

Protecting Consumer Privacy: Confidential Health Information

You probably know that when you go to a doctor or other health provider they are required to keep all of your medical information private. The same rules that apply to doctors, hospitals, and other health professionals also apply to you as an IHSS provider. An IHSS consumer may tell you things about her/his medical situation so that you can provide authorized services properly and safely. This does not give you permission to share this information with anyone else.

- You cannot give information about the services including that the person you work for receives care through IHSS.
 - “You know Mrs. Chen who lives in Apt. 203? I get paid to take care of her through the IHSS program.”
- You cannot give information about the specific services and hours authorized for an IHSS consumer.
 - “Mr. Jones gets more hours than you. For instance, he gets 7 hours a week for meal preparation.”
- You cannot share any information about the health conditions or medical diagnoses of an IHSS consumer.
 - “The man who I work for, Mr. Singh, has diabetes and I am going to be trained to give him insulin injections.”
- You cannot discuss the medications or treatments taken by an IHSS consumer.
 - “Mrs. Mendoza takes a medication called Lopressor for her high blood pressure. I wonder why she takes something different than you do.”
- You cannot discuss any information about the IHSS consumer to any individuals or organizations without the written permission from the consumer or the person who is legally responsible for that individual.

Personal and health information is safeguarded under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which was signed into law in 1996. Sharing of the protected information above may have legal consequences. Contact your county IHSS Public Authority or the IHSS social worker if you have questions.