

Your Health Record and Personal Information

Metro North Hospital and Health Service respects the privacy of patients and their families.

Your previous care history can help us identify which treatments are likely to be safe and effective for you, and can also help reduce the likelihood of repeating tests unnecessarily.

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is subject to privacy and confidentiality legislation which sets the standards for how we handle your personal information.

Information collected in health records

When you attend a health facility, a paper record is made that contains:

- Your name
- Address and contact details
- Nature of the problem
- Family history
- Diagnosis and treatment
- Test results, x-rays and scans
- Medicare and Commonwealth benefit card details

Paper based records

Health information may be contained in paper records, electronic information systems or in other mediums depending on the tests and treatment you have had. Every time you attend a health facility, new information is added to your record. Information will generally be collected directly from you. However, there may be circumstances where we may need to talk to someone else, for example, your doctor or a relative, in an emergency situation. This information may also be included in your record.

Electronic Information Systems

'The Viewer' is a read-only web-based application that sources available electronic information from a number of systems. It is available to all Department of Health Hospital and Health Services (HHS), outpatient centres, community centres and primary care centres. The Australian

Government's MyHealth record is a secure online summary of your health information. You control what goes into it and who is allowed to access it.

Who owns your health record?

Your actual medical record is the property of the hospital and health service; however, you are able to access your information under the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (IP Act).

Using another name

We know some people may wish to use another name (alias) when receiving health services. However, this may prevent us from finding all the information we hold about you and providing appropriate care. Regardless of whether or not you use an alias, we will search our records and attempt to match and merge all records about you.

Protecting your information

All staff are bound by a strict legal duty of confidentiality. It is an offence for our staff to give information about you to anyone except under limited circumstances set out in legislation. *We maintain strict security policies and practices with respect to who has access to personal information about you.* If you have any questions about privacy and confidentiality within Metro North Hospital and Health Service facilities, talk to the privacy contact at your hospital. Please refer over page for contact details.

Who can access your information?

After your discharge from hospital, the information on your care and treatment will generally be forwarded to your chosen general practitioner (GP). This may include the discharge summary, test results or any special instructions for your continuing care. Should you wish to decline this service, please advise staff before you are discharged. Alternatively, if your information has not been sent to your GP upon discharge, your GP may send a request with your signed consent for the release of the information. If you receive health care at a service or residential care facility that is not operated by a Hospital and Health Service, and that facility contacts us to obtain information about you, we will release health information to help your treatment. Your records may be accessed by our administrative support staff to perform tasks such as booking appointments and communicating with other areas of the health service.

When your information may be disclosed

There may be occasions when we need to use or disclose some of your information, such as:

- Ensuring you receive appropriate treatment and follow-up care.
- Undertaking quality assurance activities and other activities that help us monitor and improve the way we operate.

- Professional supervision or mentoring of our staff.
- Patient satisfaction surveys (responding to surveys is entirely voluntary and all responses are anonymous).
- Helping us to prepare information for public health monitoring.
- Addressing liability indemnity arrangements, which may require giving information to a medical expert, insurer, medical defence organisation or a lawyer.
- Providing information to a lawyer who is representing the State or a Hospital and Health Service in relation to a matter.
- Billing or recovering debt in relation to services received.

In some circumstances we are legally obliged to disclose information about you, such as:

- If your records have been subpoenaed for a court case.
- Collecting information about particular health conditions such as life-threatening diseases or diseases with high public health risks.

We will ensure that any such disclosure is limited to only what is necessary. On occasion, information may be used for research that will help us to improve healthcare practices without your consent. All research involving patients must undergo ethics consideration and be authorised by a chief executive before it can be conducted.

Accessing your own health records

You have the right to apply for access to information held in your health records. To apply for access to your clinical records, contact one of the Information Access teams at a facility you have attended (details provided on next page).

When seeking access to your health information, you will need to provide evidence of your identity, such as:

- Passport
- Birth certificate or extract
- Driver's licence or 18+ card
- If the applicant is a prisoner, a copy of the person's identity card certified by a corrective services officer

You will need to provide a certified copy of these documents, unless presenting originals in person. If you don't have any of the listed documents, talk to the Information Access team about other accepted evidence of identity documents. If your application cannot be processed under an Administrative Access scheme, it will generally be referred for processing under the IP Act.

Applying for medical certificates, medico-legal reports and forms

When seeking a medical certificate, we recommend that you request the completion of the certificate at the time of your appointment to avoid delays in receiving the certificate.

When seeking a medico-legal report or the completion of forms for health-related claims or benefits (i.e. insurance, superannuation, illness benefit), please be aware there may be a cost which will be discussed with you.

For enquiries relating to medical certificates, reports or forms please contact the relevant Information Access team (details provided on next page).

Accessing other people's health records

If you want to access someone else's records (e.g. a

relative's), and you do not have or are unable to obtain their consent, you will need to make a Right to Information (RTI) application. Alternatively, where an Enduring Power of Attorney is in place and the patient lacks capacity, an application can be made under the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998*. A solicitor or agent can act on behalf of another person; however, the patient's authority is required in this situation. Other requirements may include evidence of identity for the patient and agent. For further information on accessing records for children or deceased patients please contact the Information Access Unit.

Amending information in your health record

If there is information in your health record that is incorrect or which you do not agree with, you can apply for it to be amended under the IP Act. You will need to provide details of why the information may be inaccurate, incomplete, out of date or misleading. For more information please contact the Information Access Unit at the relevant facility.

Information Access Unit Contacts

Caboolture Hospital, Caboolture Community Health Centre and Kilcoy Hospital

Post: Information Access Unit, Caboolture Hospital, LMB No 3, Caboolture Qld 4510
 Phone: (07) 5433 8863
 E-mail: Cab-HIS-IAU@health.qld.gov.au
 In Person: Health Information Services Counter

Redcliffe Hospital, Brighton Campus, Redcliffe Community Health Centre and North Lakes Health Precinct

Post: Information Access Unit, Redcliffe Hospital, LMB No 1, Redcliffe Qld 4020
 Phone: (07) 3883 7513
 E-mail: IAU-Redcliffe@health.qld.gov.au
 In Person: Volunteers Front Reception Counter (Front Desk)

The Prince Charles Hospital, Chermshire, Nundah, Pine Rivers & North West Community Health Centre

Post: Information Access Unit, The Prince Charles Hospital, Rode Road, Chermshire Qld 4060
 Phone: (07) 3139 4883
 E-mail: IAU-TPCH@health.qld.gov.au
 In Person: Medical Records, Lower Ground Floor, Main Building

Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital

Post: Information Access Unit, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Butterfield Street, Herston Qld 4029
 Phone: (07) 3646 8323
 E-mail: IAU-RBWH@health.qld.gov.au

Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS)

Post: Information Access Unit, Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service, 296 Herston Road, Herston Health Precinct, Herston Qld 4029
 Phone: (07) 3647 6950
 E-mail: STARS_IAU@health.qld.gov.au

RTI / IP Act Decision Makers & Privacy & Confidentiality Contacts

Caboolture or Kilcoy Hospital: (07) 5433 8860
 Redcliffe Hospital: (07) 3883 7513
 The Prince Charles Hospital: (07) 3139 4883
 Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital: (07) 3646 8323
 Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service: (07) 3647 6950

For applications for Metro North Hospital and Health Service please forward to Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital.

Developed by the Health Information Management Service. Information sourced from: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/records-privacy/health-personal/default.asp> and RBWH, About Your Medical Record.

