

# **Title: Client Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure**

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to outline WWG's client privacy and confidentiality policy and procedure.

## **2. Background**

WWG is committed to protecting, respecting and upholding the rights of our clients to privacy and confidentiality. As the National Privacy Principle 5 require that our organisation have a document that clearly sets out its policies on handling personal information, including health information, WWG uphold its commitment to collect, store and use information about clients, their needs and the services we provide to them that is secure and confidential.

This privacy policy is to provide information on how personal information (which includes health information) is collected and used within our clinic, and the circumstances in which we may share it with third parties. This privacy policy also outlines how we manage personal information and safeguard privacy pursuant to the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act), Queensland Information Privacy Act 2009 and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

## **3. Related documents**

Critical Incident Form  
Critical Incident Register  
Occupational Health & Safety Policy, Procedure.  
Cyber security policy

## **4. Policy**

### **4.1 Scope**

This procedure is to be used by all staff, practitioners, sub-contractors, volunteers and board members of World Wellness Group.

### **Types of information collected by WWG**

WWG may collect and store personal and sensitive information about patients and clients including, but not limited to, their:

- Name/ Residential address
- Information in identification documents (for example, passport, driver's licence, Immigration identification card)
- Email address/ Phone number
- Gender/ Date of birth/ Nationality
- Languages spoken
- Bank account details
- Proof of identity
- Medical information/ Emergency contact details
- Centrelink Reference Number.

### **How information is collected by WWG**

Due to WWG's work with clients entering into particular services programs and medical clinical settings, it is important and necessary for WWG to collect sensitive information in order to provide clients with specific interventions. In some client personal information is received from third parties when the client is transferred or referred to WWG for the services that we provide.

All WWG staff members will advise all clients of what information we collect, why, and the circumstances in which we need to share it with others. Information may be collected in hard copy form or electronic. WWG will only collect sensitive information with the individual's consent.

Our organisation may collect your personal information in several different ways.

1. When you make your first appointment our clinic staff will collect your personal and demographic information via your registration. A collection statement is attached to the registration form for your convenience
2. During the course of providing health services, we may collect further personal information.

[Information can also be collected through electronic transfer of prescriptions (eTP), My Health Record, eg via Shared Health Summary, Event Summary. You will need to specify if your clinic participates in any of these eHealth services.]

3. We may also collect your personal information when you visit our website, send us an email or SMS, telephone us, make an online appointment or communicate with us using social media.
4. In some circumstances personal information may also be collected from other sources. Often this is because it is not practical or reasonable to collect it from you directly. This may include information from:
  - your guardian or responsible person
  - other involved healthcare providers, such as specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals, community health services and pathology and diagnostic imaging services
  - your health fund, Medicare, or the Department of Veterans' Affairs (as necessary).

## **Storage of information**

Your personal information may be stored at our clinic in various forms. Our clinic stores all personal information securely. Primarily your health record is electronic entirely, this is password protected at all times and only accessible by relevant staff. These staff members are legally bound by the World Wellness Clinic confidentiality agreement to protect this information at all times. On the seldom event we need to store paper copies of your health records (medical certificates or prescriptions to be picked up) they are stored securely.

## **Disclosure of personal information**

WWG only uses personal information for the purposes for which permission was given, or for purposes that are directly related to one of the functions or activities of the organisation.

Personal information may be provided to government agencies, other organisations or individuals if:

- The client has consented. This consent may be evidenced by a signature or obtained verbally and documented.

WWG also collects stores and uses personal information for a number of purposes including:

- to provide clients and patients with a range of services through WWG's various programs and medical services
- when we engaging with service providers, government or agencies relating to service delivery
- to report to our funding bodies according to our contractual obligations
- to respond to client feedback or complaints, and to conduct surveys and seeking for client feedback.
- with third parties who work with our clinic for business purposes, such as accreditation agencies or information technology providers – these third parties are required to comply with APPs and this policy
- with other healthcare providers
- when it is required or authorised by law (eg 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
- for the purpose of confidential dispute resolution process
- when there is a statutory requirement to share certain personal information (eg some diseases require mandatory notification)
- during the course of providing medical services, through eTP, My Health Record (eg 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 clinic 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 are permitted by law) without your consent. Our clinic 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 clinic in writing. Our clinic may use your personal information to improve the quality of the services we offer to our patients through research and analysis of our patient data. We may provide de-identified data to other organisations to improve population health outcomes. The information is secure, patients cannot be identified and the information is stored within Australia. You can let our reception staff know if you do not want your information included.

Requests are to be made in writing to the clinic coordinator or program manager, and permission will be determined by the Board Members.

