Collection, use and disclosure of personal information for Medicare and Health program related purposes

This document complements Services Australia’s (agency) privacy policy. It contains information about how the agency handles personal information.

We administer health programs on behalf of:

* the Department of Health
* Medicare
* the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
* the Australian Immunisation Register
* Australian Organ Donor Register
* the National Cancer Screening Register.

We collect information about customers and service providers to pay benefits for Medicare, the Medicare Safety Net and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. We also collect information for the My Health Records service and to ensure compliance with the programs we administer.

Collection of personal information in a Medicare context

We collect the following information for Medicare and health program related purposes.

Individual information

* copies of birth certificates
* residency status
* compensation case name and number
* consumer number
* criminal convictions and criminal intelligence
* details of an award or settlement in relation to workers compensation, third party insurance or common law settlement
* details of people with whom the individual usually resides
* entitlement information, including Medicare entitlement start and end dates, concessional status and eligibility date
* Medicare Safety Net Family details including the status of each member of a Medicare Safety Net family registration (family contact, spouse, child dependant and dependant student)
* overpayment details
* agency reference/identification numbers, including Medicare number, Child Support Identified (CSRN), Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN), Release of Benefits (ROB) number, Individual Healthcare Identifier number and/or Individual Reference Numbers
* status of eligibility and payments received under one of the following Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) schemes:
  + Veterans' Children Education Scheme (VCES)
  + *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*
  + Education and Training Scheme (MRCAETS)
* Tax File Numbers (where collection is authorised)
* travel records and documents, including copies of passports
* veteran's entitlement card number and other associated item numbers specific to DVA claims
* white card holder status and details of related disability
* superannuation fund name(s)
* legal documents, including information about power of attorney, court orders
* to administer the Small Business Superannuation Clearing House Program – employee and employer personal information including contact details and the details of superannuation funds
* to administer the Cleft Lip and Palate Scheme
* to administer the Compensation Recovery program – contact details of insurance providers and solicitors
* salary details.

Medical information

* Details of medical procedures, including:
  + photographs of medical conditions and procedures,
  + Medicare Benefits Schedule item numbers,
  + date the medical service was provided
  + provider number of rendering provider and payment type.
* financial information and details on services used.
* benefits claimed by a member of the public or a health practitioner/practice or business (pharmacy)
* prescription information, including:
  + prescription and claim form
  + prescriber number and name of the doctor
  + patient entitlement number
  + drug prescription information, including a description of the drug prescribed and supplied
  + the quantity of the drug
  + instructions for drug use
  + repeat details and dates of prescription and supply
  + approved supplier number(s)
  + the patient's or agent's signature
* physical or mental health, including specific details about disabilities and immunohistological evidence
* details of vaccinations received, including date of service, vaccine brand, dose number, batch number and details of the health professional who provided it
* Prisoner Of War (POW) indicator
* Department of Veterans’ Affairs claims information
* records of correspondence and information in respect to medical practitioners, allied health providers, dentists, pharmacists and patients collated during an investigation, audit, education, counselling and/or recoveries
* records held for General Practitioner practices, Private Health funds and Medical Indemnity Insurers.
* records of general correspondence with health practitioners, pharmacists and the general public in relation to compliance matters
* the duration of referral for any specialist service including pathology and diagnostic services
* summary statistics on the use of services and benefits paid in our administered programs by an individual or groups of patients.

Practitioner/Healthcare Provider information

* authorised representatives of practice sites
* benefits review details
* company affiliations
* court documents, including invoices and policy information relating to Medical Indemnity Claims
* details of past and present medical practices and standing in the medical profession
* financial information and details on services used and benefits claimed by a member of the public or a health practitioner/practice or business (pharmacy)
* information about community care providers, community nurses, convalescent care providers, medical grade footwear prescribers, neuropsychologists, optometrical dispensers, prosthetic manufacturers and residential aged care facilities
* insurer name
* Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) for eligible providers
* main proprietor’s details – sole trader, company or partnership
* overpayment details
* peer group evaluations of practitioners
* provider and practice details, including occupation, qualifications, residency status, professional membership details, practice or pharmacy location and financial information (including bank account details and details of debt owed to us)
* records of correspondence and information in respect of medical practitioners, allied health providers, dentists, pharmacists and patients collated during the process of investigation, audit, education, counselling and/or recoveries
* records held for General Practitioner practices, private health funds and Medical Indemnity Insurers
* records of general correspondence with health practitioners, pharmacists and the general public in relation to compliance matters
* records of general correspondence with health practitioners in relation to provider registration
* Section 19AB exemption details under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, as issued by the delegate of the Minister
* service details, including services rendered and medication dispensed
* the personal information of approved pathology practitioners, authorities, laboratories and collection centres
* Healthcare Identifier Service organisation and individual identifying information
* personal information related to applications for Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificates, including details of evidence of identity for individuals, site/organisation representatives and Certificate Managers.

