

WAMS privacy policy

Current September 2019 to be reviewed September 2022 or earlier if there are changes to privacy laws

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our client, 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 do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

We 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 Medicare claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation.

When you register with WAMS, you provide consent for our GPs, nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers to collect and use your personal information to provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only those staff who are authorised and need to see your personal information will be able to.

If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

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 fund details.

Being anonymous or using another name

You have the right to have services anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required by law to only deal with identified individuals. You must still advise a WAMS health practitioner if you wish to be cared for under another name so that we can be sure your health care is accurately recorded and used for continuity of your treatment.

How do we collect your personal information?

Our practice may collect your personal information in several different ways.

1. When you make your first appointment our receptionist will collect your information via your registration.
2. When providing medical services, we may collect further personal information to do with your care and ordering medications.
3. 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
 - your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

When, why and who do we share your personal information?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with authorised persons, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with privacy laws and WAMS privacy policy
- with other healthcare providers including specialists and hospitals
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. court subpoenas)
- when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain consent (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- to assist in locating a missing person
- for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process

Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in providing WAMS services we will not share personal information with any third party or anyone outside of Australia without your consent.

WAMS will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information is stored securely at WAMS as an electronic health record. It may also be stored as and administration record as part of your Aboriginality application and WAMS membership.

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. We require you to put this request in writing and we will respond within 14 days. Records can only be viewed at the service and you must provide adequate proof of identification to do so.

There may be a fee if you would like parts of your record.

WAMS 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 WAMS Practice Manager and have proof of identification to authorise any changes.

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 to the WAMS Practice Manager or Brewarrina Manager. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure within 30 days.

You may also contact the Office of the Australian Information Privacy Commission (OAIC). They are the independent national regulator for privacy and freedom of information.

Generally, the OAIC prefer you to use their online form to make your complaint and will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.