

Freedom of Information- General Information

What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) gives you the right to request access to documents about you held by Bendigo Health. You may also request access to records of family members, with evidence of the appropriate authority. 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 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 \$34.50 accompany a request for access. We are unable to process a request until the application fee is paid.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, you may ask the agency to waive the application fee. Evidence of hardship will be required (e.g., health care card, pension card).

Victorian legislation requires that all health records are reviewed by an authorised officer prior to release. If your application is approved you may be required to pay additional fees called access charges.

If access charges apply to your request, you will be advised of these when notified of our decision. Any access charges incurred must be paid before the documents will be sent to you.

Note that from 1 July 2026 we will no longer charge an access fee where documents are provided in digital format and the request is for your/your client’s own health information. Be aware that very large requests may still be refused as unreasonable as the determination for an unreasonable request is not based on cost.

Documentation

- Search charge of \$25.90 per hour (excludes requests for documents containing information relating to the personal affairs of the applicant)
- Document charge of 20c per A4 page (as per legislation). Electronic documents are free of charge
- Radiology image on USB \$10
- Postage charges of \$11.00 when sent by registered mail, or

Viewing the medical record

- A Supervision Charge of \$25.90 per hour to be calculated per ¼ hour or part of a ¼ hour
- Document charge of 20c per A4 page or digital page if copy also required

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

Please complete the attached application form and return it to us along with:

1. a copy of your photo identification (for example: Drivers Licence, Passport)
2. remittance advice if paying via EFT;
3. signed medical consent release form if making an application for someone else's record, or other certified documents such as Guardianship Orders;
4. a copy of the death certificate where the patient is deceased.

Request for records of children 16 years and over will require a signed medical consent form.

How long will I have to wait?

The FOI Act requires that Bendigo Health take steps to notify an applicant of a decision as soon as possible. This must be within 30 days of us receiving a valid request from you. There are times where we may need to extend this time frame by 15 days so that we may consult with other Bendigo Health staff. If this is required, we will advise you in writing. The 30 days commences when we have received **all** of the following:

1. your written application
2. the \$34.50 application fee or evidence of hardship for fee waiver
3. 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
PO Box 126
Bendigo Vic. 3552

Telephone: (03) 5454 8307 OR 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 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.

You can also request copies of your discharge summaries, operation reports and pathology and radiology results only, from our Health Information Services team, free of charge, by contacting them on (03) 5454 8307 OR Email his@bendigohealth.org.au.

Check your My Health record for documents as well.

Bendigo Health Freedom of Information team

