

Freedom of Information- General Information

What is Freedom of Information?

Freedom of Information Act 1982 gives a person the right to request access to documents about you held by Bendigo Health Care Group. The Act also gives you the right to request amendment of information about you that you believe is incorrect or misleading. Your medical record remains the property of the Bendigo Health.

How does it work?

You may apply to access the information in the following ways:

- by receiving a copy or of the medical record(s) or
- by viewing the record with the FOI Officer

How much will it cost me?

Section 17(2A) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (“Act”) requires that a non-refundable application fee of \$31.80 accompany a request for access. We are unable to process a request until the application fee is paid.

The application fee is a fixed cost which is non-refundable. The only exception is for people suffering financial hardship who may ask the agency to waive the application fee with evidence of hardship provided.

Victorian legislation requires all health records to undergo an appropriate review prior to release by medical or administrative personnel. If your application is approved you will be required to pay the following additional fees.

You will be advised of production charges when notified of the outcome of your application. Payment of these charges is required prior to the documents being provided.

Documentation

- Search charge of \$23.85 per hour (excludes requests for documents containing information relating to the personal affairs of the applicant)
- Document charge of 20c per A4 page
- Radiology on USB \$10 per USB
- Postage charges of \$11.00 when sent by registered mail, or

Viewing the medical record

- A Supervision Charge of \$23.85 per hour to be calculated per ¼ hour or part of a ¼ hour
- Photocopying Charge of 20c per A4 page if any photocopies are required

How do I view or obtain a copy of my records?

Please complete the attached application form and return the form with a photocopy of an identity document which includes a photograph and a signature (for example: Drivers Licence, Passport), and your cheque or money order made payable to "Bendigo Health Care Group". If you are making an application on behalf of another person then the request must be accompanied by the patient/client's signed authority, or other certified documents such as Guardianship Orders. If the patient/client is deceased the Legal Representative (executor of will or administrator of estate) or the Senior Legal Next of Kin must sign the application and attach a photocopy of identification and supporting documentation of their relationship with the deceased.

There is no set age limit for minors to be able to consent. Bendigo Health Care Group will assess each request on a case by case basis.

How long will I have to wait?

The FOI Act requires that Bendigo Health Care Group take all steps to notify an applicant of a decision on a request as soon as is practicable, but in any case not later than 30 days after the day on which a valid request is received. Please note that the Act allows Bendigo Health to unilaterally extend this time by 15 days in certain circumstances; in this case we will advise you in writing. The 30 days commences upon the receipt of the written application, accompanied by the \$31.80 application fee, identification and supporting documentation (if required).

You will be notified by email/mail when your application is complete.

How do I get in contact?

Freedom of Information Officer
Bendigo Health Care Group
PO Box 126
Bendigo Vic. 3552

Telephone: (03) 5454 8307 Facsimile: (03) 5454 8340 Email: foi@bendigohealth.org.au

Please note that the FOI process and associated charges do not apply if you simply require information to be transferred from Bendigo Health Care Group's medical record(s) to your medical practitioner for ongoing care purposes. Your medical practitioner may request information in writing but it must be accompanied by your written consent.

Yours faithfully

Bendigo Health Freedom of Information