

Metro North Health

Message from the Chief Executive

Nick Steele



Summary:

- Information privacy and appropriate access to information systems - our obligations

Message feedback



Audience: All staff



Read time: 3 min



For: Information

Dear colleagues,

Metro North Health is entrusted with access to highly sensitive patient, employee and corporate information. Every member of our workforce has a responsibility to ensure that information is accessed only when required for legitimate work purposes.

Over the past 12 months, Metro North has undertaken several communications and awareness initiatives to reinforce privacy obligations and appropriate access to information. These have included executive communications, targeted privacy and inappropriate access campaigns, Privacy Awareness Week activities and education resources for staff. Despite these efforts, reports of alleged inappropriate access continue to be received and investigated by the Ethical Standards Unit.

As the rollout of the integrated electronic Medical Record (ieMR) continues across Metro North, I am writing to remind all staff of my expectations regarding the access, use and protection of information.

Let me be clear: Accessing information about yourself, your family members, friends, colleagues or any other individual without a legitimate business reason is not acceptable. Curiosity is not a valid reason to access information.

Our information systems contain monitoring and audit capabilities. Within ieMR, user activity is recorded and auditable, including searches, access to records and actions performed within the system. Controls exist to identify unusual access patterns, including access to records relating to colleagues and other individuals where there is no apparent work-related need. Where concerns are identified, audits and investigations will be undertaken.

Inappropriate access to information may constitute:

- Misconduct under the *Public Sector Act 2022*;
- A breach of the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service;

- A breach of privacy legislation and Metro North policies;
- Corrupt conduct under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*; and
- In serious circumstances, a criminal offence.

Such conduct may result in disciplinary action, referral to external agencies and other appropriate action.

Before accessing any information, I expect all staff to stop and consider:

- Am I authorised to access this information?
- Do I need this information to perform my role?
- Am I directly involved in the care, treatment or business activity associated with this information?
- Can I justify this access if it is later reviewed or audited?

If you cannot confidently answer "yes" to these questions, you should not proceed.

Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of information is fundamental to the trust our patients, staff and community place in us. I expect every member of the Metro North workforce to uphold the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and respect when accessing information.

Further information regarding staff obligations, monitoring arrangements and reporting requirements is available in the Metro North [Inappropriate Access to Information and Information Systems Procedure \(007236\)](#).

If you are unsure whether access is appropriate, seek advice from your line manager before proceeding.

If you have concerns regarding the inappropriate access or misuse of information, please contact the Ethical Standards Unit on 3646 1566 or MN-ESU@health.qld.gov.au.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to maintaining the privacy, confidentiality and trust that are essential to the care and services we provide.

Regards,
Nick

Metro North Health



We uphold our commitment to health equity through our Values in Action
Respect | Integrity | Compassion | High Performance | Teamwork



Metro North Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land upon which we live, work and walk, and pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

Metro North Health's vision

Creating healthier futures together—where innovation and research meets compassionate care and community voices shape our services.



**Queensland
Government**

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