

The purpose of this policy is to provide the standards by which the practice will communicate across a variety of channels to patients and third parties.

## **Communication can occur through the following channels:**

- Telephone
- Letter
- Fax
- Email
- Website
- Facebook Message

## **Telephone**

Phone calls from patients requesting to speak to the doctor will generally not be put through. As the doctor is likely already be attending to another patient in their room. Reception will take a message and send a message via an internal message service the practice software has linking the message to the patient. If the patient has a medical related question the call will be put through to a practice nurse. In the event the patient requires tele-consult with the doctor greater than 10 mins they will be charge a fee.

All third party calls from other doctors, nurses and nursing homes will be screened by reception, if the matter is urgent the doctor will be asked whether they are able to take the call and are transferred through. If the doctor is unable to take the call, the Practice Nurse can assist and resolve the issue.

## **Fax**

Received faxes that are patient related are imported directly into the patients' medical record. All urgent patient related faxes are immediately hand delivered to the Doctor, if that Doctor is not available the fax is hand deliver to their delegate. All other faxes received are given to the team member it is addressed to.

All staff should remember the following points when sending a fax, bearing in mind that some numbers will not be attended by the intended recipient.

- Data sent will be restricted to the minimum necessary for the purpose
- A fax header will be drafted providing details of the person the fax is being sent to, the fax number being used, the number of pages being faxed and a reference as to what the fax is about (i.e. referral for Test, Patient)

## **Letter**

Received letters that are patient related are directly imported into the patients' medical record. And remaining letters are provided to whomever they are addressed to. Reception will open mail each day to priorities medical related investigation reports, discharge summaries from advertising and promotional materials.

Letters sent out are recorded in the mail out book with the date prepared and ready to be sent. Letters being sent out should not identify the envelope that it has come from a medical practice, the sent address should simply state PO Box 5193 Manly, QLD 4179.

## **E-mail**

The practice does not engage in email correspondence with Patients. Patients are free to use the form on the website under contact if needed. All communication requested by third parties for referrals/reports is encrypted and requires a password to open.

## **Website**

The practice website is maintained by Silky Oaks Medical Practice but hosted by a third party. The practice can specify the content but presentation is limited to the third parties' options. Wherever possible any information on the practice website is to be:

- Clear and concise
- Avoid medical jargon
- Has clear contact details including after hours
- Contains information relevant to our local area and population.

## **Facebook**

The practice maintains a Facebook page to build awareness in the local community of the services the practice offers. The practice runs this page within the terms and conditions of Facebook. The practice recommends contacting the practice directly via phone but will respond to messages but no medical details will be discussed via Facebook message. The Practice Manager manages the Facebook page or a delegate. Any posts presented are for information on services that will not be relevant to all patients. Any posts aim to:

- Be clear and identify who they are for (people over 75, parents of children under 4 years)
- No prompt unneeded medical treatment but inform patients of different services

### **Complaints and Feedback**

We take complaints and feedback seriously. There are a number of ways you can complain or provide feedback. These include:

- Direct in person
- Over the phone request to speak to Practice Nurse, Practice Manager or Clinical Lead
- Via email to [admin@silkymed.com.au](mailto:admin@silkymed.com.au)
- On our website in the feedback section

The practice aims to respond to a complaint or feedback within 48 hours. It is important to be aware this may not occur within this time frame in respect to public holidays and weekends.

As a Learning Organisation without feedback we cannot learn and ensure the same issue does not happen again. The management team strongly value your feedback and complaints.

If your complaint is serious about the misconduct or negligence of a Provider and you feel insufficient response from the Practice has happened then you can notify the Medical Board of the issue.

You can do this by calling:

**1300 419 495**

For details on the notification process see:

<http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/How-are-complaints-managed.aspx>