

SHOAL BAY AND ANNA BAY MEDICAL CENTRES

INFORMATION HANDLING PROCEDURES

Shoal Bay/Anna Bay Medical Centre is committed to providing quality health care for its patients. As a fundamental part of this commitment, principals and staff of the practice, recognise the importance of ensuring that our patients are fully informed and involved in their health care.

The Shoal Bay/Anna Bay Medical Centre is, as a health provider in the private sector, bound by the National Privacy Principles. These principles set the standards by which we handle personal information collected from our patients. A copy of these Principles is available for inspection at the reception desk.

As a part of our commitment to providing quality health care it is necessary for us to maintain files pertaining to your health. The files contain the following types of information:

- Personal details (your name, address, date of birth, Medicare number);
- Your medical history;
- Notes made during the course of medical consultations;
- Referrals to other health service providers;
- Results and reports received from other health service providers.

The information held about you is provided by you or arises as a consequence of information provided by you.

Your medical file is handled with the utmost respect for your privacy. The file will be accessed by your medical practitioner, and when necessary, for example in the absence of your usual medical practitioner, by other medical practitioners in the practice. It may also be necessary for our staff to handle your file from time to time to address the administrative requirements of running a medical practice. **Our staff are bound by strict confidentiality requirements as a condition of employment** and these requirements will be observed if it is necessary for them to view your medical records.

At times, to ensure the function of our practice, it may be necessary to allow external organisations to access our practice and possibly, to view the medical records. Any external organisation that provides service or advise to this practice will be aware of the need to preserve the requirement of the Privacy Act and will be bound by a confidentiality agreement.

Ordinarily we will not release the contents of your medical file without your consent. However, we advise that there may be occasions where we will be required to release the details of your file irrespective of whether your consent to the disclosure of the information is given. This will occur where the law requires disclosure, such as pursuant to a subpoena.

We advise that as a patient of this practice you have rights of access to any information we hold concerning you. Should you wish to access this information we refer you to our handout entitled "**ACCESSING YOUR MEDICAL RECORD**".

As part of our commitment to preserving the confidentiality of the information contained in your medical record we advise that strict secure storage policies are observed in this practice. Your electronic records are accessible only by staff of this practice and are protected by a security password. Your paper records are kept in a secure filing area off site and accessible only by practice staff. Each member of staff is well versed in the principles and importance of doctor–patient confidentiality.

Should you, at any time, have a query or complaint in relation to the privacy policies in place at this practice please contact your Doctor or Mrs A Ryan who will be happy to address any concerns you may have. We advise that it is the practice's policy that any complaint is required to be made in writing and addressed to your Doctor and marked *private and confidential*. We advise that we will make our best endeavour to address complaints within 60 days of receipt of your complaint.

Ann Ryan
Practice Manager