

## Privacy Policy

### Purpose

Barwon South West Telehealth is committed to protecting the privacy of patient and staff information.

Health Services are required by law to protect personal information and comply with the [Health Records Act 2001 \(HRA\)](#) and other relevant legislation relating to confidentiality and privacy. This policy outlines the management of personal information to satisfy the requirements of this legislation.

### Target Audience

This policy relates to staff, patients and their families, visitors, members of the public and external organisations.

### Policy

#### Collection

Health Services only collect personal health information necessary to perform their functions. Information will be collected by fair and lawful means, where possible directly from the patient themselves.

#### Use and Disclosure

In general, information is only used and disclosed for the primary purpose for which it was collected or a directly related secondary purpose. Generally, this is for the purpose of providing care and treatment or purposes directly related. Information may be used or disclosed for other purposes, which are permitted under law. For example: to lessen or prevent a serious threat to public health, welfare or safety. Individual patient consent is obtained for use or disclosures for purposes that are not directly related to primary or secondary purposes.

Health Services will make health information relating to an individual available to another health service provider for the purposes of continuity of care.

Information that is de-identified, ensuring an individual's identity cannot be ascertained, is not covered by the [Health Records Act 2001](#) and may be used and disclosed without consent.

Health Service staff sign confidentiality agreements as part of their employment contract, and are subject to disciplinary action if there is a breach.

#### Data Quality

Health Services must take reasonable steps to keep all current personal information they hold up-to-date, accurate and complete.

## **Data Security and Data Retention**

All reasonable measures are taken to protect personal health information held from unauthorised access, improper use, disclosure, unlawful destruction or accidental loss. Medical records and computer systems have controlled access and only authorised staff members can gain access.

Information that may be needed for future care of the individual or for public health reasons will be kept securely for future retrieval, in accordance with relevant [Retention and Disposal Authorities](#).

## **Openness**

Health Services have complaints processes to address patient concerns relating to the care and handling of their personal information.

## **Access and Correction**

Consumers have the right to request access their personal information, as set out in the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#). In some circumstances access may be refused and an explanation will be provided.

Patients also have a right to request an amendment to incorrect information.

Your health service will provide further information on how you can access your information.

## **Anonymity**

In general, it is impracticable for Health Services to provide healthcare to individuals anonymously.

## **Health Service Privacy information**

Your health service will make available their relevant policies for viewing upon request. Ask a member of your treating team where you can access this information.

Further information is available from the Office of the Health Services Commissioner [www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc) or the Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner [www.privacy.vic.gov.au](http://www.privacy.vic.gov.au).

## **Key Aligned Documents**

Barwon Health Privacy Policy: <http://www.barwonhealth.org.au/privacy-policy>

Western District Health Service Privacy Statement: <http://www.wdhs.net/privacy-statement>

## **Key Legislation, Acts & Standards**

Health Records Act 2001 No. 2 of 2001 Version incorporating amendments as at 10 February 2013 (VIC). Retrieved September 24, 2013 from [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/hra2001144/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/hra2001144/)

Privacy Act 1988. (Cwlth). Retrieved April 17, 2013 from [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/pa1988108/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/pa1988108/)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. Retrieved November 6, 2014 from  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num\\_act/padpa201460o2014317/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/padpa201460o2014317/)

Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cwlth). Retrieved September 24, 2013 from  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/foia1982222/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/foia1982222/)

Retention and Disposal Authorities <http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/disposal-and-transfer/retention-and-disposal-authorities>