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## Patient Rights - Policy

The practice staff members respect the rights and needs of all patients.

**Anti-discrimination**

No patient is refused access to clinical assessment or medical treatment on the basis of gender, race, disability, Aboriginality, age, religion, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual preference or medical condition. Our practice has implemented provisions to assist all patients to access our services including *Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS).*

The practice identifies important/significant cultural groups within our practice including non-English speaking background patients, religious groups and those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. We endeavour to continue to develop any strategies required to meet their needs.

**Right to refuse treatment**

Patients have the right to refuse any treatment, advice or procedure. Our doctors discuss all aspects of treatment and will offer alternatives should a patient seek another medical opinion.

Comprehensive documentation of events when patients refuse treatment or advice, or seek an alternative clinical opinion, are made in the patient record. Contact should also be made to the treating GPs medical defence organisation.

Patients are provided with sufficient information about the purpose, importance, benefits, risks and possible costs associated with proposed investigations, referrals or treatments to enable patients to make informed decisions about their health. (see below for more details on this point).

**Patients in Distress**

There may be times when patients present at the practice in a highly distressed state. These patients require close monitoring and should be afforded dignity when seeking help.

When a patient presents at your practice in a distressed state, staff escort the patient to a spare room, usually the *nurses room can be used, we then*  alert the GP about the situation and continue to monitor the patient until they can be seen by a member of the clinical team. Patients are made comfortable by offering water or tissues.

**Transferring a Patient to Another Service**

Patients are very mobile people and may choose to attend an alternative medical service. To ensure the continuity of care, GPs of our practice assist patients to attend another medical service by facilitating the transfer of their medical record.

When a patient requests a transfer of their medical record, the practice staff will ask for the forwarding medical service address. Usually a written form will need to be signed by the patient with the details of their new GP. If a cost for the transfer will be incurred, the patient is notified by practice staff at the time the request is made.

Practice staff will confirm with the patient the request for transfer and forward the request to their GP. The GP will generate a patient health summary and send it via registered post to the new practice.

The signed form from the patient will be documented in the patient health record retained by the practice. Details of the transfer will also be documented in the patients file.

## Management of a patient refusing treatment or advice

### Policy

This practice takes an active approach to ensure the best outcomes for patients at all times even if they choose to reject investigation and/or management advice.

Our practice endeavors to help our patients understand the importance of medicines and treatment advice to help them make informed decisions about their health care.

Our clinical team can demonstrate how we provide care for patients who refuse a specific treatment, advice or procedure.

### Procedure

Staff and doctors are to respect the right of all patients to make investigation and treatment choices or to seek a further clinical opinion.

Patients should be advised to notify the doctor or nurse if they want to refuse a specific advice or procedure.

An appropriate risk management strategy to be followed includes ensuring that:

* the patient has been provided with the full range of options available, including the risks and benefits of each to enable them to make an informed choice.
* the consequences of the choices made are explained including those of   
  non-investigation and treatment.
* the patient is offered continued monitoring, support or timely referral appropriate to their choices. This may be to another GP within our practice or to another practice.
* full documentation of the actions taken above and any referrals (including dates) to other care providers in the medical record is essential.