

## Use and Disclosure (cont'd)

- ◆ where lawful and practical, individuals can request certain sections of their medical record to be withheld from professionals / agencies. If this is the case, speak to your treating health professional or Clinical Information / Medical Records Department;
- ◆ we may use your information to contact you regarding patient / client satisfaction surveys that help us to evaluate and improve our services.
- ◆ to other health services and authorised parties to help prevent a serious and imminent threat to someone's life, health or welfare, such as in an emergency.
- ◆ it should be noted that when the safety of others is involved, legal regulation overrides the principles of confidentiality. In situations where reports to Community Services and NSW Police are necessary, the consent of the patient / client is not required.
- ◆ to other health services or law enforcement agencies, such as the Police, if you provide us with information relating to a serious crime, including assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and so on.
- ◆ to pastoral care workers, including hospital accredited chaplains, providing spiritual and pastoral care.
- ◆ exchange information that promotes a child or young person's safety, welfare or wellbeing between prescribed bodies (government and non-government agencies), including the police, schools and residential care providers

Should you wish your religion to be withheld from the chaplaincy and pastoral care service please advise the clinical staff or the patient administration staff.

## Contact us

If you have questions or a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, please contact your nearest SWSLHD hospital or community health centre.

### South Western Sydney Local Health District Facilities

Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital  
Bowral Hospital  
Braeside Hospital  
Camden Hospital  
Campbelltown Hospital  
Carrington Centennial Hospital  
Community Health Services  
Fairfield Hospital  
Karitane  
Liverpool Hospital  
Queen Victoria Memorial Home

#### \* SLHD facilities, that share the eMR with SWSLHD are:

Balmain Hospital, Canterbury Hospital, Concord Repatriation General Hospital, Concord Centre for Mental Health, Thomas Walker Hospital (Rivendell), Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney Dental Hospital, Tresillian and SLHD Community Health Services

Further information including brochures in different languages is available at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/utilities/privacy/resources.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/utilities/privacy/resources.asp)

#### Reference:

- ◆ Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002
- ◆ NSW Health Privacy Manual Version 2
- ◆ Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act)

#### Other privacy laws and related legislation:

- ◆ Health Administration Act 1982
- ◆ Mental Health Act 2007
- ◆ Public Health Act 1991
- ◆ Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988
- ◆ Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- ◆ State Records Act 1998
- ◆ Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

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Health  
South Western Sydney  
Local Health District

## PRIVACY INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS/ CLIENTS

### Health Service Obligations

Under the Health Records and Information Privacy (HRIP) Act 2002, the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) is committed to safeguarding the privacy of patient / client information and has implemented measures to comply with these obligations. Our staff are bound by law, by NSW Health Privacy Policy and by strict code of conduct to maintain confidentiality of patient information.

This leaflet explains the collection of your information, the purposes for which it is used and disclosed and how you can access this information.

This information includes your personal details and information relating to the health services provided to you.

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## Introduction

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This brochure explains how and why we collect personal information about you, how you can access your information and how your information may be used within the Local Health District or disclosed to other parties.

- ◆ There are 15 Health Privacy Principles and staff must comply with all principles.
- ◆ The key principles are described in this brochure.
- ◆ Specialised services, including but not limited to, cancer services, palliative care and mental health may have additional or different patient expectations or needs to address regarding information sharing.
- ◆ Personal health information and carer's information of Home and Community Clients (HACC) is disclosed for statutory reporting to State and Commonwealth government agencies. This includes for example Medicare details, notifiable diseases and births and deaths.

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## Access to your information

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You are entitled to request access to all personal information including your medical records held by SWSLHD. Normally you will be asked to apply for this access in writing and to provide identification. There may be a fee involved if you request copies of your personal information or medical record. Access to your personal information may be declined in special circumstances if, for example, giving access would put you or another person at risk of harm.

If you believe any information held about you is incorrect, incomplete, misleading or out-of-date please let us know as you have the right to request a correction. Upon receiving your request the Local Health District will update or make provision to allow you to add a notation to your medical record.

To assist us in maintaining accurate records please advise your health care provider or relevant administrative staff if, for example, you change your address or GP contact details.

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## Collection of Health Information

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Personal information is collected whenever you attend one of the SWSLHD hospitals as an inpatient, outpatient or emergency patient, or if you visit or receive any service from one of our community health services. When you first attend a SWSLHD facility a personal health record is created for you. Your record is given a medical record number or 'MRN' (a unique patient identifier) which enables all your health information to be correctly identified and securely filed.

The information collected from you includes general personal information such as your name, address, date of birth, religion and insurance details. It also includes health information such as present and past illnesses, test results, operations performed, medications and other related clinical information. We may also collect information from other health professionals who have treated you and in an emergency we may need to collect information from a family member, friend, carer or other person to enable us to provide you with the best care, treatment and advice. We only collect information that is relevant and necessary for your treatment and for health service management purposes.

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## Security of Information

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Information about you is stored in a medical record paper file and electronically in the Sydney Local Health District \*(SLHD) and SWSLHD electronic medical record (eMR). This may include information about usage of drugs and alcohol, episodes of mental health, incidence of domestic violence etc.

The electronic information is available to users authorised to access information throughout SWSLHD and SLHD facilities. Some information may also be held in the form of an image including x-ray or photograph, or as an audio or video recording.

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure the information we collect about you is stored securely. We are required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time.

In accordance with the HRIP Act, appropriate systems and policies are in place to protect your information from loss, unauthorised access and misuse.

If you do not wish certain information about you to be collected and recorded, you should tell your treating doctor / clinician and he / she will discuss with you the consequences this may have for your healthcare.

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## Use and Disclosure

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Your clinical information will be used or disclosed by your health care team to provide treatment and ongoing care. In addition, it may be used or disclosed for other related purposes (e.g. sending you a reminder to attend an appointment); and in ways that would be reasonably expected for your care and wellbeing.

This may include, for example, the transfer of information to your GP, to another treating health service, Ambulance Service of NSW or hospital, referral to a health professional, pathology tests, X-rays and so on.

Your personal health information may also be used or disclosed for the following other related purposes:

- ◆ to provide certain information to State and Commonwealth government agencies to comply with certain laws (e.g. reporting notifiable diseases and births and deaths) or for statutory reporting;
- ◆ to comply with a subpoena, summons or search warrant if your personal information is required as evidence in court
- ◆ for billing (Medicare, private health funds, Department of Veterans' Affairs) or for managing legal claims;
- ◆ for purposes related to the operation of the Ministry of Health, for example funding, planning and to conduct safety and quality improvement initiatives;
- ◆ in accordance with the statutory guidelines issued under privacy law, for research purposes approved by a SWSLHD or SLHD Human Research Ethics Committee; for staff and student training purposes; or for planning, financial or management purposes