



3.1 CWAATSICH Privacy Policy

3.1.1 Policy

The *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Privacy Principles* require CWAATSICH to have a document that clearly sets out its policies on handling personal information, including health information. This document, called a Privacy Policy, and outlines how we handle personal information collected (including health information) and how we protect this information.

CWAATSICH has used the privacy policy template available from the RACGP and this has been adapted to reflect how our clinics collect and use personal information.

Our privacy policy is displayed in the waiting room, on the clinic information sheet, the CWAATSICH website and is readily presented to anyone who asks.

Our collection of information statement informs patients about how their personal health information will be used, including by other organisations to which the clinic usually discloses patient information to, and any law that requires the particular information to be collected. Patient consent to the handling and sharing of personal patient health information is sought and documented early in the process of clinical care, and patients are made aware of the collection statement when giving consent to share health information.

According to the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Privacy Principles*, an organisation may use or disclose personal health information for a purpose (the secondary purpose) which is directly related to the primary purpose of collection without seeking consent, but only if the individual would have a reasonable expectation that the information could be used or disclosed for that secondary purpose.

A directly related secondary purpose for the use and disclosure of personal health information in our clinics includes the many activities necessary for the provision of a health service, such as management, funding and monitoring, as well as complaint-handling, planning, evaluation and accreditation activities.

It is essential to recognise the importance of ‘reasonable expectation’ as many individuals may be unaware of the range of activities for which their personal health information may be used and disclosed, such as the accreditation process. CWAATSICH ensures we tell patients how, and for what purpose, personal health information collected about them could be used or disclosed.

Patients are advised of this ‘secondary purpose’ in several ways, including:



- At the time of the consultation with a general practitioner
- Via the CWAATSICH clinic privacy statement in the practice information sheet
- Via the CWAATSICH clinic privacy statement on signage on the walls of each CWAATSICH clinic, and/or
- By reading, understanding and signing the patient registration form when registering or re-registering at a CWAATSICH clinic, which incorporates the practice privacy statement.

It is important we maintain a patient's right to 'opt out' of the secondary purpose through refusal to consent. If an individual expresses negative views or opposition when made aware of a proposed secondary use or disclosure of their personal health information, this would indicate that they have a reasonable expectation that their personal health information will not be used or disclosed in that manner, and their non-consent is recorded on file.

3.1.2 Procedure

We inform our patients about our clinic's policies regarding the collection and management of their personal health information via:

- A sign at reception
- Brochure(s) in the waiting area
- Our clinic information sheet
- New / re-registering patient information forms
- Verbal means if appropriate, and
- CWAATSICH website.



CWAATSICH privacy policy current as at 01st December 2024 states:

Introduction

This privacy policy is to provide information to you, our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health information) is collected and used within our clinics, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties.

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient of our clinics, you provide consent for our GPs and clinic staff to access and use your personal information, so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare.

Only staff who need to see your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

Why do we collect, use, hold and share your personal information?

Our clinics will 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 directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, clinic audits, accreditation, and business processes (e.g. staff training).

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.

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym unless it is impracticable for us to do so or unless we are required or authorized by law to only deal with identified individuals.

How do we collect your personal information?



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

1. When you make your first appointment our clinic team will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration.

[CWAATSICH has a collection statement attached to/within our registration form.]

2. During the course of providing medical services, we may collect further personal information.

[Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary. CWAATSICH participates in these eHealth services.]

3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us.
4. 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 with whom do we share your personal information?

We sometimes share your personal information:

- with third parties who work with CWAATSICH for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and CWAATSICH policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (e.g. court subpoenas)
- when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- to assist in locating a missing person
- to establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).



Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than while providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our clinics will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that are permitted by law) without your consent.

CWAATSICH clinics will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying CWAATSICH in writing.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our clinics in various forms.

Our CWAATSICH clinics store information in electronic format only.

Our clinics store all personal information securely in the electronic format, in protected information systems and archived records in hard copy format in a secure environment.

Personal information is protected and secured by use of passwords, screensavers, secure cabinets, secure storage of archived paper records, confidentiality agreements for staff and contractors.

How can you access and correct your personal information at our Clinics?

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

CWAATSICH clinics acknowledge patients may request access to their medical records.

We require you to put this request in writing to the Practice Operations Manager and our clinic will respond within a reasonable time, 30 days in writing and will outline any fees that may occur to supply you with your medical records.

Our clinics 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 clinic is correct and current.

You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to the Practice Operations Manager, 94 Edward Street Charleville Qld 4470.

How can you lodge a privacy-related complaint, and how will the complaint be handled at our clinic?

We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing.

We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Complaints can be lodged at your closest CWAATSICH clinic, and you will receive an acknowledgement response within seven days.

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond



before they investigate. For further information visit www.oaic.gov.au or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992.

Policy review statement

The privacy policy is reviewed annually, and any updated information will be added to the website and the information is available in every patient waiting room.

Prior to a patient signing consent to the release of their health information, patients are made aware they can request a full copy of our privacy policy.

Patient consent for the transfer of health information to other providers or agencies involved in the patient's healthcare (e.g. treating practitioners and specialists outside the practice) is obtained at the patient's first visit to one of our clinics through the *New / reregistering Patient Information Form*.

Once signed, this form is scanned into the patient's health record and its completion is noted.