[PRACTICE HEADED PAPER]

Consistent with ICGP Sample Privacy Statement

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Our Practice wants to ensure the highest standard of medical care for its patients. We understand that a General Practice is a trusted community governed by an ethic of privacy and confidentiality. Our practices are consistent with the Medical Council of Ireland guidelines and the privacy principles prescribed by Data Protection legislation. We see our patients’ consent as being the key factor in dealing with their health information. This Privacy Statement is about making consent meaningful by advising you of our policies and practices on dealing with your medical information.

MANAGING YOUR INFORMATION

* In order to provide for your care in our Practice, we need to collect and keep information about you and your health in our records.
* We retain your information securely.
* We will only ask for and keep information that is necessary. We will attempt to keep it as accurate and up to-date as possible. We will explain the need for any information we ask for if you are not sure why it is needed.
* We ask you to inform us about any relevant changes that we should know about. This would include such things as any new treatments or investigations being carried out that we are not aware of. Please also inform us of change of address and phone numbers etc.
* All persons in our Practice (not already covered by a professional confidentiality obligation) sign a confidentiality agreement that explicitly makes clear their duties in relation to personal health information and the consequences of breaching that duty.
* Access to patient records is regulated to ensure that they are used only to the extent necessary to enable our Practice Support Team to perform their tasks for the proper functioning of our Practice. In this regard, patients should understand that our Practice Support Team may have access to Patient Records for:
* Identifying and printing repeat prescriptions for patients. These are then reviewed and signed by the GP.
* Generating a social welfare certificate for the patient. This is then checked and signed by the GP.
* Typing referral letters to hospital consultants or allied health professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and dieticians.
* Opening letters from hospitals and consultants. The letters could be appended to a patient’s paper file or scanned into their electronic patient record.
* Scanning clinical letters, radiology reports and any other documents not available in electronic format.
* Downloading laboratory results and Out of Hours Co-op reports and performing integration of these results into the electronic patient record.
* Photocopying or printing documents for referral to consultants, attending an antenatal clinic or when a patient is changing GP.
* Checking for a patient if a hospital or consultant letter is back or if a laboratory or radiology result is back, in order to schedule a conversation with the GP.
* When a patient makes contact with our Practice, checking if they are due for any preventative services, such as vaccination, ante natal visit, contraceptive pill checks, cervical smear test, etc.
* Handling, printing, photocopying and postage of medico legal and life assurance reports, and of associated documents.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROFESSIONALS

We may need to pass some of your information to other health and social care professionals in order to provide you with the treatment and services you need. Only the relevant part of your Patient Record will be released. These other professionals are also legally bound to treat your information with the same duty of care and confidence that we do.

DISCLOSURES REQUIRED OR PERMITTED UNDER LAW

* The law provides that in certain instances personal information (including health information) can be disclosed, for example, in the case of infectious diseases.
* In general, work-related Medical Certificates from your GP will only provide a confirmation that you are unfit for work with an indication of when you will be fit to resume work. Where it is considered necessary to provide additional information we will discuss that with you. However, Social Welfare Certificates of Incapacity for Work must include the medical reason you are unfit to work.
* In the case of disclosures to employers, insurance companies or requests made by solicitors for your records, we will only release the information with your signed consent.

USE OF INFORMATION FOR TRAINING, TEACHING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

* It is usual for GPs to discuss patient case histories as part of their continuing medical education or for the purpose of training GPs and/or medical students. In these situations, the identity of the patient concerned will not be revealed.
* In other situations, however, it may be beneficial for other Doctors within our Practice to be aware of patients with certain conditions and in such cases our Practice would only communicate the information necessary to provide the highest level of care to the patient.
* [Our Practice is involved in the training of GPs in conjunction with the Irish College of General Practitioners. As part of this programme, GP Registrars will work in our Practice and may be involved in the provision your care.]

USE OF INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH, AUDIT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

* It is usual for patient information to be used for research, audit and quality assurance purposes to improve services and standards of practice.
* GPs on the Specialist GP Register of the Medical Council of Ireland are now required to perform audits. In general, information used for such purposes is done in an anonymous manner with all personal identifying information removed.
* If it were proposed to use your information in a way where it would not be anonymous or if our Practice was involved in external research then we would discuss this further with you before proceeding and seek your written informed consent.
* Please remember that the quality of the patient service provided can only be maintained and improved by training, teaching, audit and research.

PATIENT RIGHT OF ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION

You have the right of access to all the personal information held about you by our Practice. This right of access is subject to limited exemptions in the case of health and medical records, including situations where allowing access would be likely to damage the physical, mental or emotional well-being of the individual.

If you wish to access your records, it is prudent to discuss your requirement with your GP directly who will ordinarily outline the information in the record with you. You can also make a formal written access request to our Practice and the matter can be dealt with formally. There may be a charge.

TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER PRACTICE

If you decide at any time and for whatever reason to transfer to another practice, we will facilitate that decision by making available to your new GP a copy of your records on receipt of your signed consent from your new GP. For medico-legal reasons we will also retain a copy of your records in our Practice for an appropriate period consistent with our legal obligations.