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Privacy Policy

Introduction

We are committed to protecting the privacy of patient information and to handling your personal information in a responsible manner in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012, the Australian Privacy Principles and relevant State and Territory privacy legislation (referred to as privacy legislation).

This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use and disclose your personal information, how you may access that information and how you may seek the correction of any information. It also explains how you may make a complaint about a breach of privacy legislation.

This Privacy Policy is current from 2 May 2023. From time to time we may make changes to our policy, processes and systems in relation to how we handle your personal information. We will update this Privacy Policy to reflect any changes. Those changes will be available on our website and in the practice.

Why do we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information?

Our main purpose for collecting, holding, using and disclosing your personal information is to provide healthcare services to you in a safe, efficient and responsive manner.

Collection and holding of personal information

Why and when your consent is necessary

When you register as a patient at our practice, we collect personal information that is necessary and relevant to provide you with the best possible, individualised medical care. Only staff who need to view your personal information will have access to it. If we need to use your information for anything else, we will seek additional consent from you to do this.

What personal information do we collect?

The information we will collect about you includes your:

- Name, address, date of birth, contact details and patient healthcare identifier for identification purpose.
- Medical information such as your medical history, medications, allergies, smoking/alcohol use history, immunisations, family history, social history and risk factors for common chronic diseases.
- Medicare number, concession card number and Centrelink Youth Allowance statement (where applicable) for identification and Medicare claiming purposes.
- Private health fund details to facilitate appropriate referrals to private specialists.
- Credit card and direct debit details for payment or pre-payment of our services. Credit card details are stored, with your consent, by the AutoMed system when appointments are booked. Your card is securely tokenised and not visible to the AutoMed System or to the clinic. Card details are not exposed to any 3rd parties and cannot be used for any payments other than services provided at this clinic.

Dealing with us anonymously

You have the right to deal with us anonymously or using a pseudonym unless we are required by law to only deal with identified individuals. Should you choose to deal with us anonymously or under a pseudonym which is not on your Medicare card, you will be required to pay for your consults in full and a Medicare rebate will not be payable.

How do we collect your personal information?

Wherever practicable we will only collect information from you personally. However, we may also need to collect information from other sources such as treating specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services, pathology providers, diagnostic imaging services, Medicare, your health fund or DVA where necessary. Information can also be collected through My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary) if you are registered for this and have consented to information sharing with our clinical staff.

We collect information in various ways, such as over the phone, SMS communication, in writing, in person at our practice or over the internet if you communicate and transact with us online (i.e. our website, email, clinic app, online booking system, social media) . This information may be collected by clinical and non-clinical staff (i.e. Practice manager, receptionists).

In emergency situations we may also need to collect information from your next of kin, relatives or friends.

We may be required by law to retain medical records for certain periods of time depending on your age at the time we provide services.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms such as electronic records (including clinically relevant photographs). Personal information that we hold is protected by:

- securing our premises;
- placing passwords and varying access levels on databases to limit access and protect electronic information from unauthorised interference, access, modification and disclosure;
- confidentiality agreements for staff, with regular audit and monitoring of staff access to personal information.

Use and disclosure of personal information

When, why and with whom do we disclose your personal information?

We will treat your personal information as strictly private and confidential. We will only use or disclose it for purposes directly related to your care and treatment, or in ways that you would reasonably expect that we may use it for your ongoing care and treatment. For example, the disclosure of blood test results to your specialist or uploading your health summary to My Health Record which you have registered for. We also from time to time provide de-identified statistical data to our Primary Health Network for quality improvement purposes.

There are circumstances where we may be permitted or required by law to disclose your personal information to third parties. For example, to Medicare, Police, insurers, solicitors, government regulatory bodies, tribunals, courts of law, hospitals, or debt collection agents.

We may need to occasionally disclose information about you to outside contractors who work with our practice for business and accreditation purposes such as an IT service provider or GP Accreditation Agencies. We impose security and confidentiality requirements on how they handle your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principle. Outside contractors are required not to use information about you for any purpose except for those activities we have asked them to perform.

Other than for the purpose of providing medical services or as otherwise stated above, our practice will not share your personal information with any third party without your consent.

We will not transfer your personal information to an overseas recipient unless we have your consent or we are required to do so by law.

Sensitive information

Sensitive information (e.g. mental health diagnoses) is often included in your Medical history and Health summary on our electronic records to ensure we provide thorough medical care to our patients. These may sometimes show up in referral letters to your Specialists. If you are uncomfortable with this and prefer to have it omitted, please discuss this with your doctor.

Access to your personal information and correction of it

You are entitled to request access to, and correction of, your personal information. You can lodge this request either via email (admin@thecranegp.com.au) or by calling the practice on 03 9088 3258. Our practice will acknowledge your request within 3 business days. We can post the requested information to your postal address, or we can email the information to you in accordance with our Email Policy.

There may be a fee for the administrative costs of retrieving and providing you with copies of your medical records.

Our practice will take reasonable steps to ensure that your personal information is accurate, complete, up to date and relevant. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our practice is correct and current. If you wish to correct or update your information, please make your request in writing to admin@thecranegp.com.au or by post to The Crane General Practice (Attn: Practice Manager), 35 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill VIC 3068.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about the privacy of your personal information, we request that you contact us in writing. Upon receipt of a complaint we will consider the details and attempt to resolve it in accordance with our complaints handling procedures.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of a complaint or the outcome, you may make an application to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) by calling 1300 363 992 or visiting their website www.oaic.gov.au.

Contact

Please direct any queries, complaints and requests for access to medical records to our Practice Manager in one of the following ways:

- Email: admin@thecranegp.com.au
- Post: The Crane General Practice (Attn: Practice Manager), 35 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill VIC 3068