

What Happens to Information About Me?

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BRHS Privacy Statement protecting patient privacy is something we respect at Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS).

Throughout the hospital, you are made aware of why your information is collected, used and disclosed. Wherever possible, we will provide you with choices about how your information is used and to whom it is disclosed. Confidentiality of health information is assured. Information is stored in a secure manner, both paper-based and electronically. We support, promote and comply with the 11 Health Privacy Principles (HPPs) listed in the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

Your health information will only be used and disclosed for the purposes for which it was collected and be protected from misuse.

The collection or sharing of information is limited to that which is necessary, rather than what may be useful in the future. It is important to be clear about the purposes for which information is being shared. It is also important to be open with you about why information is being shared and with whom, what will happen to it, and how you can get access to it and correct it if necessary.

When you become a patient of BRHS, a record is made containing your name, address, contact details and other information such as the nature of the problem for which you seek treatment and the treatment or advice you were given. Every time you attend BRHS, new information is added to your record. Your information may also be included on clinical databases where necessary for your treatment or ongoing care. BRHS will also collect information about you from other health services as necessary and this information will be added to your record.

Why is this information necessary?

Information relating to your health care may be shared with other health care professionals within the treating health service, according to standards set by law, so they can plan your treatment with you. It may also be shared with other health care services, outside the health service you are treated at, when you are discharged so that your care and treatment can be continued.

This information may also be used for research and planning, which will help us provide better healthcare overall. No personal, identifiable information apart from that which is described in this brochure, will leave the hospital without your prior consent.

Individuals who carry out research must follow strict guidelines, gain your consent and maintain the confidentiality of the information they access. If information is taken away, it is de-identified (i.e. details are stripped away so that you personally cannot be identified).

You may be asked to participate in Quality Improvement activities, clinical trials or research-you can refuse. Information is only made available for research projects which have been approved by the Ethics & Research Committee following thorough investigation and review.

How is my information protected & who has access to it?

When you are an inpatient, information about you is stored in a central paper medical record which is stored securely within the Health Information Department.

If you are an outpatient in community health, allied health or dental services, information is stored in a paper, scanned or electronic record, all linked under the one unit record number across BRHS.

Information about you is also stored within the BRHS computer systems. Although your paper medical record can only be used by one healthcare professional at a time, the information contained within the computer system allows multiple healthcare professionals to access your information whenever necessary. Details such as your name, address, date of birth, telephone number as well as test results, diagnosis and treatment information are available, electronically to healthcare professionals who are involved in your care.

If you are transferred to another hospital, some information about you will be made available to healthcare professionals at the other hospital. Again, this is necessary to ensure that you receive quality care and avoid duplication of tests and clinical assessments.

If you have any concerns or you do not wish for information to be shared for purposes directly related to your care you should speak to a member of your health care team or the **Patient Liaison Officer on (03) 51503333, ext 856.**

BRHS maintains strict policies with respect to who receives passwords and access to your personal information. All staff are bound by a strict code of conduct with respect to maintaining the confidentiality of your information.

Your Local Doctor & Community-Based Providers

It is routine practice that we fax or electronically transfer a discharge letter to your local doctor when you go home after an admission or Emergency Department attendance. This letter summarises your stay at hospital, your medication and any special instructions we need your doctor to know about. If you do not wish for this information to be sent to your doctor, please let your Nurse Unit Manager know as soon as possible.

It is also routine that we send a typed letter to your local doctor following an outpatient Consultant visit, although this is not the case for every visit. Please let your doctor know if you do not want this to occur.

Sometimes your local doctor will write or telephone us for additional information about your treatment. In this situation, we routinely release information to the doctor whom you have specified or nominated as your local doctor on your patient registration form.

Information about you will be disclosed to community-based providers that are involved in your care. This information may be shared electronically or by other methods such as phone, fax or mail.

If you refuse disclosure of your health information to your local doctor or community-based providers, this may have an adverse effect on your health and ongoing care.

Other Hospitals or New Doctors

If you are seen at a hospital outside BRHS or you see a new local doctor, in some instances they may contact us to obtain information about you so that they can treat you safely and effectively. In an emergency situation, we will release personal information about you to facilitate your care. In all other circumstances, your written consent will be sought prior to the information being released.

We may contact you after you have gone home

We want to know what you think of the services BRHS provides. You may receive a postal survey. Your response will be anonymous and confidential and it is completely voluntary. If you do not want to receive any surveys, please contact the Health Information Manager on (03) 51503487. Some patients may be invited to join support groups depending on your illness.

Other people who receive information about you

In some circumstances, BRHS is obligated, by law, to release personal information about you.

Examples of this include:

- ❖ Presentation of your medical record as evidence in court when subpoenaed (in case of legal action);
- ❖ We have to report information about you to the Department of Human Services.

Can I have access to information about me?

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) and the Health Record Act 2001(Vic), you have the right to request access to your patient record and personal information held by BRHS.

If there is information in the patient record which is incorrect or you do not agree with, you have the right to request that it be corrected.

Requests for access to your BRHS Patient Record can be made in writing to the **Health Information Manager, Health Information Service, BRHS, PO Box 474, Bairnsdale 3875**. A fee is charged for FOI requests unless you are a health care card/pension card holder.

Who do I contact for more information?

If you have any question regarding what happens to the information about you please contact the **Patient Liaison Officer** at BRHS on **(03) 51503333, ext. 856**.

You can also contact the **Health Information Manager** on **(03) 51503487**.

Further information is also available at the BRHS website www.brhs.com.au, listed under the FOI Statement II.

Australian Privacy Principles

BRHS supports and complies with the 11 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) relation to health information under the Health Records Act March 2014.

1. Open & transparent management of personal information
2. Anonymity & pseudonymity
3. Collection of solicited personal information
4. Dealing with unsolicited personal information
5. Notification of the collection of personal information
6. Use or disclosure of personal information
7. Direct marketing
8. Cross-border disclosure of personal information
9. Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers
10. Quality of personal information
11. Security of personal information

We welcome feedback at:

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service PO Box 474 Bairnsdale VIC 3875
P (03) 5150 3333 F (03) 5152 6784 E email@brhs.com.au www.brhs.com.au

The information in this brochure is intended as a guide to one of the services provided by BRHS and is correct at the time of publishing. **Issue date:** JUNE 2014 **Our Ref:** GI0012

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service is located on the traditional land of the Gunai Kurnai people.