Other

* personal information of Committee or Tribunal members, specific medical or dental practitioners, optometrists, chiropractors, physiotherapists, podiatrists, osteopaths, pharmacists and patients
* United Medical Protection (UMP) Support Payment liability
* Western Australian Government Medical Services Schedule item number

Use of personal information in a Medicare context

* In the context of delivering health-related services and performing Medicare functions, we routinely use personal information in the following circumstances and for the purposes listed below.
* Call recordings may be used for the following purposes:
* quality assurance
* learning and development
* complaints and feedback management
* review of decisions
* fraud and security
* release of information (including Freedom of Information requests)

Individual health information

* to enable the allocation of individual healthcare identifiers for the efficient management of an individual’s personal health information, in accordance with the *Healthcare Identifiers Act 2010*
* to confirm authorisation, the personal information of persons who are authorised to interact with the Healthcare Identifiers Service on behalf of a healthcare organisation registered with the Healthcare Identifiers Service
* to administer the My Health Record system.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

* to maintain claims history to record Commonwealth subsidised benefit payments for the cost of medicines supplied under the PBS and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS). This is in accordance with the *National Health Act 1953 and* information is used for audit purposes and to allow us to assess PBS payments
* to allow the payment of PBS benefits in accordance with the *National Health Act 1953*
* to record entitlement of benefits under the safety net arrangements of the PBS
* to maintain the PBS and RPBS Authorities system, to capture approval-related details for the prescription and supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme authority required medication
* to record and process refunds of pharmaceutical benefits patient contributions in accordance with section 87A of the *National Health Act 1953*
* to establish Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme patient entitlement tables to assess a person's eligibility for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The Medicare system (Medicare Safety Net Patient Refund and the General Practitioner bulk billing incentive) also uses these records to assess if a person has concession entitlement at a determined date in time
* to establish and maintain Pharmaceutical Benefits mailing lists, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Branch software vendor assistance payment system, the Community pharmacy agreement intranet database
* to maintain the complex drug patient database to support patient eligibility to receive specialised drugs. This applies where the complex drug (for example, imatinib mesylate (Glivec®), infliximab (Remicade®), trastuzumab (Herceptin®) (for early-stage breast cancer) is part of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, in accordance with sections 85 and section 100 of the *National Health Act 1953*
* to maintain patient treatment details under the Botulinum Toxin Program administered in accordance with the *National Health Act 1953* under special section 100 arrangements
* to determine patient eligibility to receive trastuzumab (Herceptin®) for late-stage metastatic breast cancer
* to facilitate payments to state and territory health departments for dispensing Highly Specialised Drugs (HSD) in public hospitals
* utilising information received from approved suppliers with authority to prescribe using online claiming for PBS, Claims Transmission System (CTS) or manual claims, developing Pharmaceutical Benefits Information System reports, using information as a registered Repository Operator for the Personally Controlled eHealth Record
* to conduct the Prescription Shopping Program in line with the *Human Services (Medicare) Regulations 1975*, including the Prescription Shopping Information Service (PSIS) doctor registration database
* to establish and maintain the Pharmacy approval register to record details of applications for approval to supply pharmaceutical benefits under the *National Health Act 1953*
* to maintain patient treatment detail under the In Vitro Fertilisation/Gamete Intra Fallopian Transfer (IVF/GIFT) Program administered in accordance with the *National Health Act 1953* under special section 100 arrangements.

