

Patient Health Records: Next of Kin and Cultural Background

Improving the health of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders 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 will be able to demonstrate how they routinely record patients' self identified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status, in order to assist in appropriately tailoring health care to patients and their specific and differing needs.

Practices also will be routinely recording the details of the person whom the patient would like to be contacted in an emergency.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

- 1.7.1D** *Our Practice can demonstrate that we routinely record the person the patients wishes to be contacted in an emergency*
- 1.7.1E** *Our practice can demonstrate that we routinely record Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status in our active patient health records.*

Assessment methods

- Document review of patient health records

Surveyors will look for evidence of self identified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status and patient's emergency contact details in a review of current health records.

- Interview with GPs and practice staff

GPs 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders status. Records will also indicate the patient's nominated Next of Kin to be contacted in an emergency.

Best practice:

- 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.