

Privacy Policy

Introduction

This privacy policy is to ensure patients who receive care from Belair Family Health Centre are comfortable in entrusting their health information to the Practice. This policy provides information to patients as to how their personal information (which includes their health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may disclose it to third parties.

This practice is bound by the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles, also complies with the SA Health Records Act 2001 and the My Health Records Act 2012. To enable ongoing care and total quality improvement within this practice, and in keeping with the Acts and Principles, we wish to provide you with sufficient information on how your personal health information may be used or disclosed and record your consent or restrictions to this consent.

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
- medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
- Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
- healthcare identifiers
- health fund details.

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals. (see APP 2)

Practice procedure

The Practice will:

- provide a copy of this policy upon request
- ensure staff comply with the APP and deal appropriately with inquiries or concerns
- take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to implement practices, procedures and systems to ensure compliance with the APP and deal with inquiries or complaints
- collect personal information for the primary purpose of managing a patient's healthcare and for financial claims and payments.

Staff responsibility

The Practice's staff will take reasonable steps to ensure patients understand:

- what information has been and is being collected
- why the information is being collected, and whether this is due to a legal requirement
- how the information will be used or disclosed
- why and when their consent is necessary
- the Practice's procedures for access and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches, including by providing this policy.

Patient consent

The Practice will only interpret and apply a patient's consent for the primary purpose for which it was provided. The Practice staff must seek additional consent from the patient if the personal information collected may be used for any other purpose.

Collection of information

The Practice will need to collect personal information as a provision of clinical services to a patient at the practice. Collected personal information will include patients':

- names, addresses and contact details
- Medicare number (where available) (for identification and claiming purposes)
- healthcare identifiers
- medical information including medical 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 paper records
- as electronic records
- as visual – x-rays, CT scans, videos and photos
- as audio recordings.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways.

- When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration. When you present to the Practice for the first time you are required to complete a new patient information form. Patients are encouraged to pay attention to the collection statement attached to the form and information about the management of collected information and patient privacy and then sign to say they have read and agree to them.

During the course of providing medical services, the Practice's healthcare practitioners will consequently collect further personal information. Information may also be collected through My Health Record via Shared Health Summary or Event Summary.

- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary), or from any other involved healthcare specialists, Allied Health professionals, hospitals, community health services, pathology and diagnostic imaging.
- We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment.
- The Practice holds all personal information securely, whether in electronic format, in protected information systems or in hard copy format in a secured environment. Our practice abides by the RACGP computer and information security standards and all staff have training in confidentiality and sign an agreement.
- The information we collect may be collected by a number of different methods and examples may include: medical test results, notes from consultations, Medicare and health insurance details, data collected from observations and conversations with you, and details obtained from other health care providers.

Use and disclosure of information

- Personal information will only be used for the purpose of providing medical 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 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 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.
- Your personal health information will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected, or as otherwise permitted by law and we respect your right to determine how your personal health information is used or disclosed.
- Follow up reminder/recall notices for treatment and preventive healthcare.
- Administrative purposes in running our medical practice.
- Billing Purposes, including compliance with Medicare and Health Insurance Commission requirements.
- Disclosure to others involved in your healthcare, including the communication of relevant information, to practice staff, specialists and other healthcare providers to ensure quality care is provided. This may occur through referral to other doctors, or for medical tests and in the reports or results returned to us following referrals.
- Accreditation and Quality Assurance activities are conducted by professionally trained non-treating GP's and other professionally trained and qualified persons eg. General Practice Managers.
- Disclosure to other doctors in the practice, locums etc attached to the practice for the purpose of patient care.

- For legal related disclosure as required by a court of law.
- For the purposes of research only where de identified information is used.
- To allow medical students and staff to participate in medical training/teaching using only de identified information.
- To comply with any legislative or regulatory requirements, when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)

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

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
- when it is 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 confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Access, corrections and privacy concerns

- Belair Family Health Centre acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records and patients are encouraged to make this request in writing. The Practice will respond within a reasonable time.
- The Practice will take reasonable steps to correct personal information where it is satisfied they are not accurate or 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.
- The Practice takes complaints and concerns about the privacy of patients' personal information seriously. Patients should express any privacy concerns in writing and address to the Practice Manager or Principal GP. The Practice will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with its complaint resolution procedure.

APP – AUSTRALIAN PRIVACY PRINCIPLES : The Privacy Act requires our practice to abide by the 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs):

- APP 1 **open and transparent management of personal information** – Our practice has documented and implemented procedures to meet the Australian Privacy Principles. APP2
- anonymity and pseudonymity** – Our practice has processes in place should a patient not wish to identify themselves or does not want to have their real identity recorded.
- APP 3 **collection of solicited personal information** – Our practice follows appropriate policy on all consent required
- APP 4 **dealing with unsolicited personal information** – The practice evaluates all information it receives that has not been requested and the appropriate person responsible decides if it should be kept or destroyed.
- APP 5 **notification of the collection of personal information** – If the practice receives personal information the patient is unaware of then the practice will notify them. We must include why we are collecting it and what the practice will do with the information.
- APP 6 **use or disclosure of personal information** – The practice obtains consent from the patient for the secondary use of their information. Should the information be de-identified then consent is not required
- APP 7 **direct marketing** – Our practice does not engage in direct marketing
- APP 8 **cross-border disclosure of personal information** – Our practice ensures that any information from overseas recipient has similar protection to the APP and the consent has been obtained.
- APP 9 **adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers** – Our practice does not use IHI or Medicare numbers as a primary patient identifier in the computer systems.
- APP10 **quality of personal information** – Our practice has a process that sees that personal information is kept up to date during data collection.
- APP11 **security of personal information** – our practice complies with the standards set by the RACGP in the Computer and information security policy.
- APP12 **access to personal information** – The practice has a procedure for requests for personal information. This is provided in the format requested where possible and if refused the practice must inform the patient of the reason.
- APP13 **correction of personal information** - Our practice has a procedure for correcting information. This also includes notification to third parties if applicable.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information if it is not accurate, complete and up to date.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to either reception staff if general details or practice manager for clinical details. (there is a form for request of personal information kept behind reception)

Our practice acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing and our practice will respond within 30 days. This information includes medical details, family information, name, address, employment and other demographic data, past medical and social history, current health issues and future medical care, Medicare number, accounts details and any health information such as a medical or personal opinion about health, disability or health status.

At all times, we are required to ensure your details are treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your records are very important and we will take all steps necessary to ensure they remain confidential. All staff have been trained in confidentiality and signed an agreement.

You can decline to have your health information used in all or some of the ways outlined above but it may influence our ability to manage your health care to provide the best outcome for you.

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint and how will the complaint be handled at our practice?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. If you wish to make a complaint about how your personal information has been handled or are concerned that we have breached your privacy, you should provide a written complaint to the Practice Manager or Principal GP at 459 Belair Road, Belair 5052. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure and within a reasonable time frame.

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

AHPRA

The State or Territory Manager

GPO Box 9958

Adelaide

SA 5001

Tel: 1300 419 495

Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner

P O Box 199

Rundle Mall

Adelaide

SA 5000

Tel: 1800 232 007

Policy Review Statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur. These will be displayed on our notice board and or the Website.

Updated January 2024
