

## Questions and Answers

### What happens if I go to another practice?

You can attend another practice or completely change your enrolment at any time. If you are enrolled at one practice and visit another as a casual patient, you will pay a higher fee for that casual visit.

### What happens if my general practice changes to a new PHO?

Your practice will let you know and explain if there will be any changes.

### What is a PHO?

Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) fund, deliver, and coordinate primary healthcare services such as general practices, pharmacies, and hauora health providers. PHOs receive government funding based on the characteristics of the people enrolled (such as age, gender, and location).

If you live in Otago or Southland, WellSouth will likely be your PHO.



## For Further Information

Visit [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz) to access the Health Act 1956, Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 2020.

The Health Information Privacy Code 2020 is available at [www.privacy.org.nz](http://www.privacy.org.nz). You can also use the Privacy Commissioner's Ask Us tool for privacy queries.

To find out more about WellSouth, and the role of PHOs, go to [www.wellsouth.nz](http://www.wellsouth.nz)



## Enrolling with a General Practice



WellSouth Primary Health Network  
Phone: 0800 477 115

Adapted from *Enrolling with a general practice* produced by Pegasus Health (Charitable) Ltd.



### **What is a general practice?**

A general practice is a health centre where you can see a member of the care team. They provide check-ups, diagnosis and treatment of health conditions, immunisations and screening, wellbeing support, and referral to hospitals and specialists.

### **Why should I enrol?**

Enrolling is free and voluntary. If you choose not to enrol you can still receive care, but you will pay more and may not have access to a full range of services.

It's important you find a general practice you feel comfortable with, so it's fine to visit a few before you decide.

### **How do I enrol?**

Enrolling is easy, just fill in a form at your general practice of choice. The reception staff will help you if you need it. Caregivers can enrol their children under 16, but anyone over 16 needs to sign their own form.

Find a local general practice using Healthpoint [www.healthpoint.co.nz](http://www.healthpoint.co.nz)

## **Privacy and your Health Information**

Your Privacy and confidentiality are very important to your PHO and your general practice. The following information explains why we collect your information and how it may be used.

### **Use of your health information**

Below are some examples of how your health information is used.

- Health New Zealand uses your information to provide treatment and improve the quality of services.
- A clinical audit (a quality check by a qualified health professional) may be done to review the care you received. They may look at your health records if the audit involves checking health matters.
- When you register in a health programme (e.g. immunisation or breast screening), any relevant information may be shared with other health agencies.
- The Ministry of Health uses your information to give you a unique number on the National Health Index (NHI). The NHI number helps identify you when you use health services.
- The Ministry of Health holds health information to see how well services are delivered and to plan and fund future health services.
- Auditors may sometimes check financial records of your health practitioner and may contact you to confirm you received services.
- Notifications of births and deaths may be sent electronically to the Births, Deaths, and Marriages register to make government processes easier.
- Your PHO may use your information for clinical and administrative purposes, including getting subsidised funding for you.

### **Research**

Your health information may be used in research approved by an ethics committee or when identifying details are removed.

Research that could identify you can only be published if you have agreed and the study has ethics approval.

You do not have to give consent for unpublished research, statistical purposes, or studies published without identifying you.

### **Your right to access and correct**

You have the right to see and request a copy of your health information. You don't need to explain why you are requesting it, but may need to prove your identity. If you ask for a second copy within 12 months, there may be a small fee.

You can ask for corrections to your health information. If your healthcare provider chooses not to change that information, you can have this noted on your file. Most general practices have a patient portal where you can see some of your health records online. Ask your practice if they have one so you can sign up.

### **Complaints**

It is okay to complain if you are not happy with the way your health information is collected or used. Talk to your healthcare provider first. If you are not happy with their response, you can call the Office of the Privacy Commissioner free on 0800 803 909.