

Confidentiality

Everyone working for Swan Hill District Health has a moral, ethical and legal duty to keep information about you confidential. We only pass on information about you to those who are involved in your treatment, or if authorised by you or by law. We have strict rules on who can access or receive your personal information and all staff are bound by these.

How can I access my Health Record?

You have the right to access your medical record under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic). Requests for access should be directed to the 'Freedom of Information Officer' at Swan Hill District Health.

You may write to us, or you can request an 'FOI Request Form' from Reception, or print one from our website.

Freedom of Information requests can take up to 30 days to be processed.

Why do we collect this information?

Your medical record is the means of communication for the health professionals at Swan Hill District Health who contribute to your care.

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. It is a means of communication amongst your healthcare team.

MORE INFORMATION:

If you have any concerns or queries regarding the information that is collected and how it may be used, please speak with your treating team or contact the following staff:

CHIEF HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGER:

Phone: (03) 5033 9341

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER:

Phone: (03) 5033 9489

PRIVACY & DATA PROTECTION COMMISSIONER

Phone Toll Free: 1300 666 444

Web site: www.cpdp.vic.gov.au

Email: privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au

Protection & Use of Your Personal & Health Information



Swan Hill District Health
PO Box 483,
Swan Hill, Vic 3585

www.shdh.org.au

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What do we collect?

When you become a patient of Swan Hill District Health as an inpatient, resident of an aged care facility, or through our Emergency, Community or Outpatient services, a health record is created. This will contain your name, address, date of birth, contact details, information required for billing purposes, and medical information regarding the nature of the problem you are seeking treatment for, together with your past medical history and future treatment plans.

Your health information or your medical record is the basis for planning your care and treatment. The healthcare professionals who care for you at Swan Hill District Health compile your medical record.

While you have contact with our health service your treating team will collect ongoing information about you, your condition and how you respond to treatment. Every time you attend the health service new information is then added to your health record.

We ask you for information so that you can receive the proper care and treatment. We keep this information, together with details of your care because it may be needed if we see you again.

Who has access?

YOUR TREATING TEAM

So that we can work together for your benefit while you are a patient here, your health information will be shared among those health professionals that are in your treating team. Other health care facilities that you attend in the future may ask to have access to your health information to assist in planning your ongoing care.

Who has access?

YOUR TREATING TEAM

Sometimes your local doctor may request access to your medical information. It is usual procedure to provide a discharge summary to your local general practitioner.

RESEARCH, TEACHING AND QUALITY

We may use some of your health information for the purpose of research, statistical analysis or quality improvement activities. We may also use the information for teaching of our staff. Whenever possible we remove any information which identifies you before it is used for this purpose. Information in these instances is only available to approved health professionals who must abide by our confidentiality policy.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

We are required by legislation to report information to the following government authorities where relevant (these authorities are also bound by privacy laws and principles):

- Victorian Cancer Registry
- Victorian Perinatal Data Collection Unit
- Communicable Diseases Prevention & Control Unit
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Safer Care Victoria
- Victorian Agency for Health Information
- If the record is subpoenaed for court
- Where there is immediate danger to the community

We are also required to submit statistical information to the Department of Health. This information contains no names.

How is the information stored?

The information collected about you is stored in secure areas and is only accessed by authorised staff. It can only be destroyed in accordance with the standards set by the Public Records Office Victoria and the Public Records Act 1973. The main patient medical record is kept for a minimum of 15 years after the last attendance, and 30 years if you



What if I object to sharing my information with person(s) who would normally have access?

If you wish to withdraw consent from sharing your information with person(s) or agencies that would normally have access to your information (e.g. you may not wish your local GP to receive a copy of the discharge summary), and we are not bound by legislation to report the information, then you can state this on the 'Patient Authority for Release of Information' form, which you will be asked to sign on admission or pre-admission to the health service.