



Sapphire Clinic Policy - Communication

Purpose

This policy outlines how Sapphire Clinic manages telephone calls and electronic communications to ensure timely, clear, and accessible communication with patients and other stakeholders. It also addresses how the clinic supports patients with communication impairments or those who do not speak English, in compliance with the RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition).

Scope

This policy applies to all staff at Sapphire Clinic, including general practitioners, nurses and administrative personnel.

Telephone Communication

1. Receiving Calls

- Reception staff will answer calls promptly during operating hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Callers will be greeted professionally
- Urgent calls, such as those related to high-risk test results or acute medical concerns, will be triaged and directed to the appropriate staff member immediately.

2. Returning Calls

- Non-urgent calls will be returned by the end of the next business day.
 - Urgent messages will be prioritised and responded to promptly by the relevant GP or nurse.
 - All call details, including the patient's name, contact information, message content, and follow-up actions, will be recorded in the patient's health record as required.
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Electronic Communications

1. Receiving Communications

- Emails and secure messages (e.g., via HealthLink or Argus) will be checked regularly during clinic hours.

- Clinically significant electronic communications will be flagged for prompt review by the treating GP or relevant clinician.
2. **Responding to Communications**
 - Non-urgent electronic communications will be acknowledged or replied to within two business days.
 - Urgent communications will be escalated for immediate action where necessary.
 3. **Security Measures**
 - All electronic communications will adhere to privacy legislation and clinic security protocols to ensure the protection of patient information.
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Accessibility

1. **Patients with Communication Impairments**
 - The clinic will use assistive technologies (e.g., speech-to-text tools, hearing aids, or Auslan interpreters) to facilitate effective communication.
 - Written information can be provided in large print or plain language formats upon request.
 2. **Patients with Limited English Proficiency**
 - The clinic will arrange accredited interpreter services, including TIS National, for patients who do not speak English.
 - Translated versions of key patient documents, including consent forms and appointment instructions, will be made available.
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Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training on effective communication practices, including:

- Handling sensitive information over the phone or electronically.
 - Using communication tools and resources for patients with accessibility needs.
 - Maintaining cultural competence and sensitivity.
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Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when significant changes to regulations or clinic procedures occur, ensuring continued compliance with the RACGP Standards.