

WHAT HAPPENS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

When you become a client of any health service provided by Castlemaine Health a health record will be created. This will contain basic identification data, contact details, information for billing purposes and information about your condition and treatment given. Each time you attend the service new information is added to your record. Some information may be recorded on our computer system and a paper history will be kept to record all relevant information about you.

Why is this information necessary?

It is necessary for us to collect and keep this information to ensure that each health care professional involved in your care has all the facts. Your previous history of care can help us quickly identify which treatments are likely to be safe and effective for you. We rely on information you give staff to help us provide the right care and attention for you. Withholding relevant information may delay your treatment or put your health at risk.

How is my information used?

Your health information will be shared amongst those health care professionals in your treating team. All staff at Castlemaine Health are bound by professional ethics and legal obligations with respect to maintaining the confidentiality of your information.

When you are discharged from our services we usually send a letter to your local doctor, health care provider or the service which referred you to us. This also applies if you are transferred or referred to another hospital or agency. The letter summarises your care with us, your medications and any special instructions we need your healthcare provider to know. Only people who are directly involved in your ongoing care can receive this information about you.

If you do not wish information to be released to your other health care providers please let your Unit Manager or treating Therapist know as soon as possible so that any concerns can be discussed. Refusals need to be documented.

My Health Record

My Health Record is an Australian Government initiative to provide a national digital health record. The *My Health Records Act 2012* allows the upload of patient information to the My Health Record system. Your consent is implied for the uploading of clinical information to your My Health Record, unless you expressly withdraw this consent. The Act also permits access to the information in your My Health Record by authorised clinicians who are providing your care at Castlemaine Health. You can withdraw your consent to upload by expressing this to your clinician during your admission.

In the future, if you are an inpatient in a hospital, or in a medical emergency situation, we will release information about you to facilitate your care if the treating hospital asks us. In all other circumstances, your written consent will be sought prior to the information being released.

Some of your information may be used to:

- help educate staff
- help staff review the care they provide to ensure it is of the highest standard
- plan future services and check that we are running an efficient service
- study disease patterns or treatments offered
- conduct health research and planning.



Wherever possible this information will not identify you. If identification is necessary, your permission will be sought.

Our legal obligations

We are required by law to release information in certain circumstances. These include reporting of specific diseases to databases maintained by the Department of Human Services or other health care organisations. We must also provide medical records to the courts when subpoenaed. We are also required to report statistical information to the Department of Human Services and other agencies, however, no identifying details are included.

How long is my information kept?

Your information is stored securely and can only be accessed by authorised staff. It can only be destroyed according to standards set by the Public Records Office Victoria and other government agencies.

Access to information about me

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 allows people to have access to their health records in most circumstances. All requests for access should be made via the Chief Executive Officer. There is a small fee charged for this service.

Who to contact about Privacy issues

If you have any questions or concerns during your episode of care with us please discuss them with your Unit Manager or treating Therapist.

After discharge, if you have any concerns, you can write to:
Chief Executive Officer
PO Box 50
CASTLEMAINE Vic 3450

More information

The *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Health Records Act 2001* regulate the information handling of personal and health information. They include standards for information collection, use, disclosure and protection of personal and health information. Find out more at www.dhs.vic.gov.au

The Public Record Office Victoria sets the standards for disposal of public records. The Public Record Office Standard on the *Retention and Disposal Authority for Patient Information Records* (PROS 11/06) provides a mechanism for the disposal of records created during and post 1950. Find out more at www.prov.vic.gov.au

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients, consumers and other people using Australian health services to receive high quality and safe healthcare. Find out more at www.health.vic.gov.au