

## **Riverside Family Practice Medical Practice Privacy Policy**

Revised November 2024

Review Date November 2025

### **1. Introduction**

Our practice is committed to best practice in relation to the management of information we collect. This practice has developed a policy to protect patient privacy in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 ('the Privacy Act'). Our policy is to inform you of:

- the kinds of information that we collect and hold, which, as a medical practice, is likely to be 'health information' for the purposes of the Privacy Act;
- how we collect and hold personal information;
- the purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information;
- how you may access your personal information and seek the correction of that information;
- how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with such a complaint;
- whether we are likely to disclose personal information to overseas recipients;

### **2. What kinds of personal information do we collect?**

The type of information we may collect and hold includes:

- Your name, address, date of birth, email and contact details
- Medicare number , DVA number and other government identifiers, although we will not use these for the purposes of identifying you in our practice
- Other health information about you, including:
  - notes of your symptoms or diagnosis and the treatment given to you
  - your specialist reports and test results
  - your appointment and billing details
  - your prescriptions and other pharmaceutical purchases
  - your dental records
  - your genetic information
  - your healthcare identifier
  - any other information about your race, sexuality or religion, when collected by a health service provider.

### **3. How do we collect and hold personal information?**

We will generally collect personal information:

- from you directly when you provide your details to us. This might be via a face to face discussion, telephone conversation, registration form or online form
- from a person responsible for you
- from third parties where the Privacy Act or other law allows it - this may include, but is not limited to: other members of your treating team, diagnostic centres, specialists, hospitals, the My Health Record system<sup>1</sup>, electronic prescription services, Medicare, your health insurer, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

#### **4. Why do we collect, hold, use and disclose personal information?**

In general, we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information for the following purposes:

- to provide health services to you
- to communicate with you in relation to the health service being provided to you
- to comply with our legal obligations, including, but not limited to, mandatory notification of communicable diseases or mandatory reporting under applicable child protection legislation.
- to help us manage our accounts and administrative services, including billing, arrangements with health funds, pursuing unpaid accounts, management of our ITC systems
- for consultations with other doctors and allied health professional involved in your healthcare;
- to obtain, analyse and discuss test results from diagnostic and pathology laboratories
- for identification and insurance claiming
- If you have a My Health Record, to upload your personal information to, and download your personal information from, the My Health Record system.
- Information can also be disclosed through an electronic transfer of prescriptions service.
- To liaise with your health fund, government and regulatory bodies such as Medicare, the Department of Veteran's Affairs and the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) (if you make a privacy complaint to the OAIC), as necessary.

#### **5. Who do we share your personal information with?**

We may share your personal information:

- If you have requested or consented to the disclosure or
- With other Healthcare Providers involved in your care
- Through the Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (eTP), using the My Health Record System (eg via Shared health Summaries and Event Summaries) and through the use of our online booking and results and reminder services.

- If your Doctor is legally obliged to disclose the information (eg subpoena or court order or suspected child abuse)
- 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 the Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- As part of a confidential dispute resolution process
- If the information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other Health Insurance rebates.

Only people that need to access your personal 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.

### **Quality Improvement and Research**

De-identified health information is used within the Practice to improve the quality of care we provide. Research may also be undertaken using de-identified data if an appropriately constituted ethics committee has approved the activity. Our Practice shares de-identified data with our Primary Health Network through the Federal Government's Quality Improvements Program, to improve patient outcomes and deliver best-practice care. If you have any concerns about this please discuss them in person with our Practice Manager who can exclude you from this de-identified data share.

### **Recalls, Reminders and Patient Education**

Our Practice may send out reminders and invitations by phone, SMS, email and by mail from time to time for scheduled health services or to provide health education resources, and we may text you to confirm appointments, provide information on results, or seek feedback on the quality of our services.

Our Practice may also send out links to education resources to you by SMS and email. We do not regard this as direct marketing. Please let us know if you have any concerns about this.

## **6. How can you access and correct your personal information?**

You have access to the information contained in your medical record. You may ask your doctor about any aspect of your health care including your information in your record.

We believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your doctor and for good health care.

Information in your record can be provided to you by way of an accurate and up to date summary of your care, for instance, if you are moving away and are transferring to a new doctor. Do not hesitate to ask your doctor if you want a summary of your care for any reason. Your Doctor will provide a full explanation of your health summary or medical record, usually scheduling and appointment is the best way to seek this explanation.

Our Practice will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify your personal information held by our Practice is correct and up to date. You may also request that we correct or update your information, this can be done in discussion with your Doctor during a consultation, or you can request in writing to our Practice Manager.

## 6. How do we hold your personal information?

Our staff are trained and required to respect and protect your privacy. We take reasonable steps to protect information held from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. This includes:

- strong password protections are applied
- access to personal information is restricted
- Holding your information on an encrypted database
- Holding your information in secure cloud storage
- Holding your information in a lockable cabinet
- Our staff sign confidentiality agreements

Our practice has document retention and destruction policies

## 7. Privacy related questions and complaints

If you have any questions about privacy-related issues or wish to complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles or the handling of your personal information by us, you may lodge your complaint in writing to

**Practice Manager**  
**Riverside Family Practice**  
**15 Richmond Street**  
**Casino, NSW**  
**2470**  
**Email via [reception@riversidefp.com.au](mailto:reception@riversidefp.com.au)**

We will normally respond to your request within 30 days.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you may refer the matter to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC):

**Phone:** 1300 363 992

**Fax:** 02 61234145

**Post:** GPO Box 5218

Sydney NSW 2001

For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

Or the Health Care Commission NSW on 1800 043 159.

## 8. Anonymity and pseudonyms

The Privacy Act provides that individuals must have the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with our practice, except in certain circumstances, such as where it is impracticable for us to deal with you if you have not identified yourself. Therefore this Practice requires that we are able to identify you whilst maintaining confidentiality.

## 9. Overseas disclosure.

We may disclose your personal information to the following overseas recipients:

- any practice or individual who assists us in providing services (such as where you have come from overseas and had your health record transferred from overseas or have treatment continuing from an overseas provider)
- anyone else to whom you authorise us to disclose it

## **10. Updates to this Policy**

This Policy will be reviewed from time to time to take account of new laws and technology, changes to our operations and other necessary developments. A notification of the updates to the policy will be displayed at our reception desk.

## **11. Privacy and websites**

We do not collect information on our Website, which is only an information providing website