

## Teaching and research

### **Today's medical and nursing students are tomorrow's doctors and nurses.**

The WCH is a teaching hospital and works in collaboration with universities to train medical, nursing and midwifery students and other health professionals. Your personal health information may be used by students under the supervision of our staff. Any information about you will be treated confidentially by students, trainees and our staff.

Information about you may also be used for health and medical research. All research undertaken at the WCH is approved by an ethics committee and must meet National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines. This means that you will have the research project clearly explained to you, and that you must give permission before your information can be used.

You are not obliged to take part in any teaching or research activity. Please discuss any concerns about teaching or research with a member of your treating team.

### **Access to your medical record**

Except for certain legal exemptions under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, you have the right to request access to your medical record and any other document kept by the WCH. You may do this yourself, or ask someone to do it for you. You also have a right to view or copy your medical record and to apply to have the record changed if you believe that any information is incorrect, out-of-date or misleading.

A fee may be charged for dealing with your FOI application.

To obtain access to your medical record, please contact the Freedom of Information Officer by calling (08) 8161 6127 or email [foiofficer@wch.sa.gov.au](mailto:foiofficer@wch.sa.gov.au).

## Further information

For a copy of our Patient Information Privacy Policy or the complete Code of Fair Information Practice, visit [www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au) or contact the WCH Privacy Officer (details below). Our Privacy Officer will assist you if you have concerns related to the privacy of your personal health information.

If you are not satisfied with the response received, you may wish to contact the WCH Consumer Complaints Coordinator (on 8161 6710) or one of the following organisations for further advice and assistance:

### **Departmental Ethics and Privacy Committee**

Department of Human Services  
PO Box 287  
Rundle Mall SA 5000  
Phone: (08) 8226 6963  
Fax: (08) 8226 7088

### **South Australian State Ombudsman**

Consumer Health Complaint Unit  
5th Floor, East Wing  
50 Grenfell Street  
Adelaide SA 5000  
Phone: (08) 8226 8699  
Toll Free: 1800 182 150  
Fax: (08) 8226 8602  
Email: [ombudsman@agd.sa.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@agd.sa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au)

### **Privacy Committee of South Australia**

PO Box 40  
Enfield Plaza SA 5085  
Phone: (08) 8343 6800  
Fax: (08) 8343 6805  
Website: [www.archives.sa.gov.au](http://www.archives.sa.gov.au)

### **Further copies of this brochure can be obtained from:**

Privacy Officer Women's and Children's Hospital  
72 King William Road  
North Adelaide SA 5006  
Phone: (08) 8161 6005  
Fax: (08) 8161 6112  
Website: [www.wch.sa.gov.au](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au)

CHILDREN, YOUTH & WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICE



Government  
of South Australia



Women's  
& Children's  
Hospital

# How the WCH manages the Privacy and your personal information



DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES

## Protecting your Privacy

When you access services provided by the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) we will almost always ask you to provide personal information about you or your child.

Regardless of whether this information is sensitive, we appreciate your right to privacy. The Department of Human Services has developed a Code of Fair Information Practice which outlines what South Australian hospitals will do, and what you can expect, to protect your privacy.

This brochure explains why we need to collect information and outlines what we will do to ensure that information about you or your family remains private.

## About the WCH

The WCH provides health services for newborn babies, children and young people, and for women in the areas of reproductive health including maternity and gynaecological care.

A number of our services are offered in community locations and many are provided in partnership with other organisations.

As well as treating women and children when they are sick, WCH also helps to keep them healthy and out of hospital. We are committed to promoting healthy lives and empowering the community to stay healthy.

Training future health professionals and research are also important roles for the WCH.

## Privacy Principles

The Department of Human Services has adopted a Code of Fair Information Practice to ensure that all public hospitals and health units comply with a set of Privacy Principles. These Principles regulate the way in which personal health information is collected, used, disclosed, stored and transferred. The Principles require that the WCH takes all reasonable steps to ensure that any information about you that we collect:

- is accurate and up-to-date;
- contains only relevant details about you or your child;
- is only provided to those people who need it to treat and care for you or who have responsibilities related to your treatment and care; and
- is protected from misuse and unauthorised access or disclosure to others.

### Your personal health information

Health information includes your personal details, information about your health, your medical and family history. This information is kept in your medical record and many details are also stored electronically. The information must clearly distinguish you from other patients, and so it needs to be detailed and accurate.

Staff (including students and trainees) treating and caring for you need access to your health

information so that they can plan and provide you with the best possible treatment and care.

Except where legislation requires that we pass on information about you (see below), you are free to decide what health information you give us and who we may give your information to. You may decide to withhold or restrict access to your health information, however you should be aware that this could affect your treatment and care.

Your health information may be used to help plan for future services and to help the WCH improve the quality and safety of current services. Wherever possible, we will ensure that any information used for these purposes cannot identify you.

## Providing your information to others

Your medical record provides essential information for your doctor and other health providers, such as nurses, pathologists, radiologists and physiotherapists. It is vital that these people have access to your information in order to give you the best possible care.

The WCH is part of a wider public hospital and health system. Some health information stored electronically by the WCH is made available through computer systems to other hospitals and services within the public health system. This ensures that, wherever you are treated, health staff will have immediate access to relevant health information, especially in an emergency.

When you or your child go home or complete treatment at the WCH, your WCH doctor will usually send a letter to your GP or specialist or to other relevant people, such as the Royal District Nursing Service or domiciliary care services. This letter summarises the treatment and care you have received and provides any special instructions or information that your local doctor or other health providers need to know for your further care.

Sometimes, your doctor or other health providers may request more information on your treatment and care at the WCH, in order to decide on any further care that you may need. If you prefer that this information is not provided, please discuss this with the WCH staff caring for you.

### Legal disclosure of your information

Laws, such as the Public and Environmental Health Act, the South Australian Health Commission Act and the Motor Vehicles Act, require doctors to report certain information on people who have specific medical conditions.

Some authorities (for example, Centrelink) are legally entitled to certain information about matters such as Medicare eligibility, the registering of births and deaths, circumstances of death, drink-driving and notifiable diseases, including infectious diseases and cancer.