

# INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY

ATSICHS Brisbane is committed to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all personal information collected in the course of delivering health services, in accordance with the *Australian Privacy Principles 2012*. This document describes how ATSICHS collects and manages your personal information. All staff at ATSICHS Brisbane are bound by our Privacy Policy. You can ask for a copy of our complete Privacy Policy if you would like to.

## What information is collected?

ATSICHS Brisbane collects the following personal and health information from you:

- name, address, phone number, email.
- your Medicare and Centrelink numbers
- ethnicity, next of kin and family details
- social and living circumstances
- past medical history
- current medical issues.

The information is collected only so that ATSICHS Brisbane can provide the best care and services to meet your health needs.

## How do we collect information?

We always try to collect information directly from you, the client. Our staff do this in a way that is respectful and non-intrusive. We collect information through:

- forms that you fill out, agreements that you sign, and through mail, email and telephone calls to you
- information provided by you to staff during a consultation or when receiving a service
- letters from specialists that you have seen who are reporting back to our doctors

Our staff can provide information to patients about why we are collecting information, any laws that require information to be collected, the types of organisations to whom we would usually disclose the information and the consequences of not providing information.

## Why do we collect information?

ATSICHS collects and uses personal and health information for the primary purpose of providing health services and investigating health conditions to:

- make appointments and send reminder notices
- maintain and update your personal client record.
- disclose your health information to health professionals in a medical emergency
- use de-identified information to model or forecast service delivery
- liaise with a person's nominated representatives or family members where needed
- improve our services through quality improvement activities, audits, surveys and program evaluations.

## **Use and disclosure of information**

- Staff will only use or disclose your personal information for the purpose of providing care and treatment to you. Disclosure would normally be to another health professional.
- There may be disclosure to other organisations to make appointments, arrange co-payments, or to regulatory authorities (e.g. Medicare).
- There may be disclosure permitted under the privacy laws, for example court orders and legislative requirements such as cancer registration, vaccination registers and infectious disease notification.
- If you want us to send your records to another practice we will do so only with your signed consent. The GP will approve the request and the records will be sent in a safe and secure manner.
- Aside from where the law says so, staff will not use or disclose your information for any purpose that is not related to your care and treatment, without your consent. If another health service asks for your records because you are a patient there, we will always get your consent first.

## **How do we keep your information private?**

- We take care that the public cannot see personal information on our computer screens.
- We store documents that have personal information in a private way.
- Our staff have particular levels of security access to client files, depending what their job is.
- All staff have their own password to access the computer.
- Our staff talk quietly on the phone and do not say anything that identifies which client they are talking to.
- All private documents are shredded after scanning into the clients file.
- Staff identify clients using three (3) identifiers to make sure that they are discussing the right health record.

## **Data Security and Retention**

Personal information is kept in electronic form and is controlled, monitored and restricted to relevant staff and authorized external users only. Security safeguards are in place to ensure information is protected against loss, interference or modification, unauthorized access or misuse. ATSIChS Brisbane keeps records indefinitely, as electronic records are made inactive or 'hidden' rather than actually being destroyed.

## **Privacy Infringements**

All ATSIChS employees and visiting health professionals are bound by a privacy clause which they sign at the beginning of their employment. Any staff who are suspected of infringing your

privacy will be immediately investigated. If they are found to have done so, disciplinary action or dismissal will follow.

### **Can I access my own health records?**

Yes, you can, Privacy laws state that you can access your own health information

We ask that you make your request in writing and sign it. We then make an appointment for you to see your usual ATSIChS doctor who will find out what records you require and provide them to you. Please be aware that if we give you a copy of your records that we can no longer be responsible for the privacy of that particular copy of your record!

You can also make a request to correct information that is in your record if you think that your record is not accurate, up to date and complete. For this too we will ask for a request in writing and make an appointment for you to see your usual ATSIChS doctor.

### **Subpoena or Court order for records**

These are lawful requests and they are managed in the same way as when records are requested from other practices – the GP approves the request and the records are securely transferred.

### **What if I think that my privacy hasn't been respected?**

Please tell us!

- If you have a query or a complaint, ask to speak to the Practice Manager at the clinic.
- You can also send an email to our Director Clinical Services at [admin@atsichsbrisbane.org.au](mailto:admin@atsichsbrisbane.org.au)
- Or call us on 07 3240 8900

### **Your rights**

We would always prefer complaints and issues to be brought to our attention first so that we have the opportunity to address or rectify them immediately. However, you may choose to contact Queensland's health services complaints agency, The Office of the Health Ombudsman, by calling them on 133 646, emailing them at [complaints@oho.qld.gov.au](mailto:complaints@oho.qld.gov.au) or sending information to PO Box 13281 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4003.

### **Legislative References**

- *Federal Privacy Act 1988*
- Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) as per Privacy Amendment Act 2012, forming part of the Privacy Act 1988
- RACGP 4<sup>th</sup> edition standards 4.2.1 and 3.1.4
- APP 12 Access to information 2014.