**Richlands Medical Centre Privacy Policy**

Current as of: 13/01/2020 Review date: 13/07/2020

The doctors and staff of Richlands Medical Centre are committed to giving you quality care and service. We value and protect your privacy and treat all patient information as private and confidential. Patients will be assured that their privacy will be protected when visiting our practice. This document outlines how Richlands Medical Centre complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations.

When you register as a patient at Richlands Medical Centre, we get you to read through our Health Information Collection and Use Consent Form. By signing this form, you consent to your personal information being collected, stored and used in accordance with this Privacy Policy.

**Introduction**

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

**Why and when your consent is necessary**

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

**Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?**

Our practice will need to collect your personal information to provide healthcare services to you. Our main purpose for collecting, using, holding and sharing your personal information is to manage your health. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (eg staff training).

**What personal information do we collect?**

The information we will collect about you includes your:

* names, date of birth, addresses, contact details
* medical information including medical history, medications, allergies, adverse events, immunisations, social history, family history and risk factors
* Medicare number (where available) for identification and claiming purposes
* healthcare identifiers
* Health information can be received and added to patients’ records from health service providers who are external to Richlands Medical Centre. Examples of this are records of specialists or pathology reports.

**How do we collect your personal information?**

Our practice will collect your personal information:

1. When you make your first appointment our practice staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.
2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.
3. Information can also be collected through, My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary
4. We may also collect your personal information when you send us an email, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.
5. In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. Often this is because it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from:

* Your guardian or responsible person
* Other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
* Medicare or the Department of Veteran's Affairs (as necessary).

**Why and when your consent is necessary**

When you register as a patient of our practice, you provide consent for our GPs and practice staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

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

We sometimes share your personal information:

* 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 APPs and this policy
* With other healthcare providers
* When it is required or authorised by law (eg court subpoenas)
* When it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient’s life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient’s consent
* To assist in locating a missing person
* To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
* For the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
* When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
* During the course of providing medical services, My Health Record (eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your 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.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

Our practice may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data.

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.

**Retention of health information:**

We hold health information for a minimum of 7 years from the late of the last entry in the patient record, unless the patient was a child in which case the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained the age of 25 years of age. This is because we are required to maintain such records under some laws.

**How do we store and protect your personal information?**

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms; paper or electronic records. Our practice stores all personal information securely in an electronic format which are password protected.

**Dealing with us anonymously**

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

**How do we store and protect your personal information?**

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms;

* electronic records
* x-rays, ct scans, ultrasounds
* paper records

Our practice stores all personal information securely.

Because of the sensitive nature of information collected by us to provide service to our patients extra precautions are taken to ensure the security of that information. Our electronic files are password protected on several levels, and the computer backup tapes are stored securely offsite. We require all of our employees and contractors to observe obligations in confidentiality in the course of their employment/ contract and they must sign a confidentiality undertaking.

When distributing information to other health care facilities such as referral letters, we have templates in built in our database that only includes relevant medical information for the external health care team to contact and facilitate care.

**Consequence of not providing all or part of the information requested:**

There could be serious repercussions to your health if we or others treating you do not know who you are, how to contact you, or be able to contact you in a timely manner. Withholding personal information from those involved in your health care may put your life or health at risk.

Secondary purposes which are directly related to the primary purpose of collection for which we may use or disclose personal information may be for quality assurance, audits, training, billing, liaising with government offices regarding Medicare entitlements and payments and as may be required by our insurers.

**How can you access and correct your personal information at our practice?**

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

On request you may access your personal information held by Richlands Medical Centre. We require you to put this request in writing using our Request for Personal Health Information form. We aim to provide an acknowledgment of your request within 14 days and the information is usually available within 30 days of lodging a request. There are some circumstances where access may be denied under the Privacy Act or other law. Examples of these circumstances are:

* Where providing these details will pose an unreasonable impact on the privacy of another individual; or
* Where your request for access is frivolous or vexatious; or
* Where the information relates to anticipated legal proceedings between Richlands medical centre and you, and the information would not be accessible by the process of discovery in those legal proceedings; or
* Where providing access would be unlawful, would pose a threat to the life of health of an individual, may prejudice an investigation of possible unlawful activity, may prejudice enforcement of laws, or denying access is specially authorised by law.

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 that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to Richlands Medical Centre, Shop 8 Richlands Plaza, 511 Archerfield Rd, Richlands, QLD, 4077.

For further information on requesting your personal information please ask at the front desk. Charges may apply to provide for administration time, printing etc.

**How can you lodge a privacy related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our practice?**

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

If an individual wishes to:

* Complain to us about a breach of privacy; or
* Access his or her own information held by us; or
* Correct any information held by us concerning his or her own information; or
* Find out more about how we manage personal information

That individual can contact:

The Privacy Officer

Richlands Medical Centre

Shop 8 Richlands Plaza, 511 Archerfield Rd

Richlands, QLD, 4077

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner - OAIC. Generally the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond, before they will investigate. For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 336 002.

**Privacy and our Website**

Please refer to Richlands Medical Centre Social Media Policy.

**Policy review statement**

This policy is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis by the privacy officer Dr Angela Bowman or Practice Manager Mrs Olivia Eyre-Watt.

**Disclaimer**

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