

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION POLICY

revised Feb 2026 Next review date Feb 2027

PATIENT INFORMATION - DETAILED

This document aims to explain clearly how personal information about you and your health is recorded and managed in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD. Your Doctor will be happy to discuss this with you.

Your Personal Health Information

Your Doctor needs information about your past and present health in order to provide you with high quality care.

Information is called “personal health information” if it concerns your health, medical history or past or future medical care and if someone reading it would be able to identify you.

Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD follows the “Code of Practice for the Management of Health Information in Medical Practices” developed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. This means that your personal health information is kept private and secure. The approach used is consistent with the provision of Federal and State Privacy Legislation.

The type of information we may collect and hold includes:

- your name, address, date of birth, country of birth, gender identity, email and contact details;
- Medicare number, DVA number, IHI number for My Health Records and other government identifiers; and
- other health information about you, including: notes of your symptoms or diagnosis and the treatment given to you; notes of your preferences (or the preferences communicated by next of kin responsible for your care) regarding medical treatment; your specialist reports and test results; your appointment and billing details; your prescriptions and other pharmaceutical purchases; your genetic information; your healthcare identifier; and any other information about your race, sexuality or religion, when collected by a health service provider.

To be able to provide comprehensive care our doctors may request or retrieve information from various sources including their previous GP, local hospital, pathology, radiology, pharmacies, specialist rooms, My Health Record, and aged care facility documents/records. Your Doctor will only collect information that is relevant to your medical care. If you are uncertain as to why information is being requested, ask your Doctor.

Your Medical Records

Your Doctor will do his/her best to make sure that your medical records are

- Are accurate, comprehensive, well organised and legible;
- Are up to date;
- Have enough information to allow another Doctor to care for you;
- Do not contain offensive or irrelevant comments about you;
- Contain a summary of your care; and
- Can be used to remind you, with your permission, to return for follow up, check ups and reviews.

Providing your information to other Doctors

The Doctors in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD respect your right to decide how your personal health information is used or disclosed (for example to other Doctors). In all but exceptional circumstances, personal information that identifies you will be sent to other people only with your consent. Gaining your consent is the guiding principle.

It is important that other people involved in your care, such as other Doctors, are informed of relevant parts of your medical history so they can best care for you. After discussion with you, your doctor will write a letter to the other Doctor, which will either be posted, transmitted electronically securely, or given to you to take to them. If you have any concerns about this discuss them with your Doctor.

It is customary for all Doctors in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD to have access to all the medical records. If you have any concerns about other Doctors at Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD being able to see your records discuss your concerns with your Doctor. This allows the doctors to continue to provide informed and safe care for you if one of

them is on leave or unavailable.

Providing your information to others

Your Doctor will not disclose your personal health information to a third party unless:

- You have consented to the disclosure; or
- This disclosure is necessary because you are at risk of harm without treatment and you are unable to give consent – for example you might be unconscious after an accident; or
- Your Doctor is legally obliged to disclose the information (eg notification of certain infectious diseases or suspected child abuse, or a subpoena or court order); or
- The information is necessary to obtain Medicare payments or other health insurance rebates; or
- This disclosure is necessary for the Doctors in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD to carry out a review of their Practice for the purpose of improving the quality of care provided and the activity has been approved under Commonwealth or State legislation or by a medical College. This provides safeguards to protect the confidentiality of the information provided; or
- There is an overriding public interest in the release of the information.

In any of the above cases only information which is necessary to achieve the objective will be provided, and where document automation features of software are employed GPs will review the information to ensure this remains the case.

Using health information for quality improvement and research

We use patient health information to assist in improving the quality of care we give to all our patients by reviewing the treatments used in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD.

We may also use information that does not identify you in research projects to improve health care in the community. You will normally be informed if your information is to be used for this purpose and will have the opportunity to refuse to have your unidentified information used in this way.

In some circumstances, where the research serves an important public interest, identifiable medical records can be used for medical research without your consent under guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This research must be approved by an official ethics committee.

Wherever practicable, the information used for research will not be in a form that would enable you to be identified. The publication of research results, which use your information, will never be in a form that enables you to be identified.

Security of information in Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD

We will ensure that any of your personal information that is stored electronically is kept private. This will protect your record from unauthorised access.

Your access to your health information

You have access to the information contained in your medical record. You may ask your Doctor about any aspect of your health care including information in your record. We believe that sharing information is important for good communication between you and your Doctor and for good health care.

Information in your record can be provided to you by way of an accurate and up to date summary of your care, for instance if you are moving away and are transferring to a new Doctor. Do not hesitate to ask your Doctor if you want a summary of your care for any reason. If you request a summary or direct access to your full medical record your Doctor will need to take out any information provided by others on a confidential basis. Your Doctor will also need to consider the risk of any physical or mental harm to you or any other person, which may result from disclosure of your health information.

Your Doctor will be pleased to provide a full explanation of the health summary or medical record provided. Depending on what is involved, you may be asked to contribute to the cost of providing the information.

International

Where patient consent is provided then information may be sent overseas however Illawarra Aged Care GPs Pty Ltd is

under no obligation to supply any patient information upon receipt of an international subpoena.

Real-time audio/visual recording

Illawarra Aged Care Gps do not routinely use real-time visual recording, duplication and storage of a consultation, including those via telehealth or those conducted remotely. Informed consent will be obtained and documented if real-time visual recording is considered necessary.

Real-time audio recording may be used by some GPs – Only AI scribe platforms that have been vetted and approved by the Practice Management may be used. Approved platforms must comply with the **Australian Privacy Principles**, utilise end-to-end encryption; ensure data is stored on **Australian-based servers** (or meet equivalent Australian privacy protections); provide a clear Data Processing Agreement (DPA) regarding how transcriptions are handled. **Currently Approved Tools:** *Heidi Health (Pro/Enterprise), Lyrebird Health.*

GPs must obtain explicit verbal or written consent from the patient or authorised representative before activating an AI scribe. Patients/representatives can opt-out at any time during the consultation or for future visits.

Resolving your concerns regarding the privacy of your health information

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your health information or regarding the accuracy of the information held by Illawarra Aged Care GPs PTY LTD, you should discuss these with your Doctor. Inaccurate information will be corrected or your concerns noted in the records if it is not possible or desirable to alter the original record.

Anonymous communication and feedback

Should you wish to communicate with the practice anonymously, please provide communication in writing in a sealed enveloped addressed to your GP or the practice director Dr Karakaidos. This may be handed to RACF managers/reception to pass on or posted to Illawarra Aged Care Gps, PO BOX 3044 Thirrhoul NSW 2515.

Further information on Privacy Legislation is available from:

Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner 1300 363 992