health care records for the following reasons:

- Quality improvement activities
- 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.

Note: For access to health care records for research purposes please refer to the SCHN Procedure – Clinical Research – Access to Electronic Healthcare Records for Inspection Purposes. This procedure outlines the details of the process by which clinical research monitors, auditors and other authorised parties are provided with view only access to the SCHN eMR for inspection purposes.

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

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

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

Before access is granted, the applicant **MUST** apply for and receive relevant approvals. For research purposes, contact Research Ethics/Governance for approval and for Quality Improvement or Audit purposes contact Clinical Governance Unit for approval.

Once the appropriate approvals have been granted, the applicant is to contact CHW HIU on 9845 2356 or SCH HIU 9382 0021 or email to SCHN-HIU@health.nsw.gov.au to arrange access to the required patient health care records.

Step 2: Post Obtaining Relevant Approvals

The applicant's access to eMR is the accountability of the Department Head and/or the Principal Investigator.

1) *If the applicant does NOT have access to eMR*

- Contingent worker status is required for the user to be provided with a personal username and password to enable them to login to eMR
<https://intranet.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/research/research-workforce>. Notified by HIU team that restricted access to eMR has been granted to view the specified records according to the relevant approval(s) and provided with a unique username and password to enable them to login to eMR.
- A proxy account will be 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.

2) If the applicant has access to eMR (which would be the majority of requestors)

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 eMR has been granted to view the specified records according to the relevant approval(s).
- The requestor will log into (eMR) using their NSW Health stafflink login.
- **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 patient's health care records they need to review

If the applicant is already aware of the patient/s Medical Record Numbers (MRNs) required for retrieval, the applicant should send their list to SCHN-HIU@health.nsw.gov.au.

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

If the applicant is unaware of the MRNs required for retrieval, but is interested specifically in a particular medical condition/s, the applicant should 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 pre 2017

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 quality improvement or case study purposes, there must be at least one NETS staff member listed as an Investigator.

Obtaining access to electronic health care records for presentations purposes

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 a clinicians own patients for handover purposes.

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 in writing to the Health Information Manager (HIM) by email SCHN-HIU@health.nsw.gov.au 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 required and provided
 - If the request is for a research/quality improvement activity presentation, relevant Research and Governance approvals must be obtained prior.
 - If approval is granted, the HIM will record the name of the applicant and other relevant details on a SCHN Medicolegal Request form and attach 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.

Contacts and additional information

Accessing Electronic Records

Please contact:

- Health Information Unit, CHW on 9845 2356
- Health Information Unit, SCH on 9382 0021
- Research and Development Unit on 9845 1253
- eMR Unit on 9845 0735
- IT Helpdesk Support on 9845 0333
- CCIS Biomedical Engineer on 9845 1110
- 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: https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/research/ethics-governance/ethics	Website: https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/research/ethics-governance/ethics-governance/research-governance

Clinical Governance Unit – QI 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.

Copyright notice and disclaimer:

The use of this document outside Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN), or its reproduction in whole or in part, is subject to acknowledgement that it is the property of SCHN. SCHN has done everything practicable to make this document accurate, up-to-date and in accordance with accepted legislation and standards at the date of publication. SCHN is not responsible for consequences arising from the use of this document outside SCHN. A current version of this document is only available electronically from the Hospitals. If this document is printed, it is only valid to the date of printing.