

PRIVACY GUIDANCE: Audio Interviews for Research

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The use of audio recording devices/tools must comply with privacy & security requirements. It is the responsibility of all Unity Health staff and agents to safeguard personal health information (PHI) and personal information (PI) in their custody and control; including taking reasonable measures to protect, and limit the access, use, and retention of information. **The purpose of this document is to provide privacy guidance with respect conducting, recording, and transferring audio interviews for research.**

Definitions and General Rules

Researchers must have Research Ethics Board (“REB”) approval to collect participant identifiers in an audio interview. For studies that do not have REB approval to collect identifiers, the following (or similar) statement should be read to the participant prior to the audio interview. **Note:** this statement is optional for studies where the collection of identifiers is permitted.

“We do not want to identify your responses as belonging to you. You will not be asked to provide your name or any other piece of information that identifies you during the recording, and we will refer to you or address you by your Participant ID. To protect your identity, please do not provide your name or any other piece of information that identifies you in any of your responses.”

“Direct Identifiers” include: name, OHIP, MRN, address, phone number, email address, any other unique ID or identifiers (does not include Study ID). *(*this is a non-exhaustive list*)*

“Indirect Identifiers” include: a combination of date of birth, gender, and full postal code or city/town; and any other piece of information that could reasonably identify the individual (i.e. job title). ***For the purpose of this guidance, voice is an acceptable indirect identifier.*

Part 1: Conducting Identifiable Audio Interviews

- ✓ Researchers must use encrypted recording devices or tools to conduct identifiable audio interviews.
 - Approved recording devices/tools for identifiable interviews include:
 - An encrypted audio recorder
 - Native recording app on a Unity Health approved device (i.e. iPad, Laptop etc.)
 - Unity Health Zoom account (see [Using Zoom for Audio Recordings](#))
- ✓ If researchers are conducting identifiable audio interviews, but do not have an encrypted recording device/tool, the following options may be pursued:
 - a. Telephone or virtual interview (with no recording) with real-time transcription/note taking (similar to a telephone administered survey).

Part 2: Transferring/Saving Recorded Identifiable Audio Interviews

1. Complete the identifiable audio interview with the participant(s) and stop recording.
2. Transfer the audio recording from the recording device to the appropriate hospital network folder **at the earliest time point possible**.
 - a. If using a personal laptop with Citrix access to transfer the file: The audio recording must first be transferred to an encrypted or hospital-issued USB key or sent via the secure file transfer [portal](#). The audio recording can then be transferred from the hospital-issued USB key or file transfer portal location to the appropriate network folder. **Do not use unsecured methods to transfer the identifiable audio file (i.e. personal email).**
3. Once the recording is transferred to the network, delete the original from the recording device.

4. As soon as the transcript of the audio recording or the data analysis from the audio recording has been verified/validated to be accurate, the audio recording stored on the network should be destroyed. (Exceptions could include justified circumstances to retain the recording, approval by the REB, or as otherwise required by law.)

Part 3: Conducting Unidentifiable Audio Interviews

- ✓ Unidentifiable audio interviews may be conducted using unencrypted devices.
- ✓ Researchers recording unidentifiable audio interviews are encouraged to use encrypted recording devices/tool (i.e. Zoom for Healthcare), but are not required to do so.

Note: in the event that the researcher or study is not authorized to collect identifiers, and a participant provides identifying information during the audio interview, the researcher should:

- ✓ Pause the audio recording and remind the participant not to use personal identifiers.
- ✓ If an unencrypted recording device was used, please follow the steps outlined in [Part 2](#) (above) to securely transfer the recording to a network folder.
- ✓ Remove or “code” the identifiers during the transcription of the audio recording and then delete the identifiable recording from the network folder.

Part 4: Transferring/Saving Recorded Unidentifiable Audio Interviews

1. Complete the unidentifiable audio interview with the participant(s) and stop recording.
2. Transfer the audio recording from the recording device to the appropriate hospital network folder **at the earliest time point possible**. ** Please see the note above for cases where a participant inadvertently provides identifiable information**
3. Methods of transferring unidentifiable audio recordings include: email, secure file portal, and encrypted/unencrypted USB's.
4. Once the audio recording is transferred to the network, destroy the original recording from the device and other devices/locations where the recording may have been saved (i.e. if using email to transfer, delete the email from your “Sent” emails folder etc.).
5. As soon as the transcript of the audio recording or the data analysis from the audio recording has been verified/validated to be accurate, the audio recording stored on the network should be destroyed. (Exceptions could include justified circumstances to retain the recording, approval by the REB, or as otherwise required by law.)

Using Zoom for Audio Recordings

Unity Health Zoom accounts may be used to record identifiable and unidentifiable audio interviews.

1. Schedule a Zoom session with the participant you wish to interview
2. Ensure both the host and participant cameras are **disabled/off**
3. Click “record” at the start of the session
4. When the session has ended, 3 separate files (audio file, video file, and text file) will be automatically saved to your local computer (default to “Documents” folder)
5. Locate the 3 files, and delete the video file and text file (since your camera is disabled, the video will be of a black screen).
6. If you collected identifiers, save the audio file outlined in [Part 2](#) above
7. If you did not collect identifiers, save the audio file outlined in [Part 4](#) above

Transcription Services

Any use of third party services (including transcription service to transcribe audio recordings) must be declared on the REB application. Before using the services, the Researcher must ensure that appropriate service provider contracts and Unity Health approvals are in place between Unity Health and Third Party Service Provider.