Audit and compliance

* information relating to individuals and health providers is disclosed or transferred to the Department of Health on a regular and ongoing basis for data-matching and compliance activities in relation to health provider compliance. The use, transfer, disclosure and data matching is authorised by or under law, including the *National Health Act 1953* and the *Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015*.
* to advance an audit or inquiry where a medical practitioner, allied health provider, dental practitioner, pharmacist or other person enrolled in the Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme programs have been the subject of or identified in relation to an audit or inquiry
* in the pursuit of program integrity investigations
* to enable us to carry out committee and tribunal secretariat functions related to compliance activities
* within investigators' and managers' diaries to record daily professional activities
* to identify non-compliance, fraud, including internal fraud and inappropriate practice in the programs we administer
* in accordance with Section 86 of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, delegates of the Chief Executive Medicare making requests to the Director of Professional Services Review
* for compliance monitoring and activities, personal information of health practitioners, pharmacists, pharmacies, medical practice staff, members of the public, approved pathology providers and approved pathology authorities is collected and used
* for the statutory functions of a Medicare Participation Review Committee, established under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
* to maintain debtor records for details of monies owed to us
* to conduct procurement and contract management activities
* to establish General Practice Recognition Appeal Committee files
* to undertake a Review of Compliance Audit decisions, when an application has been received from a health professional.

Medicare enrolment and claiming (including Safety Net)

* to maintain Medicare public enrolment records by enrolling and identifying eligible persons to administer Medicare services
* to maintain records of individuals on the Australian Immunisation Register
* Medicare and Department of Veterans Affairs provider registration records are maintained to identify eligible providers and prescribers and to record their qualifications and status for the payment of Medicare and DVA benefits
* to allow the payment of Department of Veterans’ Affairs benefits
* to enable the Medicare Claims Review Panel (MCRP) to assess patient claims for payment of Medicare benefits based on a 'demonstrated' clinical need
* Medicare claim history is used to record and assess payments of Medicare benefits for audit purposes and for the Compensation Recovery Program and for policy and financial planning of the Medicare program
* Medicare claims history for recording an expense that has been incurred for a professional service for which Medicare benefits have been claimed
* to enable the processing of electronic claims
* in accordance with section 16A of the *Health Insurance Act 1973,* a Pathology approval and registration system is maintained to determine eligibility for the payment of Medicare benefits for pathology services
* to establish Medicare Safety Net Family Registration records to establish a family composition and record entitlement to benefits under the safety net arrangements of the Medicare program
* administration of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule
* administration of the *Dental Benefits Act 2008* (the Dental Act), the *Dental Benefits Rules 2008* (the Dental Rules) and the *Dental Benefits (Consequential Amendments) Act 2008* ensured amendment of other affected legislation, including the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
* to review personal information of persons who have received services from health providers working in non-teaching public hospitals in Western Australia, and to assess invoices submitted by the Department of Health Western Australia for the payment of benefits under the Western Australian Visiting Medical Practitioner (WAVMP) program
* to process claims from Aboriginal Health Services
* to maintain Department of Veterans’ Affairs Veteran Registration (Cross reference file) to identify persons eligible for payments under the *Veterans Entitlement Act 1986*, and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* on behalf of the Department of Veterans' Affairs
* to maintain Department of Veterans’ Affairs claims history records to assess claims and benefits paid on behalf of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs under the *Veterans Entitlement Act 1986* and the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*. The records can also be used for audits, reporting, policy and financial planning and billing purposes
* to administer the Special Assistance Scheme, including entitlements under:
* BALIMED 2002
* Tsunami Healthcare Assistance
* Bali 2005
* London Assist
* Dahab Egypt Bombing Healthcare Costs Assistance
* Care Package
* Mumbai Disaster Healthcare Assistance
* to establish and maintain the Medicare Location Specific Practice Number (LSPN) register. The register identifies practice sites and bases for mobile equipment where diagnostic imaging procedures and radiation oncology services are undertaken
* to maintain General Practice Recognition Eligibility Committee files. These records relate to all dealings of the General Practice Recognition Eligibility Committee. Its role is to consider the eligibility of medical practitioners for Vocational Registration for the purposes of section 3F of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*
* to establish and maintain Medicare Levy Exemption (MLE) records for individuals who are working, and seeking exemption from paying the Medicare Levy
* to administer the Radiation Oncology (Hospital Program Grants) to validate and process data for Hospital Program Grants (HPG)
* to administer the Cleft Lip and Palate Scheme
* to administer incentive payments to eligible providers under the Telehealth incentives scheme
* to establish and maintain information to operate the National Health Funding Administrator Payments System
* to establish and maintain colostomy and ileostomy membership files to assess and reimburse Ostomy Association members for the supply of approved colostomy and ileostomy items
* to register and assess claims for payments under the Continence Aids Payment Scheme
* to administer Chronic Disease management plans
* to administer and assess claims for payments under the External Breast Prosthesis Reimbursement program
* to administer the Australian Government rebate on Private Health Insurance in accordance with the *Private Health Insurance Act 2007* and the *Fairer Private Health Insurance Incentives Act 2012*
* to create an individual healthcare identifier, Medicare enrolment information is used
* to disclose Medicare demographic data from the HI Service to the Personally Controlled eHealth Record system operator for registered consumers/authorised representatives and nominated representatives where applicable.

