

HUNTER NEW ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT  
HUNTER NEW ENGLAND CLINICAL INFORMATION SERVICES

## WHAT IS RELEASE OF INFORMATION?

Release of Information is a less time consuming and simpler method of allowing you access to your medical record than using the NSW **Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009**.

The NSW legislation governing release of information is called the **Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998**. From March 2004 the **Health Records Information Privacy Act 2002** also operates to regulate health information including access to it.

### What sort of information can I ask for?

You can ask for any kind of personal health information pertaining to you, which is contained in your medical record and has been created by the health service agency you are making the request from. This information may include outpatient and inpatient notes, pathology results and medical imaging reports, the health service agency correspondence, medication sheets and discharge summaries.

### Is any information not available?

Documents referring to third parties, other agency documents or correspondence, or any material classified as "sensitive in nature" will not be made available.

### What is sensitive information?

Where the agency is of the opinion that disclosure of information to you may have an adverse effect on your physical or mental health you will be notified and you may be asked for a treating health professional to view the record with you.

### How do I request information?

A form is available from the Clinical Information Department at the health care site where you are requesting information, which you will need to complete with as much detail as possible. You will be asked to supply your full name and any alias you may be known by, your address and date of birth, and details of the information you are requiring with dates if possible.

### Do I need to verify my identity?

As a general guide the documents comprising a medical history are considered to be particularly sensitive and confidential in nature and thus great care is taken by a health service agency to ensure appropriate identification procedures are followed.

You will need to provide at least 2 forms of identification including photographic identification where possible. Acceptable identification includes: passport, driver's licence, Medicare card, birth certificate, and health care card.

### How do I verify my identity if my application is sent by mail?

Please photocopy the 2 forms of identification you are relying on and have these witnessed by a Justice of the Peace as true copies of the originals.

**How do I access my child's medical record?**

If you are a parent requesting information about your child you will need to show that you are in fact the child's parent and an original birth certificate will need to be sighted or an authenticated copy of the birth certificate sent by mail. If you are a separated parent you will need to show the child's birth certificate and also evidence that you are the child's parent. Each parent has authority to request information from your child's medical record, unless the Family Court has specifically removed that right from you.

If your child is over 14 years of age it is necessary to have authority from the child as well as yourself.

If the child is over the age of 16 years it is appropriate for the child to make the request for release of information from their record.

**How much will it cost me to make a request for release of information?**

A standard fee of \$33.00 (which includes GST) for a maximum of 80 pages is payable with your request application. This must be paid using a cheque or money order made out to "Hunter New England Health Local Health District". Unfortunately we do not have the facilities to accept cash.

Pages in excess of 80 pages will incur an additional cost of .40 cents per page plus GST. There is no discount on this service.

**How will I receive the information I have requested?**

After we have received your completed request and payment we have 21 days to process your request.

The health service will photocopy the information you requested and send it to you by mail.

**Who do I refer to if I have any more questions regarding completing the Request Form for Release of Information?**

If you have any further queries regarding completing the Request Form please contact the Clinical Information Department or specific Service Manager for assistance.

**What do I do if I am not satisfied with the response to my request for information?**

If you have any complaints regarding the service provided to you please contact the Clinical Health Information Manager or specific Service Manager and if further action is needed the process for an official complaint or review of the information request will be explained to you.