

Policy on Medical Records

How long should medical records be kept?

Inactive individual patient medical records should be kept until the patient has reached the age of 25 years or for a minimum of 7 years from the time of last contact.

Who owns the medical record?

Ownership and Access (*WGS Procedure and Policy Manual*)

The doctors (or practice) own the record created in WGS including specialist reports.

In the ACT legislation has been passed that gives patients access to their records (1997). Should a patient request copies of their medical record; it is the policy of WGS that they make an appointment with the relevant doctor for review of their medical records. The fee charged for this service is based on our fee structure for consultation; there is no Medicare rebate for this service.

Subpoenas or summonses seeking production of medical records for legal proceedings are to be addressed to the owner of the records.

All staff should be conscious of the benefits of good communication with patients to minimise problems in this area.

It is the Policy of WGS that every request for patients' records is dealt with individually and at the discretion of the treating doctor.

(In a private medical practice, the ownership of the medical records depends on the structure of the practice in which the doctor works. It is advisable for doctors to clarify ownership of the medical records at the beginning of a contract to avoid any disputes when the doctor leaves the practice as to whether copies of the medical records can be taken with the doctor).