### **Integrity of information**

WWG will take all reasonable steps to ensure the personal information we hold, use and disclose is accurate, complete, and up to date. If an individual believes that the information WWG holds about them is incorrect, they must provide up to date information to the Program Manager. We may request evidence to support the request to ensure accuracy.

## **5. Procedure**

We inform our clients about our policies regarding the collection and management of their personal information via privacy disclosure located on Client Consent Form. All staff and Board Directors are made aware of this policy during staff orientation.

When you register as a patient of our clinic, you provide consent for our GPs and clinic staff to access and use your personal information so they can provide you with the best possible healthcare. Only staff who need 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 staff members are provided with ongoing support and information to assist them to establish and maintain privacy and confidentiality.

The privacy of personal information is defined by legislation (*Privacy Act 1988*). WWG acts in accordance with these legal requirements at all times as underpinned by the policy outlined below.

WWG staff members must also strive to respect the confidentiality of other sensitive information. However, in the spirit of partnership, we share information with clients and other involved individuals and organisations (subject to consent), where it would be in the best interest of the client, or other individual, to do so.

Personal information collected by WWG is only used for purposes that are directly related to the functions or activities of WWG. These purposes include:

- Enquiry about WWG programs

- Referral to programs
- Providing program related services and medical treatment and support to clients
- Administrative activities, including human resources management
- Sector development and Community development activities
- Compliment, Complaint and Feedback handling
- Quality Improvement and Clinical Governance requirements.

When collecting health and personal information, WWG staff must provide information to clients regarding:

- The purpose for collecting information
- How information will be used
- To whom (if anyone) information may be transferred and under what circumstances information will be transferred
- Limits to privacy of personal information
- How a client can access or amend their health information , and ,
- How a client can make a complaint about the use of their personal information.

### **Data quality**

All WWG staff members take steps to ensure that the personal information it collects is accurate, up-to-date and complete. These steps include maintaining and updating personal information when WWG is advised by individuals that the information has changed (and at other times as necessary), and checking that information provided about an individual by another person is correct.

### **Data security**

WWG staff also takes steps to protect the personal information it holds against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure and against other misuse. These steps include reasonable physical, technical and administrative security safeguards for electronic and hard copy or paper records as identified below.

#### **Reasonable physical safeguards include:**

- Locking filing cabinets and unattended storage areas
- Physically securing the areas in which the personal information is stored
- Not storing personal information in public areas
- Positioning computer terminals and fax machines so that they cannot be seen or accessed by unauthorised people or members of the public.

#### **Reasonable technical safeguards include:**

- Using passwords to restrict computer access, and requiring regular changes to passwords
- All databases are secure, reliable and password protected

- Establishing different access levels so that not all staff can view all information Ensuring information is transferred securely where possible or where not possible ensuring that appropriate safeguard measures have been taken.

### **Access and correction**

Individuals may request access to their own personal information. Access will be provided unless there is a sound reason under the *Privacy Act1988* or other relevant law to withhold access. Other situations in which access to information may be withheld include:

- There is a threat to the life or health of an individual
- Access to information creates an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others
- The request is clearly frivolous or vexatious or access to the information has been granted previously
- There are existing or anticipated legal dispute resolution proceedings
- Denial of access is required by legislation or law enforcement agencies.

You have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information.

Our clinic acknowledges patients may request access to their medical records. We require you to put this request in writing by filling out our release if medical record form and submitting it to the reception staff. Our clinic will respond within a reasonable time. (30 Days)

Our clinic will take reasonable steps to correct your personal information where the information is not accurate or up to date. From time to time, we will ask you to verify that your personal information held by our clinic is correct and current. You may also request that we correct or update your information, and you should make such requests in writing to [admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au](mailto:admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au)

### **Breach of privacy or confidentiality**

If staff members are dissatisfied with the conduct of a colleague regarding privacy and confidentiality of information, the matter should be raised with the Program Manager.

If a client or stakeholder is dissatisfied with the conduct of a WWG staff or Board Director, a complaint should be raised in accordance with the 'Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy. We take complaints and concerns regarding privacy seriously. You should express any privacy concerns you may have in writing. We will then attempt to resolve it in accordance with our resolution procedure.

Please make complaints in writing and submit it to our clinic via email or post, and we will respond within 30 days.

World Wellness Clinic  
33 Stoneham Street  
Stones Corner  
4120  
[admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au](mailto:admin@worldwellnessgroup.org.au)

You may also contact the OAIC. Generally, the OAIC will require you to give them time to respond before they will investigate. For further information visit [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) or call the OAIC on 1300 363 992

### **Relevant Legislation**

Queensland Information Privacy  
Act 2009 Work Health and Safety  
Act 2011 (Qld)  
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)