

Who has access to your personal and health information?

AHS doctors, nurses, counsellors, and clinical Aboriginal Health Workers have access to your medical health information. This includes those employed in other AHS centres in Tasmania if you seek health care there. It also includes relieving doctors and nurses. Nonclinical staff will not be able to see your medical health information

Reception staff have access to health information only for administrative purposes such as Medicare billing and filing. Technical staff and system developers have access to the computerised health information system for technical purposes.

TAC/AHS staff members can access your personal information to let you know about preventive health care, such as reminders and invitations for health programs that are relevant to you. If you do not want your contact details to be used for this purpose, please let your doctor or support worker know.

If you have concerns about who has access to your personal and health information, please speak with your doctor or support worker.

Accessing medical services without disclosing your identity

In exceptional circumstances you may be given access to health care and support services without disclosing your identity. We will only allow you to do this if we believe that you are eligible for TAC/AHS health care, your health care will not be prejudiced, and it would not involve any breach of the law.

Complaints

If you have any concern about the way we have handled your health information, you should generally first raise it with the doctor or other staff member concerned. If for some reason you feel that you are unable to raise your concern with that person, you should raise it with senior health service staff.

If you are still dissatisfied with the way your concern has been handled, you can make a complaint to the AHS Medical Director, or TAC CEO.

You can also contact:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 2001
Phone 1300 363 992
Fax (02) 9284 9666

Health Complaints Commissioner

GPO Box 960
Hobart TAS 7001
Phone 1800 001 170
Fax (03) 6233 8966

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

GPO Box 5480
Sydney NSW 2001
Phone (02) 9126 3600

ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)

1800 132 260

198 Elizabeth Street Hobart TAS 7001 Ph. 03 6234 0700	56 Patrick Street Hobart TAS 7001 Ph. 03 6234 0777
182 Charles St Launceston TAS 7250 Ph. 03 6332 3888	53 Alexander St Burnie TAS 7320 Ph. 03 6436 4100
160 Best St Devonport TAS Ph. 03 6436 4160	27 Greenpoint Rd Bridgewater TAS Ph. 03 62 34 0753

PERSONAL INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND YOUR ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE

“Your Privacy is our Business”



Aboriginal Health Service
(Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre)

PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

This leaflet explains how personal information about you and your health is collected and managed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC)/ Aboriginal Health Service (AHS). Staff at the TAC/AHS are bound by our privacy and confidentiality policies. You can request a copy of our *Privacy policy* from your health receptionist or the staff supporting you.

What is personal and health information?

Personal information is information or an opinion that identifies you or could identify you. Your health information includes any information collected about your health or disability, and any information collected in relation a health service you have received.

Collecting personal and health information from you

We need to collect information from you about your personal circumstances and health to provide you with the best health care and support services. If we need to collect information from other doctors, health services or your family we will ask your permission first. The only exception is in an emergency situation where your health is seriously at risk and you are not able give us your consent.

You should only be asked to provide personal or health information that is relevant to your health care and the support we provide. If you have any doubts about giving the information you are asked to provide, ask the staff member why it is being requested.

Staff must make sure that you are able to provide personal and health information in a way that protects your privacy. Generally this will be in a private space where others cannot hear what is being said.

Keeping your personal and health information accurate

The TAC/AHS will do our best to make sure your personal records:

- Are accurate, comprehensive, well organised, legible and up to date.
- Have enough information to allow another staff member to support you.
- Contain a summary of your care or support.
- Can be used to remind you to return for follow up or notify you about programs we are offering.

Keeping your personal and health information secure

We have a duty to prevent interference, unauthorised access or disclosure, or loss in relation to your personal and health information.

Staff and contractors at the TAC/AHS are bound by the Privacy Act 1988 and Australian Privacy Principles, and by our privacy and confidentiality policies

Paper records are kept securely in filing cabinets which are locked when not in use and kept in offices which are locked after hours. TAC/AHS offices are equipped with monitored security and alarm systems.

Staff need a password to access the computerised health information system. Issuing of passwords is strictly controlled by the system administrator. Breaches of internal security will lead to disciplinary action against offending staff, usually instant dismissal.

Your health information in the computerised system is backed up our own IT contractor. Back-ups are tested routinely to make sure your health information can be retrieved in the event of a disaster at the TAC/AHS.

How we use your personal and health information

AHS doctors, GP registrars, counsellors, nurses and clinical Aboriginal Health Workers will be the main users of your health information, but other staff will have limited access to some of your health record and will use it, as necessary, for purposes directly related to your health.

Your information will also be disclosed, as necessary, for other purposes directly related to your health care such as hospital referrals and obtaining Medicare rebates, specialist reports and pathology tests. This will usually be with your consent except in emergency situations.

We disclose information to state and national health registers such as the Australian Immunisation Register, The National HPV Vaccination Program Register and the Tasmanian Cervical Screening Register. We may collect and use information from these registers to keep accurate records and provide appropriate reminders.

The TAC/AHS undertakes research and quality improvement activities from time to time. We will ask for your consent if you can be identified in the research.

Other than as stated above, information that identifies you will not be disclosed without your consent unless the law requires us to do so.

Access by you to your personal and health information

You have a right to be told what personal and health information we keep on you, and to have access to this information except in certain circumstances.

Access can be obtained by asking your doctor or the Regional Manager. We can refuse access if this is likely to seriously threaten anybody's life or health, including your own. If we refuse access, we will tell you why.