



Austin & Repatriation
Medical Centre

PRIVACY POLICY

Policy No. (new policy)	75/02
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CONTACT: Director Corporate Development

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POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The Austin & Repatriation Medical Centre (A&RMC) complies with all Victorian legislation relating to confidentiality and privacy including the *Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)*, the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)* and the *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)*. This policy documents the policies on the management of information which includes collection, use and disclosure and access of personal information at A&RMC.

Personal information is recorded information or opinion, whether true or not, about a readily identifiable individual. It includes information identifiable through a unique identifier such as a Unit Record Number (UR), test number, episode number, employee number, client number, tax file number, etc.

POLICY:

- A&RMC will not use or disclose information of a personal nature, except to the extent that this is required, authorised or permitted under law. A&RMC staff are required to be trained to understand their obligations under the laws relating to maintaining privacy.
- A&RMC will only collect information that is necessary to perform its functions. We will always try to do so in a fair, lawful and non intrusive way. Wherever possible, we will collect information directly rather than from third parties. Except in an emergency situation, we will do our best to advise patients if we collect information about them from a third party.
- When A&RMC collects information we will advise the patient why we are collecting it, draw their attention to any law that requires it to be collected, the organisations or type of organisations to whom we usually would disclose it and the consequences for the patient if the information was not provided.

- A&RMC will collect and use patient information for the purpose of providing care and treatment to patients. Unless the patient has instructed A&RMC not to do so, A&RMC may disclose patient information to other health care providers for the purpose of providing further treatment. In an emergency situation, A&RMC will disclose information necessary to allow treatment, regardless of the patient's instruction to A&RMC regarding information sharing.
- A&RMC may use or disclose personal information for other purposes which are permitted under the privacy laws. Examples include: quality assurance activities, research, teaching, public relations, fund raising, mandatory government reporting and statistical analysis. Where possible, information will be de-identified. Where there is no legal obligation on A&RMC to collect or disclose such information, patients have the right to opt out of such activities. A&RMC will inform patients about these uses via the 'Protecting Your Privacy' brochure.
- Aside from where the law specifically allows A&RMC to use or disclose health information, we do not use or disclose information for purposes that are unrelated to the purposes for which we collected the information, without the patient's consent.
- A&RMC will ensure that information is accurate, complete and up to date. Retention of records is in accordance with relevant legislation such as the *Public Records Act (Vic) 1973*, the *Freedom of Information Act (Vic) 1982* and accreditation guidelines. A&RMC is required to hold some records for extended periods. From time to time, A&RMC will conduct audits of records and databases to ensure that the information held is accurate and up to date.
- A&RMC has systems in place to monitor and control access to information. A&RMC staff and authorised external users only have access to the records and computer systems that their duties require. A&RMC computer systems uniquely identify individual users to ensure that access is appropriately authorised. All transactions involving information of a personal nature that can be audited are traceable to an individual A&RMC staff member.
- All A&RMC staff are required to abide by the A&RMC privacy policy. In circumstances where legal sharing of information is required with an outside service provider, contractors will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. When entering into an agreement, the contractor agrees that the information will only be used and disclosed in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement.
- Where an individual authorises A&RMC in writing to release health information to another individual or organisation, a confidentiality agreement with that organisation or individual is not required.
- A&RMC will provide access to personal information held about patients, consistent with the *Freedom of Information Act (Vic) 1982*. However, there are some exceptions to this. For example, A&RMC is not obligated to give patients access to health information held about them, where doing so would unreasonably disclose

