

## Patient Access to Health Records Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy ensures patients of *The Doctors Hope Island* can access their health information in a way that is consistent with:

- **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)** under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.
- **Queensland Health (Right to Information and Information Privacy Acts 2009)**.
- **RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition)**.

### 2. Policy Statement

Patients have the right to request access to their health information, subject to limited exceptions provided by law. The clinic will provide access in a **timely, secure, and transparent manner** while protecting patient confidentiality and privacy.

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All medical records (paper and electronic).
- Health summaries, reports, test results, prescriptions, imaging, and correspondence.
- All staff, contractors, and clinicians at *The Doctors Hope Island*.

### 4. Patient Rights

- Patients have the right to access their own health information.
- Requests can be made for:
  - A copy of their health summary.
  - A copy of specific reports or test results.
  - Viewing their full health record in person.
- Requests must be processed within a reasonable timeframe (30 days) as per APP 12.

## 5. Procedure for Access Requests

### 5.1 Submission of Request

- Patients must submit a written request using the clinic's *Access to Health Records Request Form*.
- Requests can be made:
  - In person at reception.
  - By email (with ID verification).
  - By post.
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### 5.2 Verification of Identity

- Photo ID must be sighted (driver's licence, passport, Medicare card).
- For third-party requests (e.g., solicitor, insurance), a **signed patient consent form** must be provided.
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### 5.3 Processing Requests

- The Practice Manager or delegated staff member reviews the request.
- Access will be provided unless a lawful exception applies (see Section 6).
- Copies can be:
  - Printed and collected securely.
  - Sent electronically (encrypted email or secure portal).
  - Provided as a summary prepared by the treating GP.
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### 5.4 Fees

- A **reasonable fee** may be charged for:
  - Staff time.
  - Photocopying or printing.
  - Postage.
- No fee is charged for lodging the request.

## 6. Grounds for Refusal

Access may be denied (with written explanation) if:

- Access would pose a serious threat to life, health, or safety.
- It would unreasonably impact the privacy of another person.
- The request is frivolous or vexatious.
- Denial is required or authorised by law (e.g., ongoing police investigation).

## 7. Correction of Records

- Patients may request corrections if they believe their health information is inaccurate or incomplete.
- Corrections must be made within **30 days**, and patients informed once updated.

## 8. Complaints

If a patient is dissatisfied with how their request was handled, they may:

1. Lodge a complaint with the Business Manager.
2. If unresolved, escalate to:
  - **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC).**
  - **Queensland Health Privacy Office.**

## 9. Record-Keeping

- A log of all patient access requests is maintained.
- Each request is documented with date, method, outcome, and staff member handling it.

## 10. Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or when legislation changes.