

# Privacy Policy

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline how Independent Practitioner Network (IPN) complies with its confidentiality and privacy obligations. IPN will make this Privacy Policy available to anyone who asks for it.

As an organisation, IPN's principal concern is and always has been the health of patients who visit our Centres. 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 one of our Centres; that the information collected and retained in our records is correct and up-to-date; and that they can access their information for review.

Whilst legislation compliments IPN's existing culture of confidentiality and our already established professional practice obligations, we are working to ensure ongoing compliance with the privacy regulations and to ensure best practice.

No exceptions under the Privacy Act apply to personal information that IPN holds or to any of its acts or practices.

## Collection, Use & Disclosure

IPN 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 IPN to ensure personal information is protected.

IPN is an independent contractor to the medical practitioners who provide services at and from our Centres. For administrative and billing purposes, and to enable the patient to be attended by other medical practitioners in the relevant IPN Centre, patient information is shared between the medical practitioners and IPN.

IPN and the medical practitioners may collect personal information (including health information) regarding patients for the purpose of providing medical services and treatment to patients. 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 and 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.

IPN may access information:

- provided directly by the patient;
- provided on the patient's behalf with the patient's consent;
- from a health service provider who refers the patient to medical practitioners providing services at or from IPN's Centres ; or
- from health service providers to whom patients are referred.

Personal information collected by IPN may be used or disclosed:

- for the purpose the patient was advised of at the time of collection of the information by us;
- as required for delivery of the health service to the patient;
- as required for the ordinary operation of our services (i.e. to refer the patient to a medical specialist or other health service provider);
- as required under compulsion of 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.

Other than as described in this Policy or permitted under the Health Privacy Principles, IPN uses its reasonable endeavours to ensure that identifying health information is not disclosed to any person.

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

Because of the sensitive nature of the information collected by IPN to provide its services, extra precautions are taken to ensure the security of that information. Information may be stored electronically and/ or hard copy. All electronically stored files are password-protected on several levels, and regular backups performed.

IPN requires its employees to observe obligations of confidentiality in the course of their employment with all staff signing Confidentiality Agreements. IPN requires independent contractors to sign a confidentiality undertaking.

IPN may contract out the following services:

- locum general practitioner services; or
- administrative services.

IPN may use or disclose personal information for quality assurance, training, billing, liaising with government offices regarding Medicare entitlements and payments and as may be required by IPN's insurers.

## Accessing your information, complaints and obtaining further information

If an individual wishes to:

- complain to IPN about a breach of privacy; or
- access his or her own information held by an IPN Centre; or
- correct any information held by IPN concerning his or her own information; or
- find out more about how IPN deals with personal information,

that individual can contact:

Privacy Officer  
Independent Practitioner Network Limited  
GPO Box 7009  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Fax: (02) 8288 8988  
Email: [info@ipnet.com.au](mailto:info@ipnet.com.au)