

The general practice where you work takes part in MedicineInsight



Please read this information sheet as it provides detail about MedicineInsight and your involvement, should you choose to participate.

This information sheet should be read alongside the Agreement the practice has received to participate in MedicineInsight. The practice principal can provide you with a copy of this document, if appropriate.

What is MedicineInsight?

MedicineInsight is a national primary health care data program run by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) in partnership with general practices across Australia. The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and has received ethics approval from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) (Reference Number: 23-171)

The data collection serves to support the Commission's Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) objectives by enabling safety and quality improvement in primary care (local quality improvement activities) and to facilitate national post-market surveillance and reporting of medication prescribing (national quality improvement activities). You can find more information about the Commission by visiting www.safetyandquality.gov.au

MedicineInsight collects, analyses and reports on non-identifiable data from the patient medical records held in participating general practices. The purpose of MedicineInsight is to provide real-world insights into how health technologies, medicines (including vaccines) and medical tests are used in primary care. These insights provide useful quality improvement measures for routine clinical practice (patterns of prescribing and patient care) and health outcomes for patients. Findings also support policy development and identify areas of need in primary health care and population health.

What information does MedicineInsight collect and how?

MedicineInsight collects longitudinal, non-identifiable data from the patient medical records held in this practice. This information is extracted from the software used to manage patient records and write prescriptions. The type of practice data collected by MedicineInsight includes:

1. Participant data (e.g. name of practice, postcode, software and extraction date)
2. Patient demographics (e.g. encrypted identification number, birth year, gender, remoteness indicator, Indigenous status, SEIFA indicators)
3. Clinical data entered directly by healthcare professionals and practice staff about a patient (e.g. encounter, medical history, prescriptions, medical tests performed, observations, risk factors, management activities, allergies/ADRs, MBS service and vaccinations)
4. System-generated data (e.g. start time and date of patient encounter).

When a general practice joins MedicineInsight, a data extraction tool is installed on the practice's clinical information system (CIS). This tool works with the CIS to extract required data and remove any information that may identify a patient. For example, the patient's name, address, and date of birth are replaced with a unique reference number. This process is known as 'de-identification' and makes the extracted patient information anonymous (or non-identifiable) but still allows the Commission to obtain data about a patient over time (known as longitudinal data).

This data is then encrypted and securely transferred for storage in a secure Australian cloud-based location. This location contains non-identifiable data from other participating practices and forms a database available for use by the Commission.

What privacy measures are in place?

The Commission is committed to the protection of personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). The Commission aims to ensure that it manages all personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act. For the MedicineInsight program, there are opt out arrangements (details below) for patients and consent notices for general practitioners (details below).

You can get more information about the Commission's privacy policy from: www.safetyandquality.gov.au/about-us/governance/privacy-policy

How does MedicineInsight use data collected from general practices?

This practice has received an Agreement from the Commission to support the practice to participate in the MedicineInsight data collection. This Agreement outlines the actions and responsibilities both parties agree to as a result of this involvement; including the collection, use and disclosure activities associated with the operation of the MedicineInsight data collection. For example, the Commission uses MedicineInsight data to:

1. Provide regular MedicineInsight Practice Reports to the practice. These are regular aggregated clinical reports on quality use of medicines topics that are customised to the activities of a participating General Practice. These reports are based on the practices own data and offer insights into patterns of prescribing and patient care, comparing these with benchmarks at local, regional and national levels. They also provide an opportunity for improved data quality, facilitate data interpretation and the development of local plans to support clinical interventions. Reports are available to the Participant online via a confidential and secure platform.
2. Enable custom MedicineInsight Practice Reports to consenting general practitioners. These are detailed reports available to individual general practitioners that allocate their own patients to the quality use of medicines topic in a MedicineInsight Practice Report for the purpose of reducing preventable harm, and to support clinical patient interventions to achieve optimal health outcomes for a patient and their clinical care. This report requires the collection of personal information from the general practitioner for the purpose of patient allocation and to display their name on the report which is accessible to those working within the practice. The unique reference number assigned to the patient record at the time of de-identification, allows the general practitioner to re-identify their own patients data within the confines of the practice to inform the standard of care they provide to their patients.

