

IMS's Commitment to Health Information Stewardship

A global leader in information solutions, IMS is an international leader in health information stewardship – including privacy and data protection. We firmly believe that patient health information used wisely and responsibly advances worldwide medicine and results in real value for healthcare communities. Also, we strongly believe that this information, by its nature, can be highly sensitive to an individual and that individual privacy must be preserved and protected.

Our business model is to provide objective, authoritative information to the national and international healthcare markets. As a company, we are patient privacy and data protection advocates – and since our founding 50 years ago, IMS has pioneered commercial practices to de-identify individual patients and sensitive data. This is a key component of our core competency in privacy. IMS has privacy officers in the United States, Europe, Canada/Latin America and Asia Pacific to ensure the leadership necessary to manage this information in a manner that balances a range of societal values, including the promotion of improved healthcare and individual privacy.

IMS's leadership is based on a set of shared beliefs:

1. Patient privacy is very important; therefore, we use de-identified patient information in all of our syndicated services and products. In some markets, IMS may conduct a specific market research assignment linked to identifiable patients. In those instances, we will first obtain express prior consent based on the provision of clear notice and limited purpose.
2. IMS's information services and products create value for the entire healthcare community. Our privacy stewardship assists us in maintaining the public trust necessary to deliver that value to society. To ensure we create value while respecting individual privacy, we have privacy officers in our major business units, and have internal privacy councils to ensure that privacy and data protection are core competencies.
3. Information on treatment activities is more valuable to the healthcare community, and more conducive to legitimate public scrutiny, when it is linked to the health professional. Therefore, where lawful and consistent with appropriate public interests, IMS will make this link.
4. We will be open about our services and products and, where required, offer appropriate choices for information collection or use to stakeholders in the healthcare community.
5. We recognize that national laws differ among the countries we serve, and we will respect those differences.
6. Security is important, and we will protect the integrity of personal data and health information in our charge. The measures taken will be proportional to the privacy risk.
7. Information collected will be limited to what is needed to meet the healthcare community's needs.
8. IMS will be creative and proactive in advocating these principles throughout the world.

These core beliefs are a baseline set of values shared by all at IMS. All IMS operations are encouraged to meet this worldwide commitment and also will exceed it to comply with national law or to assure IMS's continued leadership in health information stewardship. We codify and put these beliefs into action through policies, guidelines and internal procedures that are reflective of applicable local law. We expect to be held accountable for these practices and will proactively audit our policies, guidelines and procedures to measure our compliance.