

**Vitalis Family Medical Practice  
550 Princes Highway  
Kirrawee NSW 2232**

### **Preamble**

The Federal Privacy Act incorporates 10 National Privacy Principles (NPPs) and Privacy NSW 15 Health privacy Principles (HRIP Act) that set out the rules for the handling of personal information in the private health sector. In the interests of providing quality health care this practice has implemented this privacy policy that complies with the Privacy Act (1988) and the NPPs (2000) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act HRIP Act (2002)

Full details of the NPPs and HRIP Act are available on request. Any enquiries regarding this Policy should, in the first instance, be directed to the Practice Manager.

### **Identifiers**

These are numbers or symbols that are used to identify patients with or without using a name e.g. Medicare or DVA numbers. The practice will limit the use of identifiers assigned by other agencies to those uses necessary to fulfil our obligations to those agencies e.g. Medicare claims.

### **Anonymity**

A patient has the right to be dealt with anonymously, provided that this is lawful and practical. However in the health context this is unlikely to be practical and may in some circumstances be dangerous to the person's health. All requests of this nature will be referred to the Practice Manager.

### **Trans border data flows**

The individual's privacy is protected by federal privacy legislation and State privacy legislation. If patient information is sent by the practice outside of New South Wales, we will take all steps to protect patient privacy.

### **Sensitive information**

Health information is sensitive information for the purposes of the privacy legislation. This means that generally patients' consent will be sought to collect the information that is needed to make an accurate medical diagnosis, prescribe appropriate treatment and to be proactive in patient health care.

### **Complaints**

The best way to deal effectively with concerns and complaints is to communicate openly and respectfully. This often reduces the likelihood of the problem escalating and becoming more difficult to deal with. The Practice Manager or the treating doctor can allay concerns and complaints at a local level. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our Privacy Policy, and satisfaction is not gained with consultation with our Practice, you may complain to the Australian Information Commissioner who can be contacted at:

Office of the Australian Information

Commissioner

GPO Box 5218

Sydney NSW 2000

Privacy Hotline: 1300 363 992

Websites:

[www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/privacynsw](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/privacynsw)

The ways in which this practice complies with the legislation, the NPPs and the HRIP Act are set out below:

### **Collection**

It is necessary for us to collect personal information from patients and sometimes others associated with their health

care in order to attend to their health needs and for associated administrative purposes.

### **Use and Disclosure**

A patient's personal health information is used or disclosed for purposes directly related to their health care and in ways that are consistent with a patient's expectations. In the interests of the highest quality and continuity of health care this may include sharing information with other health care providers who comprise a patient's health care team from time to time.

In addition, there are circumstances when information must be disclosed without patient consent, such as:

- Emergency situations
- By law, e.g. mandatory reporting of some communicable diseases, Subpoenas served to the practice
- It may be necessary to disclose information about a patient to fulfil a medical indemnity insurance obligation
- Provision of information to Medicare or private health funds if relevant for billing and medical rebate purposes

There are some necessary purposes of collection for which information will be used beyond providing health care, such as professional accreditation, quality assessments, clinical auditing, billing, service monitoring activities, improving the administration of the practice and disclosure to a clinical supervisor.

In general, a patient's health information will not be used for any other purposes without their consent.

### **Data Quality**

All patient information held by this practice relevant to the functions of providing health care will be maintained in a form that is accurate, complete and up to date.

### **Data Security**

The storage, use, and where necessary, transfer of personal health information will be undertaken in a secure manner that protects patient privacy. It is necessary for the practice to keep patient information after a patient's last attendance for as long as is required by law (7 years or until a minor turns 25 years) or is prudent having regard to administrative requirements.

### **Openness**

This practice has made this and other material available to patients to inform them of our policies on the management of personal information. On request this practice will, generally, let patients know what sort of personal information we hold, and for what purposes, and how we collect, hold, use and disclose that information.

### **Access and Correction**

Patients may request access to their personal health information held by this practice.

All requests for access to personal health information will be referred to the nominated practice Privacy Officer, our Practice Manager.

The practice encourages patients to ensure that information held is accurate and up to date and to amend any information that is inaccurate.

There are some circumstances in which access will be restricted or denied and the reason for this will be explained.

A charge may be payable where the practice incurs a cost in providing access. This is for administrative costs such as photocopying, etc.

This practice acknowledges the right of children and young people to privacy of their health information. Based on the professional judgement of the doctor and consistent with the law, it might be necessary at times to restrict access to personal health information to parents or guardians.