3. Produce routine aggregated reports for key stakeholders (such as state and territory health departments and health services organisations) on national quality improvement activities to inform primary care policies, programs, and initiatives. Report topics can range from chronic public health conditions (i.e. diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease and obstructive pulmonary disease) to post-market surveillance analysis of medication prescribing, diagnostics and therapeutics; including vaccines and medical tests. These reports help to improve policies about the way people across Australia can access and use medicines, medical tests and vaccines. They also support evidence for listings in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
4. Disclose MedicineInsight data to requesting third parties (e.g. government departments, government-funded organisations, not-for-profit organisations and research institutes) for purposes related to informing primary care policy, public health initiatives, research and service delivery. All requests to access data are subject to review and approval processes as described in the [Commission's Data Governance Framework](#) (available via the Agreement this practice has received) which involve robust privacy, confidentiality and security assessments and a determination of benefit to public good and primary care. A public register of projects that have been approved to use MedicineInsight data can be found on the [Commission's website](#).
5. Undertake audit, training, evaluation or quality improvement activities to validate the accuracy and reliability of collected data.

What about my personal information?

MedicineInsight collects a minimal amount of personal information about individual health professionals from the patient medical records held in this practice. This information is name, provider number and prescriber number.

The Agreement this practice has received from the Commission includes an obligation to inform all healthcare professionals (e.g. an individual general practitioner or practice nurse) and practice staff, about the practice's involvement in the program, which the collection of the above information is associated with.

This information sheet has been developed to assist the practice notify its health professionals (including those who commence at the practice after the practice has joined the program) of their participation in MedicineInsight, and subsequent collection of health professional information as an employee of the practice.

The enclosed consent form serves to inform general practitioners of an optional level (described below) of participation that is available to them due to the practices involvement in the MedicineInsight data collection.

How does the practice's participation in MedicineInsight benefit me?

As part of participating in MedicineInsight, general practitioners have the opportunity to provide consent for the collection of personal information for the purpose of receiving custom MedicineInsight reports as outlined in point 2 above. This additional information includes gender, year of birth or age group, email, address and number of years practicing.

If you are a general practitioner, and wish to receive custom MedicineInsight reports based on your own patterns of prescribing and patient care, please complete the [general practitioner consent form](#). The consent form sets out the Commission's privacy arrangements including adherence to the Australian Privacy Act 1988 and its associated Australian Privacy Principles.

If a general practitioner does not provide consent to receive custom MedicineInsight reports, their prescribing and patient care data will be aggregated with other non-consenting general practitioners within the practice. If a single general practitioner within the practice does not provide consent to receive custom reports, it may be possible to identify their data.

General practitioners can request to withdraw from receiving custom MedicineInsight reports at any time, and without reason, by submitting a written notice via the email below. The decision to withdraw will not preclude a general practitioner from accessing aggregate MedicineInsight reports that are made available to the practice as a result of their participation in the data collection.

Can patients choose whether they take part in the program?

The practice will automatically send non-identifiable information from the patient's medical records to MedicineInsight unless the patient chooses to opt out of the MedicineInsight program.

Participating practices are required to display the MedicineInsight poster which provides information about the program, including the practice's participation and voluntary options for patients to opt out at any time, for any reason. If the patient wants to stop participating in the program, the practice must help the patient to sign an opt-out form and return it to the practice's reception for processing.

The Commission supplies each participating practice with a kit containing the information sheets and opt-out forms, and instructions on how to help a patient opt out of the program. Commission staff are also available to help explain the process to practices via the below contact details.

When the patient opts out of the program, the practice stops sending the patient's information to the MedicineInsight database and MedicineInsight will make every effort to remove information that it has already collected.

How can I find out more about MedicineInsight if I have any questions?

Scan the QR code below for more information, or call 1300 721 726. You can also email the QUM Customer Service at qumcustomerservice@safetyandquality.gov.au

