

# WARATAH MEDICAL SERVICES

## PRIVACY POLICY



Our practices are bound by and comply with the Australian Privacy Principles 2014 (APP). This requires entities to have an APP Privacy Policy explaining how sensitive information is collected, managed, accessed and corrected. Our Privacy Policy is freely available to everyone at all our reception desks and on our website at [www.waratahmedicalservices.com](http://www.waratahmedicalservices.com).

Sensitive information includes your personal and health records. We have separated your sensitive information into Personal Information and Health Information to be able to give you the most accurate details of our Privacy Policy.

Our Privacy Policy aims to explain how we obtain, manage, store, update and disclose sensitive information, and how it can be accessed.

All our staff plus any visiting doctors, specialists or nurses comply with our Privacy Policy ensuring you complete peace of mind.

### Your Health Information

To provide quality health care our doctors and nurses need to obtain both your past and present health information. This information can be from you, your previous doctors, specialists, hospitals and allied health services. All information collected remains completely private and confidential.

Your health records are kept on computer in a secure medical program. This is updated monthly to provide the most accurate and up to date prescribing, reporting, and recalling and referral system.

The type of medical information we collect to ensure quality care includes:

- Past medical history
- Current medical conditions
- Current prescriptions
- Allergies and adverse reactions
- Immunisations
- Family and social history,
- Smoking and alcohol status and
- Country of birth

Your doctor will make sure your medical record is up to date, exact and contains complete clear progress notes. This will ensure safe hand over to other doctors if required. Your health record will also contain a Health Summary.

With your consent your health record can have reminders or recalls to assist us to contact you to follow up test results, health checks and reviews.

Your doctor will only collect information that is relevant to your medical care. If you are unsure as to why information is being collected please ask your doctor.

### Your Personal Information

Exact personal details are vital to maintain patient safety and security, and to ensure the right details are entered into the correct patients file. To guarantee accurate records are kept it is important to continually update your personal details.

Initially we collect personal information using our New Patient Registration Forms and after that by our staff asking identifying questions and updating our records when needed. We will also collect personal information during consultations and from third parties such as other health care providers.

We also need your personal details to allow us to bill you to Medicare, for Workers Compensation billings, and referrals to specialists and allied providers. They are also needed for prescriptions, and pathology and radiology referrals to ensure you are correctly identified.

Personal information we need to collect to protect our patients includes:

- Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Full address
- Telephone numbers, both home and mobile
- Marital Status
- Occupation
- Ethnicity
- Medicare card details
- Pension Card details
- Dept of Veteran's Affairs Card details
- Emergency and next of kin contact details

We will take all reasonable steps to make sure that your personal information is correct, complete, up to date and relevant. For this purpose our staff may ask you to confirm that your contact details are correct when you attend a consultation. Our usual process is to ask three identifying questions. Our receptionists, nurses and doctors will ask you questions like your full name, address, telephone number or date of birth. This ensures we are using the correct patient file and also allows us to update your details when required.

We request that you let us know if any of your personal information changes either in person on your next visit, by phone or by email. See contact details at the end of the Privacy Policy.

## **Information Provided to Others**

Our staff respect your right to decide how your sensitive information is used or disclosed to other care providers. In all but exceptional situations, sensitive information that identifies you will only be sent to other people with your consent.

It is important that other health professionals involved in your care are informed of your personal information and relevant parts of your health information so they can give you the best possible care. Usually this information is disclosed during a referral to a specialist or allied provider, to pathology or radiology. It may also be disclosed to a hospital if you are having a procedure or operation or in the case of an emergency where you may be at risk of harm without treatment.

We use an eTP service which is the secure exchange of prescription information between your doctor and your chemist. Your prescribed medications and instructions are captured by a bar code on your prescription and offers secure and safe dispensing by your chemist. Your chemist scans your prescription and all of the relevant information is sent to their computer. This reduces the risk of error and improves medication management.

Under your consent information can also be given to a solicitor or lawyer for investigations and court proceedings.

Your doctor is legally bound to release information to Australian authorities for notification of public health or to law enforcement agencies for the purpose of an investigation, or under Subpoena to the courts. Also records can be released if there is a serious threat to life, health or safety.

We will never release any of your sensitive information interstate or overseas without your signed consent.

If you are worried about how and when your information is disclosed please discuss this with your doctor.

## **Health Information for Quality Improvement and Research**

We use patient health information to help us improve the quality of care we give to all our patients by reviewing the treatments we use in our practice.

We may also use information that does not identify you in research projects to improve health care in the community. De-identified information does not contain your personal details but will have specific medical information that will be used in research for purposes of public health and safety. You will be asked if you would like to have your records included in this type of research. Generally these types of research projects are based on statistics.

