

# **Information for Patients and Relatives**

**A GUIDE TO OBTAINING ACCESS  
TO INFORMATION AT THE  
MATER MISERICORDIAE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**



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## **Types of Information Held by the Hospital**

The hospital holds a wide range of information contained in official records. Broadly this information is personal or corporate in nature. Personal information is contained in patients' personal medical records. Corporate information relates to the day-to-day management of the hospital.

## **The Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003**

The Freedom of Information Acts provide that from April 21st 1998 every person has the following rights.

- The right of access to official records held by public bodies.
- The right to have personal information amended where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.
- The right to be given reasons for decisions taken by public bodies that affect them.

## **The Hospital's Policy on Access to Information**

The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital recognises its responsibility to members of the public in relation to providing accessibility to the various records it holds consistent with the right of privacy to the individual and the public interest. As a result the hospital will endeavour to release as much information as possible without recourse to the Freedom of Information Act.

## **How to Make a Request for Personal / Clinical Information**

When requesting one's own personal information an application should be made in writing and duly signed. The request should contain the following information:

- Full name (include maiden name if married)
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Address at the time of admission / treatment
- Sufficient information to enable the hospital to identify the records requested, for example the period of admission / attendances, department attended, and name of consultant if known.
- Details of records requested.
- Clarification of purposes for which the records are requested.

## **Requests for Access to Medical Records of Another**

When requesting access to the medical records of another, an application should be made in writing and duly signed. The request should contain the following information:

- The information required for obtaining personal information as listed above.
- Proof of relationship to the patient whose information is being sought.
- The patient's written consent to the hospital to release their information to a specified named person

## **Proof of Identity**

Where an applicant seeks access to personal information, the identity of that applicant must be verified by means of documentary evidence such as birth certificate, driving licence, passport etc.

## **Where to Send your Request**

Requests for information contained in personal medical records should be made to:

The Routine Access Administrator,  
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital,  
Eccles Street,  
Dublin 7.

Telephone: 01 803 2779

Fax: 01 803 4777

E-mail: [adminaccess@mater.ie](mailto:adminaccess@mater.ie)

## **Acknowledgement and Notification of Decision**

Your request for medical records will be acknowledged within three working days upon receipt of the application. Access to the medical records will be granted within 28 days of receipt of application. Where there are any delays encountered in the release of the records, you will be informed of the reasons for the delay and the approximate date a decision will be made.

## **When Access is Refused under the Hospital's Administration Access Policy**

In exceptional circumstances a personal medical record may not be released routinely to the owner of the information. In such circumstances the requester will be directed to seek the information through the Freedom of Information Department.

## **Records of the Deceased**

To protect the confidentiality of deceased persons, requests for their records are processed through the Freedom of Information Department.

## **How to Make a Request for Corporate or Non-Personal Information**

Apply directly to the relevant head of the department or service at the hospital. Alternatively apply under the Freedom of Information Act to:

The Freedom of Information Officer,  
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital,  
Eccles Street,  
Dublin, 7  
Telephone enquiries: 01 803 2982 / 2983  
Fax: 01 803 2938  
E-mail: [foi@mater.ie](mailto:foi@mater.ie)

### **Charges for Personal Information**

- In relation to personal information, where a patient/next of kin makes a direct request for information, a photocopy charge may apply to copies of records provided.
- A nominal charge will be applied for copies of x-ray films.

### **Charges for Non-Personal Information**

- An FOI request for non-personal information must be accompanied by an administrative fee of €15 or €10 for medical cardholders. Search and retrieval and photocopying charges will also apply.

### **Further Details**

- Further information is available on the hospital's web site: <http://www.mater.ie>
- An Official Application Form can be found on the hospital's website listed above.

