



## PRACTICE PRIVACY STATEMENT

This statement sets out the HealthHub Taree & Harrington's policies relating to the collection and use of personal information. Personal information is information about you which identifies you.

### **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 (e.g. staff training).

### **Your personal information is important to us**

The Practice recognises that your privacy is very important to you and that you have a right to control your personal information. We know that providing personal information is an act of trust and we take that seriously. Unless you give us explicit consent to act otherwise, the following policy will govern how the Practice handles your personal information and safeguards your privacy. The Practice is committed to protecting your personal information and giving you choice in who can use your personal information and how it can be used. We believe that our privacy policy not only complies with relevant laws but also represents best practice.

### **Collecting personal information about you**

If you are a patient, we collect personal information about you in order to provide you with the full benefits of health care. We collect information from you directly and also from time to time thereafter if you provide us with additional information. Once you are a patient, we maintain a health care record for you and a medical history with the Practice.

Personal information is collected in a private setting and patient records are kept inaccessible to the public. Information is only released to third parties after a signed consent form. Even so disclosure is limited to that which is authorised or required.

All research information collected by the practice is done only when consent is given by the patient, and de-identified.

Use of patient information for quality assurance and professional development is de-identified.

### **What personal information do we collect?**

The information we will collect about you includes the following information and forms part of your patient health record:

- 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

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## Definition of a patient health record

A health record (also known as a medical record) is a written account of a person's health history. It includes medications, treatments, tests, immunisations, and notes from visits to a health care provider.

The primary purpose of a clinical health record is to hold the information about a patient that is required for effective care: good patient information supports appropriate clinical decisions.

## When, why and with whom do we share your personal information

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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified, and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

## Using and disclosing your personal information

The Practice will not use or disclose any information about you without your consent unless:

- Required by law.
- We believe it necessary to provide you with a service that you have requested.

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- To implement our terms of use.
- To protect the rights or property of the Practice, any Practice user, or any member of the public.
- To lessen a serious threat to a person's health or safety.
- In order to provide some services to patients, the Practice may be required to provide Patients' contact details to third party suppliers of services. The Practice provides the opportunity for you to opt-out of such third-party arrangements.

If any Patient does not want their contact details passed on to third parties for the purposes of health care, please contact the HealthHub Taree on 02 6552 5533.

Any medical students attending the practice have limited or no access to personal records, only with the permission of the patient, whilst in attendance.

When a patient transfers from this practice to another, a signed release of patient information request is required. A Health summary, a copy of recent progress notes and copies of recent results or specialist letters are then sent to the requesting practitioner. At times the continuing doctor is phoned up as well.

Confidentiality is maintained at all times when medical information is transferred to and from this practice.

## **Storage and security of your personal information**

The Practice will endeavour to take all reasonable steps to keep secure any personal information which we hold about you, and to keep this information accurate and up to date. Your information is stored on secure servers or is protected in controlled facilities.

When document automation technologies are used, we ensure that only the relevant medical information is included in referral letters.

In addition, our employees and the contractors who provide services related to our information systems are obliged to respect the confidentiality of any personal information held by the Practice. However, the Practice will not be held responsible for events arising from unauthorised access to your personal information.

## **You can access the information we keep about you**

If you wish to know what information we hold about you, please contact the HealthHub Taree on 02 6552 5533. We will respond to your request within 30 days.

## **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.

## **What to do if you have a problem or question**

If the Practice becomes aware of any ongoing concerns or problems with our personal health records on our system, we will take these issues seriously and work to address these concerns. If you have any further queries relating to our privacy policy, or you have a problem or complaint, please contact our Practice Manager on 02 6552 5533.

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This practice has a process whereby complaints can formally be made to any member of staff or the Doctor on duty. Alternatively, complaints can be made to the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission: Locked Bag 18; Strawberry Hills NSW 2012: (Phone: 1800 043 159) or else the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner Resolution Scheme (Phone: 1800 550 552).

## **Management of information no longer required**

This practice has the following in place for the destruction of patient information no longer required, by shredding; we use a commercial shredder (Mid Coast Document Services). We retain all information for 7 years or until the patient reaches the age of 25 years (whichever is longer). For electronic information - it is made 'inactive', and no longer visible to current users.

## **Future changes**

From time to time, our policies will be reviewed and may be revised. The Practice reserves the right to change its privacy policy at any time and notify you by posting an updated version of the policy on our website and on our Notice Boards at each of our Practice's.