

Notice of Privacy Practices
Effective January 1, 2006

This notice describes how medical information about you (or your minor child) may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully

Overview

Our office uses health information about you for treatment, to obtain payment for treatment, administrative purposes, and to evaluate the quality of care that you receive. Your health information is contained in a medical record that is the physical property of our practice.

The law requires us to maintain the privacy of your protected health information (“PHI”) in accordance with this Notice of Privacy Practices (“Notice”), as long as this Notice remains in effect. We are also required to provide you with a copy of this Notice, which contains our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning you PHI.

From time to time, we may revise our privacy practices and the terms of our Notice at any time, as permitted or required by applicable law. We reserve the right to apply a change in our policies to previously received PHI. We will promptly revise and distribute our Notice whenever there is a material change to the uses or disclosures, your individual rights, our legal duties, or other privacy practices stated in the Notice. We will mail a copy of the revised Notice to the address of record if requested.

Our Privacy Practices

Use and Disclosure. We may use or disclose you PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operation. For your convenience, we have provided the following examples of such potential uses or disclosures:

Treatment. Your PHI may be used to provide you with medical treatment for services. For example, information obtained by a health care provider, such as a physician, nurse, or other person providing health care services to you, will record information in you record that is related to your treatment. This information is necessary for health care providers to determine what treatment you should receive.

Payment. Your PHI may be used or disclosed in order to collect payment for the medical services provided to you. For example, a bill may be sent to you or a third-party payor, such as an insurance company or health plan. The information on the bill may contain information that identifies you, your diagnosis, and treatment or supplies used in the course of treatment.

Health Care Operation. Your PHI may be used or disclosed as part of our internal health care operations. Such health care operations may include, among other things, quality of care audits of our staff and affiliates, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities.

Authorizations. We will not use or disclose you medical information for any reason except those described in this Notice, unless you provide us with a written authorization to do so. We may request such an authorization to use or disclose you PHI for any purpose, but you are not required to give us such authorization as a condition of you treatment. Any written authorization from you may be revoked by you in writing at any time, but such revocation will not affect any prior authorized uses or disclosures.

Patient Access. We will provide you with access to you PHI, as described below in the Individual Rights section of this Notice. With your permission, or in some emergencies, we may disclose you PHI to your family members, friends, or other people to aid in you treatment or the collection of payment. A disclosure of you PHI may also be made if we determine it is reasonably necessary or in you best interests for such purpose as allowing a person acting on you behalf to receive filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, etc.

Locating Responsible Parties. Your PHI may be disclosed in order to locate, identify or notify a family member, your personal representative, or other person responsible for your care. If we determine in our reasonable professional judgment that you are capable of doing so, you will be given the opportunity to consent to or to prohibit or restrict the extent or recipients of such disclosure. If we determine that you are unable to provide such consent, we will limit the PHI disclosed to the minimum necessary.

Appointments. We may contact you to provide appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters) or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Deceased Persons. After your death, we may disclose you PHI to a coroner, medical examiner, funeral director, or organ procurement organization in limited circumstances.

Disasters. We may use or disclose your PHI to any public or private entity authorized by law or by its charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Military and National Security. We may disclose to military authorities the medical information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. When required by law, we may disclose your PHI for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities.

Required by Law. We may use or disclose your medical information when we are required to do so by law. For example, your PHI may be released when required by privacy laws, work-related injuries or illness, public health laws, court or administrative orders, subpoenas, certain discovery request, or other laws, regulations or legal processes. Under certain circumstances, we may make limited disclosures of PHI directly to law enforcement officials or correctional institutions regarding an inmate, lawful detainee, suspect, fugitive, material witness, missing person, or a victim or suspected victim of abuse, neglect, domestic violence or other crimes. We may disclose your PHI to the extent reasonably necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others. We may disclose your PHI when necessary to assist law enforcement officials to capture a third party who has admitted to a crime against you or who has escaped from lawful custody.

Your Individual Rights

Access and Copies. In most cases, you have the right to review or to purchase copies of your PHI by requesting access or copies in writing to our Privacy Officer. Please contact our Privacy Officer regarding our copying fees. Our office will provide records within 30 days of request.

Disclosure Accounting. You have the right to receive an accounting of the instances, if any, in which your PHI was disclosed for purposes other than those described in the following sections above: Use and Disclosures, Patient Access, and Locating Responsible Parties. For each 12-month period, you have the right to receive one free copy of an accounting certain details surrounding such disclosures that occurred after April 13, 2003. If you requested a disclosure accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we will charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for each additional request. Please contact our Privacy Officer regarding these fees.

Additional Restrictions. You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your PHI, but we are not required to honor such a request. We will be bound by such restrictions only if we agree to do so in writing signed by our Privacy Officer.

Alternate Communications. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your PHI by alternative means or in alternative locations. We will accommodate any reasonable request if it specifies in writing the alternative means or location, and provides a satisfactory explanation of how future payments will be handled.

Amendments to PHI. You have the right to request that we amend your PHI. Any such request must be in writing and contain a detailed explanation for the requested amendment. Under certain circumstances, we may deny you request but will provide you a written explanation of the denial. You have the right to send us a statement of disagreement to which we may prepare a rebuttal, a copy of which will be provided to you at no cost. Please contact our Privacy Officer with any further question about amending your medical record.

Copy of Notice of Privacy Practices. Should you obtain a copy of this Notice electronically, you may request a paper copy of this Notice. Please contact our Privacy Officer and a copy will be made available to you at no cost.

Our Obligations

We are required to:

- *maintain the privacy of protected health information;
- *provide you with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information;
- *abide by the terms of this Notice;
- *notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction on how your information is used or disclosed;
- *accommodate reasonable requests you may make to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations;
- *obtain your written authorization to use or disclose your health information for reasons other than those listed above and permitted under law.

Complaints

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you may complain to us to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our Privacy Officer.