Consent to Collect, Use and Share Your Health Information

Comprehensive Care is a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) that Birkenhead Medical Centre is part of. In New Zealand, to receive subsidised healthcare, you must enrol with a PHO. When enrolling, you consent to your health information being collected, stored and shared for the purposes of meeting contractual requirements and supporting the delivery of safe, effective healthcare.

What information is collected?

- Information on you (name, birth date, gender, address, ethnicity, citizenship, contact details, NHI).
- Information about your health, medical conditions and measurements.
- Information on services provided to you e.g. medication, immunisation, screening, results.
- Information about consultation charges.

Why is my information collected?

To deliver good care, Birkenhead Medical Centre must collect information needed to:

- Document your health history and managements in your medical record.
- Receive information or results from other providers involved in your care (e.g. hospital).
- Allow referrals for investigations and to other health providers (e.g. specialists).
- Report to Comprehensive Care for the reasons discussed in this document.

Comprehensive Care collects and report information needed to:

- Obtain, reconcile and process funding claims, to reduce your GP visit cost.
- Report on delivering care and funding use.
- Measure the frequency and severity of common health problems across NZ.
- Measure and improve the quality of our healthcare delivery.
- Ensure the differences in health between different population groups are reduced.
- Identify and provide opportunities for health prevention and promotion (e.g. smokefree programmes), including contact, development and follow up of treatment plans.
- Support health research that obtains approval by an ethics committee.
- Investigate adverse events and complaints relating to the care we provide.

Where is my information collected from?

Usually, we collect directly from you (i.e. in consultation). Otherwise, Birkenhead Medical Centre may receive information from other agencies involved in your care. For example:

- Correspondence (specialist letters, discharge summaries etc.) from hospitals, after-hours providers, specialists, allied health providers or other secondary and community providers.
- Discussions/contact with a hospital or specialist service when seeking advice or an update on your care, where that contact results in information about you being shared with us.
- Medical results (e.g. from laboratory, radiology) that we have requested, or from other clinicians who have included us in results for our awareness.
- Accessing authorised national or regional health information systems to support your care, e.g. hospital notes, results, prescribing, Aotearoa Immunisation Register.
- Letters from screening programmes (such as bowel, breast or cervical screening), including results, or notifications regarding attendance or non-attendance.
- Correspondence from employers, regarding, for example, fitness to work.
- Information from the New Zealand Police regarding firearms licences.

- Contact from Police, legal representatives, Oranga Tamariki, insurance companies, Ministry of Social Development (Work and Income NZ) and Accident Compensation Corporation.

Similarly, Comprehensive Care PHO may be sent information from:
- Birkenhead Medical Centre, for reasons discussed in this document.
- Authorised national/regional health information systems e.g. the Aotearoa Immunisation Register.

We may share your information to others:
Birkenhead Medical Centre may share your information to others involved in your care, such as:
- Agencies that provide results (e.g. laboratory, radiology) when requesting investigations.
- Referrals or clinical discussions to allied health, hospital, specialist, screening services etc.
- Regulators, insurers, indemnity and legal advisers to manage concerns raised on our care.
- When we are legally obligated to (e.g. Police, legal representatives, Oranga Tamariki etc.).
- When we send medical certificates with external agencies (e.g. work and income NZ sickness or disability benefits, ACC certificates etc.), or your employer, (e.g. fitness to work certificates).

Comprehensive Care may share your information to:
- NZ Ministry of Health.
- Contracted Ministry of Health data intermediaries (such as Synergia), for the purpose of reporting on funded health programmes as required under our service contracts.
- National health programme or service groups (e.g. national smokefree services), where we are contracted to report on treatment plans and outcomes.

Your information is kept secure:
In line with NZ legal requirements, robust protocols and processes are in place around how we collect, store, use, share and dispose your information in a safe and protected way. Physical or electronic information collected by Birkenhead Medical Centre is stored in endorsed, secure means.

Information sent to the PHO is stored in a secure data warehouse that similarly meets all NZ legal requirements. Some information we collect and generate is stored electronically by cloud service providers located in Australia. This information may also be processed (but not stored) on Health NZ approved cloud servers located in other approved overseas countries. This information is encrypted between stakeholders, and these providers comply with internationally recognised security standards.

Our processes fully comply to the Privacy Act 2020 and the Health Information Privacy Code 2020.

Your rights of access and correction:
Under rules 6 and 7 of the Health Information Privacy Code, you have the right to request access to the health information this practice holds about you, and request correction of that information, if you believe it to be inaccurate. If your healthcare provider chooses not to change that information, you can have this noted on your file.

Complaints:
It is ok to complain if you are not happy with how we collect, use or share your information. We encourage you to talk to your healthcare provider if this happens. If you are still unhappy with their response, you can call the Office of the Privacy Commissioner toll-free on 0800 803 909, and they can investigate further.

What happens if I do not consent?
If you do not consent to your information being collected, then you may 'opt-off' by letting Birkenhead Medical Centre know. However, without consent we may not be able to provide effective safe care to you, and Comprehensive Care may not be able to access funding subsidy for your GP visits.

Use of artificial intelligence (Heidi)

Birkenhead Medical Centre uses Heidi, an AI-assisted documentation tool, to transcribe consultations and help prepare clinical notes and correspondence. This allows your healthcare professional to focus more on your consultation.

Your healthcare professional reviews the content for accuracy and remains responsible for your care and clinical decisions. Heidi does not replace their clinical judgement.

Your consent

We will explain how Heidi is used and obtain your informed consent before using it to transcribe your consultation. Your consent will be documented in your clinical record.
You can decline or ask us to stop using Heidi at any time without affecting your access to care. Your healthcare professional can take notes without it.

How your information is handled

Heidi processes health information on our behalf. Information is encrypted, and Heidi's New Zealand privacy policy specifies storage on servers in Australia. Heidi states that patient data is not used to train, develop or improve its AI models.

Transcripts and generated notes may be retained in Heidi according to the settings used by the practice. Your healthcare professional saves the reviewed clinical notes in your practice health record. We will explain and obtain your consent before using any feature that saves audio recordings.

Withdrawing consent stops further use of Heidi for your consultation. It does not automatically remove clinical notes already saved in your health record.

Questions

Please ask your healthcare professional if you would like more information about Heidi, how long information is retained, or how your information is protected.

Privacy enquiries

If you have questions or concerns about how your health information is handled, please contact our Privacy Officer, the Practice Manager, on 09 419 1636 or at admin@birkenheadmedical.co.nz