

Information for the Consumer Partnership Program

What is health information

- As Ballarat Health Services (BHS) is a health service, any personal information collected by BHS is considered to be health information, and is therefore covered by the Health Records Act. <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/legislation/health-records-act>
- As a consumer partner you have a legal obligation to protect patient / individual privacy, this includes any information that you may observe in your consumer participation role.
- If you feel there has been a breach of privacy, report suspected/alleged privacy breach to the lead of your activity or your CPP team member as soon as possible.
- Failure to comply with this Health Records Act Victoria 2001 may result in disciplinary action or prosecution.

What is confidential information:

- Any information that identifies a patient or individual
- Information that has the name of the individual removed, or where identification of the patient / individual may still be classed as confidential.
- Any sensitive information exposed that can be traced back to an individual.

Further information / resources about your obligation:

- Health Records Act Victoria 2001
<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/health-records-act-2001/046>
- POL0003 BHS Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Application:

- Access, use and disclosure of confidential information should only be for the purpose for which it is collected; delivery of healthcare to the patient
- For work-related purpose only, not personal
- Applies to any medium – paper, electronic, verbal, social media

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Examples of what NOT to do:

- Accessing information that you do not need to know to carry out your role:
 - Unauthorised reading of a patient's medical record or employee file
 - Random searching of Patient Master Index for familiar names
 - Accessing your own medical record or pathology results or those of family or friends
- Divulging personal information without individual's consent:
 - Discussing or "gossiping" about patient details
 - Conducting a conversation relating to patient or staff information in public place
 - Telling a relative or friend about a patient or staff member in a public place
 - Copying and forwarding patient or staff information to a third party without having verbal or written consent
 - Sharing your login/password or using another person's login/password to access confidential information
 - Leaving a secure information system (i.e. system that is password protected) unattended while logged on
 - Posting information on social media regarding patients, staff or colleagues
 - Seeing someone you know within the hospital and saying; 'Hello, what are you doing here?'