Medical Indemnity Scheme

* to register and assess claims against the Medical Indemnity Scheme, records are established in accordance with the *Medical Indemnity Act 2002*, *ROCS Support Payment 2004* and *Medical Indemnity (Prudential Supervision and Products Standards) Act 2003* for:
* Incurred But Not Reported (IBNR) Claims
* High-Cost Claims
* Run-off Cover Scheme – Claims
* Run-off Cover Scheme Support Payments (ROCS SP)
* Premium Support Scheme
* United Medical Protection (UMP) Support Payments
* Record Run off Cover Contribution (ROCS) Data Premium Support Scheme (PSS) Subsidy Data.

Midwives Professional Indemnity Scheme

* to register and assess claims against the Midwife Professional Indemnity Scheme, records are established in accordance with the *Midwife Professional Indemnity (Commonwealth Contribution) Scheme Act 2010* for:
* Level 1 Commonwealth Contributions (Claims Scheme)
* Level 2 Commonwealth Contributions (Claims Scheme)
* Run-off Cover (ROC) Commonwealth Contributions (Claims Scheme)
* Run-off Cover Support Payments (ROC SP)
* Data Collection - to assist the government in administering the ‘Improving Maternity Services Package’.

Rural Health

* to record details of rural providers potentially eligible to receive payment under the rural programs:
* General Practice Rural Incentives Program – General Practice Component
* General Practice Rural Incentives Program – Registrar Component
* General Practice Rural Incentives Program – Rural Relocation Incentive Grant
* HECS Reimbursement Scheme
* Rural Procedural Grants Program
* Rural Locum Education Assistance Program.

Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP)

* to maintain the Mental Health Nurse Incentive program and determine eligibility to receive payment under the scheme through a collection of information via the:
* Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP) – Access database
* Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP) – Patient information database.

Practice Incentives Program (PIP)

* using the following processes records the Practice Incentive Program is maintained and eligibility for payments is assessed:
* Practice Incentives Program (PIP) – Access database
* Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Online register
* Practice Nurse Incentive Program
* to administer the Practice Nurse Incentive Program, including the provision of incentive payments to eligible practices.

Medicare Compensation Recovery Program

* to manage compensation cases where the amount of compensation paid exceeds $5,000 and the recovery of the amount of Medicare benefits paid for treatment of the compensable injury. Additionally, the recovery of Nursing Home benefits, home care costs or Residential Care subsidies on behalf of the Department of Social Services.

Australian Organ Donor Register

* to record the decision of individuals regarding organ and/or tissue donation or transplantation after death.

National Cancer Screen Register

* to administer the National Bowel Cancer Screening Register on behalf of the Department of Health

Australian Immunisation Register

* to record details of vaccinations received by individuals and administer the Register in accordance with the *Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015.*
* to produce individual proof of vaccinations including immunisation history statements, COVID-19 digital certificates and International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates.
* to provide the immunisation status of children and young individuals for the purpose of assessing eligibility for family assistance payments.

Communication networks

* to establish and maintain various mail-out/subscription lists to distribute relevant communications to the public and members of relevant professional bodies.

