

# How Bendigo Health protects your information privacy



- Bendigo Health collects personal, health and sensitive information to help us determine the right care and treatment for you
- Our staff are bound by strict rules about how your personal and health information can be used
- You can ask to see the information we have collected about you

Bendigo Health recognises that your information about you needs special care and protection. This brochure outlines our commitment to the protection of the information we collect, use and tell others about you.

## What information is collected and why?

Your information and the information kept on your files (medical records, community visits, resident information) is the basis for planning what treatment and care is likely to be safe and effective for you. During your contact with us, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals will need to collect information about you, your condition and the outcomes of your treatment and care.

While you have the right to refuse to provide certain information, this may have an impact on our ability to provide appropriate care.

If your care is being delivered by support services other than Bendigo Health we only disclose personal information that is necessary to deliver effective treatment and care. If you have any concerns regarding whom information can and should be shared with, please let us know.

Every time you have contact with us your information is updated to make sure the best possible care and service can be provided. Therefore, we ask that you let a staff member know or contact us when your details change.

## Protecting your privacy

Bendigo Health protects privacy by keeping your information secure from unauthorised access, use or loss. All staff are required to comply with strict policies and procedures concerning collection, use, release and disposal of information about you. All staff are bound by a strict code of conduct and legal obligations to maintain the privacy of your information.

Information is stored securely in a file and only authorised personnel are able to have access to the information. Information is also stored electronically on our computer system. Staff members require a password to access this system.

## How is information used?

Your information is used by the health professionals involved in your care and treatment. There are also other activities that require the use of your information. For example:

- Notifying your local doctor about your admission or contact with us. If you do not want information sent to your doctor, please let a staff member know as soon as possible
- Providing information to another hospital, health care facility or residential facility if you are transferred to ensure that you are treated safely and effectively
- Providing information to community health providers for continuation of care upon your discharge
- Providing information to private health funds, Transport Accident Commission, etc as appropriate
- Billing or debt recovery, as appropriate
- Disclosure to liability insurers and lawyers in reporting an adverse event
- Disclosure to the Health Services Commissioner for complaints conciliation and management

- Research: Information is only made available for research projects approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee to ensure that patient privacy is protected. This is in accordance with the ethical guidelines published by the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and Universities Australia
- Training and education: Bendigo Health participates in the training and education of many health professionals. Therefore, medical, nursing and other students who are under the supervision of an experienced member of staff at all times may be part of the team caring for you. If for any reason, you would prefer not to have a student involved in your care please inform us
- Quality improvement (including complaints management) and clinical audit activities that evaluates and seeks to improve the delivery of a particular treatment or service.

## Contact after leaving hospital

Patients may be contacted after their admission for the following purposes:

- Research or auditing
- Patient feedback survey
- Seeking donations to improve services at Bendigo Health

## What happens to your information

Certain information relating to your hospital visit may be forwarded to the Victorian Department of Health or Human Services. This information is summarised and does not identify you. Rather than being used for personal treatment and care, the information is used for funding, planning and improving health care.

In some circumstances, Bendigo Health is required by law to release information. Details about people who have specific conditions (for example, some infectious diseases and types of cancer) must be reported to databases or registers maintained by the Department of Health or other health care authorities. We may also be legally required to provide information to a court or tribunal.

## How to make a complaint

If you have a complaint about the management of your privacy, you can make the complaint to any member of your treating team or person in charge of the unit. Alternatively register your complaint by contacting the Patient Relations Officer phoning 5454 9079 or emailing [feedback@bendigohealth.org.au](mailto:feedback@bendigohealth.org.au)

## Links and references

There are also external organisations which assist with health care complaints, including complaints about privacy:

- **Health Services Commission** [www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc)  
Ph: 1300 582 113
- **Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner** [www.privacy.vic.gov.au](http://www.privacy.vic.gov.au)  
Ph: 1300 666 444

If you live in a residential aged service you can also approach:

- **Aged Care Complaints Resolution Scheme:** Ph: 1800 550 552

### Contact

### Practitioner /Patient notes

**Freedom of Information Officer**  
**5454 8307**

Department Name | iPolicy Number | Authoriser Title | Reviewed Date (month and year)



The contents of this brochure have been reviewed and approved by consumers