



Local Government – Management of Medical Practice Records

Across the State there are many regional, rural or remote local governments responsible for the operation of Medical Practices. Such Practices, whether they are run by local government, or outsourced and operated by a third party provider, are required to manage their records in accordance with the responsible local government's Recordkeeping Plan and with State Records Commission *Principles and Standards*.

The following advice applies to local governments in relation to management of Medical Practice records.

- Disposal of **all** records of a Medical Practice operated by a local government **must** be in accordance with the *General Disposal Authority for Local Government Records* (GDA LG) only. This includes administrative, financial, human resource and medical / patient information related records. The GDA LG is available on the State Records Office website - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/>
- **All** medical / patient / client records that relate to children, regardless of whether they are now adults, must be kept in accordance with the "[Disposal Freeze](#)" issued by the State Archivist on 5 April 2018. Please refer to the State Records Office website for further detail. Any such records held by local governments, or their outsourced agents, **must not be destroyed** until further notice.
- Health records relating to Aboriginal people - As outlined in the GDA LG, health care facilities **must** retain Aboriginal patient records indefinitely for clients with a date of birth prior to and including 1970. In addition, Aboriginal patient records created by remote clinics in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields and Midwest Health regions **must** also be retained indefinitely. If a health care facility is unable to determine if a patient was of Aboriginal descent, the facility should retain evidence to demonstrate that reasonable attempts were made to research and determine the Aboriginal status of the patients before conducting legal destruction of the record. Please contact the SRO for further advice.
- If a local government Medical Practice intends to digitise and destroy hardcopy (source) records with the intention that the digital record becomes the official version, it must be done in accordance with the requirements of the *General Disposal Authority for Source Records* and the associated *Digitisation Specification*, available on the SRO website.
- All staff working in local government Medical Practices should be made aware of their recordkeeping responsibilities as per the local government's Recordkeeping Plan, with those staff responsible for records management completing appropriate training to ensure policies and procedures are implemented as per the Plan.
- Public access to any medical / patient / client records held by a local government should be in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (WA). Policies and procedures should be in place to ensure confidential records are appropriately secured and accessible only to authorised staff.

For further information, contact the State Records Office via email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au.