



Waratah General Practice
54 Station Street
WARATAH NSW 2298
Phone: 49675200 Fax: 49674144

Notice to all Patients Regarding the Privacy of your Medical Records

This practice is committed to providing quality health care for its patients. As a fundamental part of this commitment, doctors and administration staff recognise the importance of ensuring that patients are fully informed and involved with their health care.

This practice, as a health provider in the Private Sector, is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles. The principles set the standards by which we handle personal information collected from patients.

As a part of the practice's commitment to providing quality health care, it is necessary for us to maintain files pertaining to patient health. The files contain the following types of information:

- Personal details (name, address, date of birth, Medicare number)
- Patient medical history
- Notes made during medical consultations
- Referrals to other health service providers
- Results and reports received from other health service providers
- Healthcare identifiers

This practice will take reasonable steps to ensure that patient personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose, administration staff will ask patients to confirm that their contact details are correct when they attend a consultation. We request that patients let us know if any of the information we hold about them is incorrect.

Dealing with our practice anonymously

You have a right to deal with the practice anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do this or unless we are required or are authorised by law to only deal with identified individuals. You must discuss this with a practitioner.

The information held about the patient is provided by the patient or arises as a consequence of information provided by the patient. We collect information in various ways such as over the phone, in writing or in person at our clinic. This information may be collected by medical and non-medical staff:

- Practice administration 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 about the management of collected information and patient privacy.
- During the course of providing medical services, healthcare practitioners will collect further personal information
- Information may also be obtained from My Health Record if you participate in this program
- Personal information may also be collected from the patient's guardian, or responsible person, or from any other involved healthcare specialists.



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- In emergency situations we may also need to collect information from patient's relatives or friends.

The practice is required by law, to retain medical records for certain periods of time depending on patient age at the time we provide the services.

A patient's personal information may be held at the practice in various forms:

- As paper records
- As electronic records
- At visual – x-rays, CT scans, photos
- As audio recordings

Corrections

If the patient believes that the information, we have about them is not accurate, complete or up to date, we ask that patients contact us in writing. The request will be assessed by Dr Sonia Nightingale who will then respond to the patient.

Patient medical files are handled with the utmost respect for patient privacy. The file will be accessed by a medical practitioner, and when necessary (for example in the absence of patient's usual medical practitioner), by other practitioners in the practice. It may also be necessary for administration staff to handle the patient file from time to time to address the administrative requirements of running a medical practice. Practice staff are bound by strict confidentiality requirements as a condition of employment with Waratah General Practice and all staff have signed confidentiality contracts.

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

Waratah General Practice uses Best Practice Clinical Software and uses documentation automation technologies, so that only relevant information is included in referral letters

Ordinarily the practice will not release the contents of a patient medical file without patient consent. However, we advise that there may be occasions where we will be required to release the details of the patient file irrespective of whether the patient consent to disclosure of the information is given. This will occur where the law requires disclosure, such as pursuant to a subpoena, court order, request from Police and government regulatory bodies.

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, the reason for the information transfer, and full consent from the patient. The practice will not use any personal information in relation to direct marketing to the patient without that patient's express consent. Patients may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying the practice in writing.

The practice will not disclose personal information to anyone outside Australia without need and without patient consent.

The practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services offered to patients through research and analysis of patient data.



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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.

We advise that a patient of this practice has rights of access to any information we hold concerning them. Should the patient wish to access this information we refer the patient to the handout entitled “**Accessing your Medical Record**”.

Allowing Others to Speak on Your Behalf

Due to patient privacy, we are unable to discuss any aspect of your medical file with anybody other than yourself, without express consent, except for someone holding a Power of Attorney, or the parent of somebody aged 15 or under.

If you would like to consent for someone else to be able to discuss your medical records with practice staff, you will be required to complete and sign the “Allowing Others to Speak on Your Behalf” form. It is your responsibility to keep us updated regarding who can access and discuss specific areas of your medical record as outlined above. The Practice bears no responsibility for any subsequent consequences should these details not be kept up to date.

Storage Policy

As part of the practice commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the information contained in the patient medical record, we advise that strict secure storage policies are observed in this practice. Patient electronic records are accessible only by doctors, nurses and administration staff of this practice and are protected by a security password. Patient paper records are kept in a secure storeroom. The storeroom has a security lock with a code required to access.

Should the patient at any time have a query or complaint in relation to the privacy policies in place, they will be advised to contact Dr Sonia Nightingale, who will be happy to address any concerns that the patient may have. It is preferable that any complaints are made in writing, addressed to the above-named person and marked private and confidential. A reply will be made in accordance with the practice complaints handling procedure. If the patient is dissatisfied with our handling of the complaint or outcome, the patient may make an application to the Australian Information Commissioner or Privacy Commissioner in your State Phone: 1300 363 992 or www.oaic.gov.au.

The practice website is for information only and we do not collect patient information on this site.

Reviewed: January 2024
Next review date: January 2025