Public Key Infrastructure Certificates

* to enable applicants to be authenticated for PKI transactions and to receive their PKI Certificate. The agency may use information collected by the agency to confirm the identity of an applicant, including Medicare provider, PBS prescriber or Healthcare Identifier information.

Australian Health Survey reimbursements

* to collect information from Australian Health Survey (AHS) respondents to assess eligibility and make payment on behalf of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Hearing Services Program

* to register claims made by Accredited Hearing Service Providers providing hearing services and aids to eligible persons under the *Hearing Services Administration Act 1997*. Personal details of Accredited Hearing Service Providers (including payments) and practitioners are also used.

Small Business Superannuation Clearing House Program

* to administer the Small Business Superannuation Clearing House Program on behalf of the Australian Government.

Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Scheme

* to register and assess claims for payments for the Supporting Leave for Living Organ Donors Scheme on behalf of the Department of Health.

National Cancer Screening Register

* to administer the National Cancer Screening Register on behalf of the Department of Health. This includes:
* determining eligibility to participate
* issuing program correspondence
* providing de-identified data to the Department of Health for program analysis
* responding to enquiries
* making payments to health professionals and
* providing participant follow up.

Disclosures of personal information for Medicare and health program-related purposes

* In the process of delivering Medicare services and performing Medicare functions, or as required or authorised by or under an Australian law, we will routinely disclose personal information to these recipients in the circumstances and for the purposes noted below:
* aggregated data to researchers and research bodies
* Attorney-General's Department
* Australian Bureau of Statistics – personal information is supplied to support:
* population estimates and generation of statistics under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*
* approved research conducted under the Multi Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP)
* the ongoing administration of government programs that rely on outputs from the MADIP.
* Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
* Australian Community Pharmacy Authority
* Australian Digital Health Agency
* Australian Government Actuary
* Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)
* Australian Taxation Office
* authorised external recipients including private health insurance funds
* authorised medical personnel in the organ and tissue donation network
* authorised third parties upon written request
* Child Protection Agencies
* Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
* contracted mail and print suppliers
* contracted service providers
* Department of Health – including MBS and VAP claims data, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme claims data, RPBS claims data, Australian Immunisation Register information and Australian Organ Donor Register consent and donation intent data and National Bowel Cancer Screening Register data
* Department of Health, Queensland – personal information of eligible women is supplied to support screening invitation and reminder processes under the BreastScreen Australia program
* Cancer Institute of NSW - personal information of eligible women is supplied to support screening invitation and reminder processes under the BreastScreen Australia program
* Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – personal information of individuals applying for International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates is supplied to the Australian Passport Office within DFAT to allow the Australian Passport Office to generate the certificates
* Department of Health, Western Australia
* Department of Home Affairs
* Department of Veterans’ Affairs
* General Practice Recognition Appeal Committee
* healthcare organisations
* healthcare providers
* medical indemnity insurers
* medical indemnity organisations
* Medicare Claims Review Panel (MCRP)
* members of the relevant committees and tribunals
* Minister for Health
* Minister for Services Australia
* National Health Funding Body
* National Prescribing Service
* Office of Hearing Services
* official committees established under legislation to inquire into the provision of Medicare services
* other review authorities through the appropriate Information Release Delegate
* other third parties where it is in the public interest in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the secrecy and confidentiality provisions of other legislation applicable to the agency
* pathology laboratories
* prescribing health professionals of identified patients
* Professional Services Review Committees
* Professional Services Review Committees Secretariat
* Professional Services Review Determining Authority
* Professional Services Review, Director
* public hospitals
* registered Child Care Providers
* registered Private Health Insurers
* Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
* specialist medical colleges
* state law enforcement bodies
* state and territory government entities, to support data linkage and integration
* State Registration Boards (medical, dental and optometrical professionals and the Professional Services Review (PSR))
* The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – program information is supplied for the purpose of analysing the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Personal information is supplied to support data integration for approved research purposes
* National Disability Insurance Agency – personal information of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and their representatives is supplied to support NDIS compliance and investigation processes
* Users who access the Healthcare Public Directory or the NASH Directory via the Certificates-Australia website. These Directories may contain the name, email address, location and PKI Certificate status of healthcare providers who are issued PKI Certificate by the department.