



Official Privacy Policy

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Introduction

HealthLink is a world leader in the provision of health sector information services. From its Auckland base, HealthLink provides electronic communications services to more than 4,000 health sector organisations sited across New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific.

HealthLink has been operating in New Zealand since 1994 and in Australia since 1999.

HealthLink provides a range of services, which include;

- Electronic messaging between healthcare providers
- Electronic claims processing systems
- Disease Management Databases
- Access to Government provided patient databases
- Managed Online security services

Every month HealthLink's systems handle more than 3 million items of patient information and the company is responsible for the management and maintenance of a number of databases containing patient information.

On a daily basis HealthLink's staff based in New Zealand and Australia handle a large number of enquiries regarding computer systems malfunctions which require them to look into computer records and peruse patient files.

Purpose

The purpose of the accompanying Privacy Policy is to set down the ways in which HealthLink's staff will manage all aspects of patient privacy. It covers HealthLink's efforts to meet the requirements of the Health Information Privacy Code (1994) and the Australian Privacy Act (2001)

This document is available to all of HealthLink's customers and is used by staff as the basis on which management decisions regarding security are made.

Governance of Privacy Policy

HealthLink agrees to follow the directives and rulings of Government appointed bodies concerned with setting standards for security policy.

In New Zealand, The Health Information Privacy Code (1994) is the key document outlining how patient privacy must be managed. Recognised as one of the best privacy frameworks in the world, the existence of the HIPC is one of the major reasons for New Zealand's rapid development of health sector information technology services.

In Australia, The amended Privacy Act (2001) has put in place a similar framework to that already in place in New Zealand.

In addition, the Health Intranet Governance Board (HIGB) a Government appointed industry body exists to regulate the security levels employed by the sector. In Australia there is currently no single body set up, however Australian standard AS4400 (Personal Privacy Protection in Healthcare Information Systems) sets out the levels of security required.

HealthLink operates subject to the laws of Australia and New Zealand.

Privacy Policy Statement

HealthLink views New Zealand and Australian privacy legislation as the cornerstone of its business. All HealthLink employees are required to demonstrate at all times that they understand that the privacy of individuals and their medical information is of paramount importance. HealthLink has a separate security policy which is designed to provide the technological and procedural safeguards that enable it to support its privacy policy

Employee Training

All employees must undertake a privacy seminar within three months of joining the organisation.

All employees must sign the company's standard privacy declaration. Employees are warned that any deliberate, grossly negligent or incompetent breach of the company's privacy policy will result in instant dismissal.

Securing Patient Information

HealthLink is moving as swiftly as possible to implement the highest possible data security measures across its systems

X.509 compliant digital certificates

128 bit encryption

IPSEC Connections on all leased lines

Security Policy Document

Customer Privacy Education

Customers sending log-files via fax to HealthLink for trouble-shooting assistance are asked to erase any patient details before the information is faxed.

Customers telephoning and wishing to discuss matters concerning the status of patients are identified using caller ID. If caller ID is not available, the recipient of the call takes down the caller's telephone number, checks that the number given corresponds and calls them back.

All patient data is erased from any computer before it is sold or disposed of by any other manner.

Any print-outs of patient information are shredded



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*If there is a communications problem,
make it our problem.*

