

South Morang Medical Centre

Privacy Policy



Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how South Morang Medical Centre complies with confidentiality and privacy obligations. As an organisation, SMMC's principal concern is and always will be the health of patients who visit our practice. A high level of trust and confidentiality is required to ensure the confidence of the patients we serve.

Patients will be assured that:

- their privacy will be protected when visiting the Medical Centre,
- the information collected and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date, and
- that they can access their information for review.

Health information

South Morang Medical Centre recognises that the information we collect is often of a highly sensitive nature and as an organisation we have adopted the highest privacy compliance standards relevant to SMMC to ensure personal information is protected.

For administrative and billing purposes, and to enable the patients to be attended to by other medical practitioners at SMMC, patient information is shared between the medical practitioners and other health providers at the medical centre. SMMC and the medical practitioners may collect personal information regarding patients (including health information) for the purpose of providing medical services and treatment.

Personal information collected will generally include:

- the patient's name, address, telephone number and Medicare number,
- current drugs or treatments used by the patient,
- previous/current medical history, including, where clinically relevant, a family medical history, and
- the name of any health service provider or medical specialist to whom the patient is referred, copies of any letters of referrals and copies of any reports back.

SMMC may access information:

- provided directly by the patient,
- provided on the patient's behalf with the patient's consent,

SMMC keeps health information for a minimum of 7 years from the date of last entry in the patient records unless the patient is / was a child in which case the record must be kept until the patient attains or would have attained 25 years of age.

Accessing your health information

On request, you may have access to your medical record held by SMMC, except in circumstances where access may be denied under the 'Privacy Act' or other laws. For example, access can be denied when letting a patient see their records would pose a serious threat to the patient's life or health, or the life or health of someone else (such as a relative, the health service provider, staff or other patients).

The threat must be significant, for example where there is a serious risk the patient may cause self-harm or harm to another person if they saw the information. The threat can be a risk of danger to physical or mental health, but does not need to be imminent – it can be a serious threat that might occur sometime after access is granted.

Can I transfer my medical records to a new medical practitioner?

Yes, patients have the right to attend a medical practitioner of their choice and are free to leave a practice and attend another if they wish.

How do I arrange this?

There is a professional obligation for a medical practitioner to provide a new treating medical practitioner with all of the information that they need to take over a patient's care.

This is usually done by the patient completing a 'transfer of file' form and producing an original source of identification for the receptionist to make a copy of.

When a patient requests that their health records be transferred to a medical practitioner outside SMMC, the medical practitioner has an obligation to provide a copy or summary of the patient health record in a timely manner to facilitate care of the patient.

For medico-legal reasons, our practice retains the original record and provides the new medical practitioner with a summary or a copy. If a summary of the patient's health record is provided to the new medical practitioner, a copy of the summary should be kept on file for record purposes.

A patient can also have a copy of his/her medical records transferred by asking the new medical practitioner to arrange for the transfer of records from the previous treating medical practitioner. The patient will still have to attend SMMC to fill in appropriate forms.

SOUTH MORANG MEDICAL CENTRE PRIVACY POLICY

Current as of: 28 October 2022

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how South Morang Medical Centre complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations. As an organisation, our priority is and always will be the health and wellbeing of our patients. 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 Victorian privacy legislation (referred to as privacy legislation).

Why and when your consent is necessary?

Collection

When you register as a patient at South Morang Medical Centre, you provide consent for our GPs, medical and non-medical staff. We collect information that is necessary and relevant to provide you with medical care, treatment, and manage our medical practice.

Only staff that needs to see 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. All staffs are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

This information may be stored on our computer medical records system and/or in hand written medical records. 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, radiologists, pathologists, hospitals and other health care providers. We also use it for directly related business activities, such as financial claims and payments, practice audits and accreditation, and business processes (e.g. staff training).

We collect information in various ways, such as over the phone or in writing, in person at South Morang Medical Centre or over the internet if you transact with us online.

This privacy policy is to provide information to you as our patient, on how your personal information (which includes your health summaries) is collected and used within our practice, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties with your consent.

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

We sometimes share your personal information with:

- ⑦ Third parties who work with our practice for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with Australian Privacy Principles and this policy
- Other healthcare providers
- When it is required or authorised by law (e.g. court subpoenas)
- When it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a patient's life, health or safety or public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain the patient's consent
- To assist in locating a missing person
- To establish, exercise or defend an equitable claim
- The purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- When there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (e.g. some diseases require mandatory notification)
- During the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (e.g. via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary).

Only people who need to access your information will be able to do so. Other than in the course of providing medical services or as otherwise described in this policy, our practice will not share personal information with any third party without your consent.

We will not share your personal information with anyone outside Australia (unless under exceptional circumstances that is permitted by law) without your consent.

Our practice will not use your personal information for marketing any of our goods or services directly to you without your express consent. If you do consent, you may opt out of direct marketing at any time by notifying our practice in writing.

How do we store and protect your personal information?

Your personal information may be stored at our practice in various forms. South Morang Medical Centre uses the following methods to store information. Paper records, electronic records, visual records (x- rays, CT scans, videos and photos and audio recordings)

South Morang Medical Centre stores all personal information securely. Your personal records are held in electronic format, in protected information systems, and hard copy format in a secure environment. All staff sign a confidentiality agreement and use passwords for entering into systems, as security.

- Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website.
- Any personal information that patients have given to us, including email addresses, will be used only in the following ways:
- Personal data will be securely stored.
- We will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission.
- We do not automatically collect your personal email address, when you visit our website. It is provided on the registration form or by the patient.
- If we join with a third party to provide services and you sign up for those services, we will share your name and other contact details, necessary with our partner to provide those services to you.
- If you view specific pages or download information from specific pages on our website, we will track and add the number of your visits to the aggregate number of visits by all users in order to better design our website.
- We may share aggregate demographic information with our affiliates. This is not linked to any personal information that can identify you or any other visitor to our website.

Policy review statement

South Morang Medical Centre has the right to change the Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to South Morang Medical Centre Privacy policy, we will address the changes promptly and update the revision date of this document.