
Pioneer Health Albany Email Policy

Current as of: 3rd July 2018

Pioneer Health Albany's Email Policy is in place to ensure reasonable steps are taken to ensure the communication of personal health information via email is safe and secure. It is, however, critical that GPs, staff and patients are aware of the associated risks with using email to send personal health information.

Purpose

Pioneer Health Albany is increasingly receiving requests from patients to send personal health information via email. Pioneer Health Albany is required to adhere to the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) and as such has protocols and precautions in place to ensure this information is sent as securely as possible, with informed consent obtained from the patient.

Scope

This policy applies to all requests for sending of personal health information to a patient via email. This policy applies to all employees of Pioneer Health Albany.

Method

All email communication undertaken with patients require the following:

1. Risks associated with sending personal health information are explained to the patient (i.e. Pioneer Health cannot guarantee privacy for emailed information)
2. The patient accepts the risks and consent is obtained and recorded in the patient file.
3. Email address is verified by the practice;
4. If the document contains sensitive information, or if the patient requests password protection, the document containing personal health information is converted to PDF and password protected prior to sending using Adobe Acrobat.
5. The password for accessing the document is sent to the patient via SMS on mobile number verified by the practice.

With these controls in place the risk is considered **LOW** in accordance with the RACGP *Privacy and Security Risk Matrix*.

Third party requests:

In the event an allied health provider, specialist or other health care professional requests information to be sent via email, the procedure for sending password protected pdf files via email must also be followed.

See procedure flow chart next page.

Breach

In the event of a privacy breach, Pioneer Health Albany's Data Breach Response Procedure is to be followed.

Emailing of patient information

Patient requests email of personal health information.

State that we cannot guarantee the patient's privacy when sending files via email. Patient still wishes to proceed?

Patient to send email to admin@pioneerhealth.com.au with the following information:

Full name:

Date of birth:

Mobile phone no:

Consent: The privacy risk for the use of unencrypted email was discussed with me and I understand the risks but wish to proceed.

This email to be documented in patient file.

Send requested information to patient by replying to email received from patient.

If information requested from a third party (e.g specialist, allied health provider) OR if information is sensitive:

Emailing a password protected PDF

Password is sent via SMS to the patient.
Mobile number **MUST** match patient record.

Email is sent with password protected PDF attached.
No personal health information to be included in the text of the email.