

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Privacy Policy		
<b>Version:</b>	2		
<b>Person Responsible:</b>	Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	12/2015	<b>Date to be Reviewed by CQI Committee:</b>	19/12/2017
<b>Board Approval Date:</b>	28/1/2016	<b>Revision Date:</b>	19/12/2016

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how Nurses on Wheels (NOW) complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

NOW's principal concern is and always will be the health of patients to whom we provide care. We acknowledge that a high level of trust is required to ensure the confidence of the patients we serve.

We endeavour to manage personal information in an open and transparent way, so that patients and others from whom we obtain personal information may be assured that:

- their privacy will be protected when dealing with NOW;
- the information collected and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date (to the best of our knowledge);
- they can access their information to check its accuracy and to make corrections.

## Collection of health and other information

NOW recognises that the information we collect is often of a highly sensitive nature and we have adopted the highest privacy compliance standards relevant to NOW, to ensure personal information is protected.

We collect personal information:

- for any purpose advised to the patient at the time of collection of the information;
- as required for delivery of health services to the patient;
- as required for the ordinary operation of our services (e.g., to refer the patient to a medical specialist or other health service provider);
- as required or permitted by law.

Personal information (including sensitive information) that we collect may include, for example:

- a patient's name, age, address, telephone number and Medicare number;
- details of any guardian or emergency contact person;
- current drugs or treatments used by the patient;
- medical history, including, where clinically relevant, a family medical history; and
- the names of any health service providers to whom the patient is referred, copies of any letters of referrals, and copies of any reports.

We may collect this information from, for example:

- a patient directly

- a guardian or family member
- other health service providers, including hospitals
- health insurance companies
- other people or organisations with the patient's consent.

### **Disclosure of information**

We may disclose personal information:

- for any purpose advised to the patient at the time of collection of the information;
- as required for delivery of health services to the patient;
- as required for the ordinary operation of our services (e.g., general administrative purposes, providing information to other health service providers);
- as required or permitted by law; or
- where there is a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, or safety; or a serious threat to public health or public safety.

NOW may use or disclose personal information for secondary purposes such as quality assurance, training, billing, and liaising with government offices including Medicare.

### **Security of information collected**

Information may be stored electronically and/or in hard copy form. All electronically stored documents are retained on our file servers and are password-protected on several levels, with regular backups of data. Hard copy documents are stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked storage area on the premises at Nurses On Wheels. This is checked every night to ensure the room is secure.

NOW 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.

NOW instructs its employees to maintain the confidentiality of information received in the course of their employment, and all employees and contractors are required to sign confidentiality agreements.

### **Accessing your information**

On request, you may have access to your medical record held by NOW, except in circumstances where access may be denied under the *Privacy Act 1988* 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).

If you believe that the personal information we hold about you is inaccurate, please inform your nurse when they next attend to you or contact our main office so that corrections may be made.

## **Transfer of records**

Patients have the right to engage another service of their choice and are free to request a copy of any relevant patient notes. For legal reasons, our organisation retains the original records and provides the new medical provider with a summary or copies of the records. If a summary of the patient's health record is provided to the new practitioner, a copy of the summary is kept on file.

A patient can also have a copy of his/her medical records transferred by asking the new medical/nurse provider to arrange for the transfer of records from the previous treating medical provider. NOW may charge a fee for retrieving and copying patient records, to cover the administrative costs involved.

## **Online privacy**

Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable visiting our website. Any personal information that patients give to us, including email addresses will be stored, disclosed or used in compliance with the *Privacy Act* and the Australian Privacy Principles.

- We will not provide your personal data to any third party without your permission other than in accordance with this policy or when otherwise permitted or required by law.
- We do not automatically collect your personal email address.
- We do not disclose personal information to any person or organisation located outside Australia.
- 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 information necessary for our partner to provide the services to you.

*NOW website may contain links to other sites. NOW is not responsible for the privacy practices of any linked sites. We encourage users to read the privacy statements of each and every linked website that they choose to visit.*

## **Changes to the Privacy Policy**

NOW may change this Privacy Policy at any time. If there are updates to NOW's Privacy Policy, we will publish an updated version of this document.

## **Obtaining further information**

If patients require more information regarding NOW, its services and facilities, they may:

- ask a staff member, or
- visit the NOW website at <http://www.nursesonwheels.org.au>

**Contact information:** If you have any queries regarding our Privacy Policy please contact:

The Chief Executive Officer  
Nurses on Wheels  
90b Highgate Street  
Bexley NSW 2207  
02 9502 3422  
jill@nursesonwheels.org.au

*Disclaimer*

*While we make every effort to protect your privacy, we may need to disclose personal information when required by law where we have a good-faith belief that such action is necessary to comply with a current judicial proceeding, a court order or legal process served on our organisation or site.*

**Relevant Legislation**

Privacy and Personal Information Act 1988  
Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002

**Relevant Standards**

Home Care Standards (C'wealth) EOs 1.3  
Disability Service Standards (NSW) 4; 6

**Board Approval**

**Chairman's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Board Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy Index Information**

Version	Date Approved	Reason
2		Adhere to Home Care Standards; NSW Disability Service Standards
<b>Section:</b>		3
<b>Section Name:</b>		Service User Rights and Responsibilities
<b>Policy Area:</b>		Privacy and Confidentiality
<b>Reason for Change:</b>		Adhere to Home Care Standards; NSW Disability Service Standards