

## Patient Health Records – Next of Kin and Cultural background

Improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has become one of Australia's highest health priorities.

It is important that practices encourage patients to self identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, where appropriate. The nationally accepted question to ask is: 'Do you consider yourself to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?'

Practices need to be working towards the routine recording of patients cultural background, including self identified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status, in order to assist in appropriately tailoring health care to patients and their specific and different needs.

Practices also need to be working toward the routine recording of the person the patient would like to be contacted in an emergency.

### RACGP Standards

**1.7.1D** *Our Practice can demonstrate that we are working toward recording the following information in our active patient health records:*

- *Self identified cultural background (eg. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self identification)*
- *The person that the patient wishes to be contacted in an emergency*

### Assessment methods

- Document review of patient health records

Surveyors will look for evidence of self identified cultural background status and patient's emergency contact details in a review of current health records.

- Interview with practitioners and staff

Practitioners and Staff will be asked by surveyors how and when this information is obtained from patients and included in their record.

### Meeting the standards

Active patient health records will contain patients self identified cultural background status including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Records will also indicate the patients nominated Next of Kin to be contacted in an emergency.

### Best practice:

- Active patient health records contain patients self identified cultural background status including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Records also indicate the patients nominated Next of Kin to be contacted in an emergency.
- The practice has a written policy describing how this information is obtained. This may include a form which new patients complete or an interview process that is conducted privately prior to their first consultation.