

How to Address Verbal Consent in HIFIS March 2022

Consent Requirements

Individuals must be asked for their explicit consent to have their personal information stored in the Homelessness Management Information System (HIFIS 4.0 and the BNL).

All new clients are required to review and sign *Hamilton's Homeless-Serving System Consent for the Collection and Sharing of Personal Information*. Staff will explain how, why, and with whom personal information will be shared in order to support the client through Coordinated Access.

At the time consent is received, staff will record in HIFIS that the client has provided explicit consent and coordinated access consent. The individual or family will be engaged to complete common assessment and included on the By-Name List for prioritization and right matching to available community resources that best meet their needs and preferences.

Accommodations for Verbal Consent

In cases where new clients are being referred or booked into shelters or hotel overflow over the phone, staff are required to inform the client of the full *Hamilton's Homeless-Serving System Consent for the Collection and Sharing of Personal Information*.

Verbal consent will be accepted until such time that staff are able to follow up with the client in person to complete a signed consent. It is important to flag in HIFIS that a signed consent is still required. This will alert staff working with the client to have the consent signed as soon as possible.

Once client has provided verbal consent:

- Go to **Add Client** in HIFIS
- Select Explicit and Coordinated Access Consent with the date of conversation as the Consent Start Date, do not select a Consent Expiration Date
- Fill in the rest of client details, save, and complete book in
- Next, under **Client Information**, click on **Various Factors**, then click on the third tab, **Watch Concerns**
- Click to **+Add Watch Concern**. In the dropdown, select "**Written Consent Required**". Enter the date of conversation for the Start Date. Do not select an End Date

This will create a prompt in the client's file, represented by an eye icon to alert staff that the client has an active watch concern. In this case the watch concern is used as flag for staff that signed consent is still required. The Watch Concern icon will show up under the Action column in the Client List when a client's name is searched.

Client List

ID	Full Name	Gender	Alias	Date of Birth	Age	File Number	Housing Status	Action
502	Mixte, Dante	Unknown		1990-05-06	31	0000000502	Unknown	 

When working with a client who has a watch concern that states “written consent required”, staff are required to review the written consent form with the client and have them sign to confirm their informed consent (be sure to securely store the signed consent form as per the consent policy and organizational data protection policies).

Staff must then expire the Watch Concern and update Consent.

- To access and edit the watch concern, click on the eye icon from the Client List page or access the watch concern under **Client Information**, by clicking on **Various Factors**, then clicking on the third tab, **Watch Concerns**.
- Next, click on the pen icon to edit the watch concern.
- Select the end date in line with the date that the consent was signed. Click save.
- Next, confirm the client’s consent status in HIFIS. Under the **Client Information** menu, click **Consent**. Confirm that the client has both Coordinated Access Consent and Explicit consent indicated without an expiration date. If an expiration date is indicated, please remove the expiration date.

Withdrawn Consent

A client may withdraw consent at any time. In the event that a client withdraws consent for their information to be collected and shared, agency staff will:

- Obtain the client’s signature on a new consent form with “For Withdrawing Consent” selected as the consent option.
- Expire the client’s previous consent form on HIFIS with an expiration date of the withdrawal date. This will lock the client’s HIFIS file to prevent access.
- Report the withdrawal of consent to the City through the hifis@hamilton.ca e-mail account.

Clients who do not consent to collection and sharing of their personal information may still access emergency sheltering services and staff will attempt to progressively engage to obtain consent.