

Practice Privacy Policy: Managing Your Health Information

Policy Revision: October 2022

Collection of information

The Practice will need to collect personal information in the course of the provision of clinical & / or counselling services to a patient / client at the practice.

Collected personal information will include patients’:

- Names, addresses, and contact details including next of kin and emergency contacts,
- Medicare number or OSHC details (if relevant) for identification and claiming purposes,
- Healthcare identifiers, and
- medical and psychological information including medical / psychological history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors.

A patient’s personal information may be held at the Practice in various forms:

- as electronic records - dedicated medical software - Best Practice
- as paper records (in the case of faxes received from pathology/ radiology providers, correspondence from specialists etc before they are scanned into the medical software
- as visual media– x-rays, CT scans, videos & or photos

The Practice’s procedure for collecting personal information is set out below.

- Practice staff collect patients’ personal and demographic information via registration when patients present to the Practice for the first time. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement which provides information about the management of collected information and the patient’s privacy.
- During the course of providing medical/psychological services, the Practice’s healthcare practitioners will consequently collect further personal information.
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient’s guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary), or from any other involved healthcare providers.

The Practice holds all personal information securely, whether in electronic format, (in protected information systems), or in hard copy format (in a secured environment awaiting destruction via confidential waste).

All individuals working in the Medical & Counselling Centre are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing work which outlines obligations and expectations in relation to privacy and health information that they will have access to.

Use and disclosure of information

Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical & or counselling services, and for claims and payments, unless otherwise consented to. Some disclosure may occur to third parties engaged by or for the Practice for business purposes, such as Accreditation (AGPAL) or for the provision of information technology. These third parties are required to comply with this policy. The Practice will inform the patient where there is a statutory requirement to disclose certain personal information (for example, some diseases require mandatory notification).

The Practice will not disclose personal information to any third party other than in the course of providing medical/counselling services, without full disclosure to the patient or the recipient, the reason for the information transfer and full consent from the patient. The Practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

Exceptions to disclose without patient consent are where the information disclosure is

- Required by law e.g. Subpoena, court order, suspected child abuse or non-accidental physical injury of self or others)
- Necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- To assist in locating a missing person
- To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- For the purpose of a confidential dispute resolution process.

The Practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to a patient without that patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by written notification to the Practice.

The Practice evaluates all unsolicited information it receives to decide if it should be kept, acted on, or destroyed.

Access, corrections, and privacy concerns

The Practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. Patients are encouraged to make this request in writing, and the Practice will respond within a reasonable time. The Practice has designated forms for the transfer of medical /psychological information between health providers. (A reasonable fee will be applicable).

The Practice will take reasonable steps to correct personal information where it is satisfied, they are inaccurate, are incomplete, misleading, or not up to date. From time to time, the Practice will ask patients to verify the personal information held by the Practice is correct and up to date. Patients may also request the Practice corrects or updates their information, and patients should make such requests in writing.

Any request for correction to be made to a medical /psychological record must be made by the patient / client, or by someone who is authorised to make it on their behalf e.g. legal guardian or another authorised person. A request to have a correction made to a record (medical /psychological) must be responded to within a reasonable period, generally within 30 days. The patient/client must be notified if the request is refused, and the reason(s) why.

Complaints

The Practice takes complaints and concerns about the privacy of patients' personal information seriously. A patient or client can make a complaint if they believe a provider has not handled their health information properly. Patients should express any privacy concerns in writing to the designated Privacy Officer of the practice, Dr Jenny Weekes (Unit Director). The complaint will be responded to within 30 days of having been received by the Privacy Officer. The Practice will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with its complaint resolution procedure.

If a patient / client feels that they are not satisfied with the manner in which their complaint has been dealt with they can seek to have their complaint reviewed by the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#).

If you should have any questions about our Privacy Policy and your health information, please direct them to our staff at the Medical & Counselling Centre, or to Dr Jenny Weekes, Director, University of Canberra Medical & Counselling Centre.

Phone: (02) 6201 2351

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