## **Information Security**

Our practice is fully computerised which means that all of your sensitive information is held on our computer system which is kept secure by a business grade firewall with intrusion detection. We also have an up to date antivirus system with identity shield and password protection. Each of our computers are password protected and time locked, and are positioned so that computer screens cannot be seen by anyone other than our staff.

When we receive medical reports by paper they are scanned into the computer and are read and actioned by your doctor before being placed into your personal health record. As each of our surgeries are individual practices your records can not be seen by anyone from outside of your practice except for computer technicians for reasons below.

We have a specialist IT Company that assists us with all our computer needs including hardware, software, updates and problem solving, and they are also bound by the APPs and our Privacy Policy.

The scheduling/billing and medical program software we use are controlled by specialist software companies who are also bound by the APPs and our Privacy Policy which means your information is always safe and secure.

If you are worried about the privacy of your sensitive information or about the accuracy of the information held by the practice, you should discuss these with your Doctor or our Practice Manager. Inaccurate information will be corrected and any concerns noted in the records if it is not possible or desirable to alter the original record.

## **Accessing Your Health Information**

You are allowed to access the information contained in your medical record. You may ask your doctor about any aspect of your health care including information in your record. We believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor and for good health care. Once you have been identified you can access your information either in person, by phone or email. See contact details at the end of the Privacy Policy.

Health information in your record can be provided to you by way of an accurate and up to date Health Summary. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor or our Practice Manager if you want a summary of your record for any reason.

If you ask for access to your full medical record, your doctor will need to consider the risk of any physical or mental harm to you, or any other person, which may result from disclosure of your health information. Your doctor may also need to remove any information that may impact on the privacy of other individuals. Your doctor will be pleased to provide a full explanation of the Health Summary or medical records provided.

## Accessing Your Health Information Continued

If you want your health information to be transferred to another surgery you can request a Health Summary or full medical record. If you have complex medical conditions or lengthy medical history you might prefer to have your complete medical record transferred. In both cases a signed transfer authority by you is required with details of the doctor receiving the information. We need the doctor's surgery address, and phone and fax number, before any information can be sent.

Except for a patient Health Summary any further copying of health information will incur a cost to cover copying and registered post.

## Complaints and Resolution Procedure

Our Practice has a Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedure. We encouraged you to give us feedback on all aspects of our practice. If you have a complaint it will be dealt with in a confidential timely manner so that we can address issues as they arise. Complaints and how they are handled is vital to ensure we can continue to improve our service to the community and for quality assurance.

If you wish to make a complaint regarding our administration you can do so in person. You will be referred to the Practice Manager and taken into the office to ensure you can express your complaint and discuss the issue in a private and confidential manner. The Practice Manager will listen and document the complaint and discuss with you any immediate solutions that may be available. You will also be reassured that if necessary your complaint will be discussed with the relevant staff member. If the issue cannot be solved on the day you will be advised that once we have discussed and solved the issue we will telephone you with the outcome. We assure you that your complaint will in no way reflect upon you in the future regarding your health care.

If you are not comfortable discussing the complaint with the Practice Manager you are asked to lodge your complaint in writing. The Practice Manager will follow up the complaint and advise you of the outcome either in writing or by phone depending on the severity of the complaint. If you have difficulty putting your complaint in writing our Practice Manager can assist you to write up your complaint.

If a complaint relates to a medical matter you are asked to put your complaint in writing so that it can be appropriately addressed. If you are unable to do this the Practice Manager can assist you to write up your complaint. Once a complaint of this nature is received the matter is discussed with the doctor and/or nurse who is involved. This is done by Dr Wolf du Plessis, our Principle Doctor, and Sue Maher, our Joint Practice Manager. The outcome of the meeting between the doctor and/or nurse and management is then reported back to you in writing. This process will be dealt with in the quickest possible way.

Complaints can be addressed to the Practice Manager of the practice you attend. See details below.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can take your complaint to The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). See contact details below.

Further information on Privacy Legislation is also available from the OAIC.

## Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (AOIC)

**Phone: 1300 363 992**

**Post: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001**

**Website: [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)**

**Email: [enquiries@oaic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@oaic.gov.au)**

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## Contact details for our Kanwal surgery:

**The Practice Manager  
Waratah Medical Services**

**654 Pacific Hwy**

**Kanwal NSW 2259**

**Phone: 43927733 Fax: 43939688**

**Email: [generalenquiries@waratahmed.com](mailto:generalenquiries@waratahmed.com)**

## Contact details for our Morisset surgery:

**The Practice Manager**

**Waratah Medical Services**

**89 Dora Street**

**Morisset NSW 2264**

**Phone: 49739700 Fax: 49731255**

**Email: [enquiries@waratahmed.com](mailto:enquiries@waratahmed.com)**

**Waratah Medical Services  
adheres to and complies with the  
Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) 2014.**