

# HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

**This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.**

Protected health information, about you, is obtained as a record of your contacts or visits for healthcare services with our practice. Specifically, "protected health information" is information about you, including demographic information (i.e., name, address, phone, etc.) that may identify you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health condition and related healthcare services.

Our practice is required to follow specific rules on how our staff uses your information, and how we disclose or share this information with other healthcare professionals involved in your care and treatment. This Notice describes how we follow those rules and use and disclose your protected health information to provide your treatment, obtain payment for services you receive, manage our healthcare operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change the terms of our notice, at any time. The new notice will be effective for all protected health information that we maintain at that time. A copy of a revised Notice of Privacy Practices may be obtained by calling the office and requesting that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or asking for one at the time of your next appointment.

**If you have any questions about this Notice, please contact our Privacy Manager.**

## **Your Rights Under the Privacy Rule**

Following is a statement of your rights, under the Privacy Rule, in reference to your protected health information. Please feel free to discuss any questions with our staff.

- **You have the right to receive, and we are required to provide you with, a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices** - We are required to follow the terms of this notice. We reserve the right to change the terms of our notice, at any time. If needed, new versions of this notice will be effective for all protected health information that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with a revised Notice of Privacy Practices if you call our office and request that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or ask for one at the time of your next appointment.

- **You have the right to authorize other use and disclosure** - This means you have the right to authorize or deny any other use or disclosure of protected health information that is not specified within this notice. You may revoke an authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your Healthcare Provider or our office has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.
- **You have the right to designate a personal representative** - This means you may designate a person with the delegated authority to consent to, or authorize the use or disclosure of protected health information.
- **You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information** - This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of protected health information about you that is contained in your patient record for as long as we maintain the protected health information. A "patient record" contains medical and billing records and any other records that your Healthcare Provider and the practice uses for making decisions about you.

Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records: psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding; and protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information. Depending on the circumstances, you have the right to disagree, in writing, with the denial of access. Please contact our Privacy Manager if you have questions about access to your medical record.

We have the right to charge a reasonable fee for copies as established by professional, state, or federal guidelines.

- **You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information** - This means you may ask us, in writing, not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.

We are not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If we believe, it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. If your Healthcare Provider does agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your protected health information in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. We have the right to terminate a restriction and will notify you in writing of such terminations. You may disagree with our termination of a restriction in written or verbal

form. With this in mind, please discuss any restriction you wish to request with your Healthcare Provider. You may request a restriction by contacting our Privacy Manager.

- **You may have the right to request an amendment to your protected health information** - This means you may request an amendment of protected health information about you for as long as we maintain this information. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement. We will provide you with a copy of any such denial and/or rebuttal. Please contact our Privacy Manager if you have questions about amending your medical record.
- **You have the right to request disclosure accountability** - This means that you may request a listing of your protected health information disclosures we have made to entities or persons outside of our practice. It excludes disclosures we may have made directly to you. You have the right to receive specific information regarding disclosures that occurred after April 14, 2003. You may receive disclosure accountability on a no-fee basis once every twelve months. We have the right to charge a reasonable administrative fee for multiple disclosures within a twelve-month period and to require payment of such fees prior to delivering additional accounting.

### **How We May Use or Disclose Protected Health Information**

Following are examples of uses and disclosures of your protected healthcare information that we are permitted to make. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to describe the types of uses and disclosures that may be made by our office.

- **Treatment** - We may use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your healthcare and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your healthcare with a third party that is involved in your care and treatment. For example, we would disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to a pharmacy that would fill your prescriptions. We will also disclose protected health information to other Healthcare Providers who may be involved in your care and treatment.

We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your Healthcare Provider is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment. We may contact you by phone or other means to provide results from exams or tests and to provide information that describes or recommends treatment alternatives regarding your care. Also, We may contact you to provide information about health related benefits and services offered by our office.

- **Payment** - Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your healthcare services. This may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the healthcare services we recommend for you, such as, making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant protected health information be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.
- **Healthcare Operations** - We may use or disclose, as-needed, your protected health information in order to support the business activities of our practice. This includes, but is not limited to business planning and development, quality assessment and improvement, medical review, legal services, and auditing functions. It also includes education, provider credentialing, certification, underwriting, rating, or other insurance-related activities. Additionally, it includes business administrative activities such as customer service, compliance with privacy requirements, internal grievance procedures, due diligence in connection with the sale or transfer of assets, and creating de-identified information.

We will share your protected health information with third party "business associates" that perform various activities (e.g., billing services) for the practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your protected health information, we will have a written contract with that entity to protect the privacy of your health information.

- We may also use and disclose your protected health information for other marketing activities. For example, your name and address may be used to send you a newsletter about our practice and the services we offer. We may also send you information about products or services that we believe may be beneficial to you. You may contact our Privacy Contact to request that these materials not be sent to you.
- We may use or disclose your demographic information and the dates that you received treatment from your Healthcare Provider, as necessary, in order to contact you for fundraising activities supported by our office. If you do not want to receive these materials, please contact our Privacy Contact and request that these fundraising materials not be sent to you.

### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures**

Other uses and disclosures of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law as described below. You may revoke an authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that we may have taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

- **Others Involved in Your Healthcare** - Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend, or any other person that you identify, your protected health information that directly relates to that person's involvement in your healthcare. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may use or disclose protected health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or any other person that is responsible for your care of your location, general condition, or death. Finally, we may use or disclose your protected health information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts and to coordinate uses and disclosures to family or other individuals involved in your healthcare.
- **As Required By Law** - We may use or disclose your protected health information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.
- **For Public Health** - We may disclose your protected health information for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information. The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability. We may also disclose your protected health information, if directed by the public health authority, to a foreign government agency that is collaborating with the public health authority.
- **For Communicable Diseases** - We may disclose your protected health information, if authorized by law, to a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease or condition.
- **For Health Oversight** - We may disclose protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the healthcare system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs, and civil rights laws.
- **In Cases of Abuse or Neglect** - In addition, we may disclose your protected health information if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information. In this case, the disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.
- **To The Food and Drug Administration** - We may disclose your protected health information to a person or company required by the Food and Drug Administration to report adverse events, product defects, problems, and biologic product deviations, to track products, to enable product recalls, to make repairs or replacements, or to conduct post-marketing surveillance, as required.
- **For Legal Proceedings** - We may disclose protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process.
- **To Law Enforcement** - We may also disclose protected health information, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes. These law enforcement purposes include:

(1) legal processes: (2) limited information requests for identification and location purposes: (3) those pertaining to victims of a crime: (4) suspicion that death has occurred as a result of criminal conduct: (5) in the event that a crime occurs on the premises of the practice, and (6) medical emergency (not on the Practice's premises) when it is likely that a crime has occurred.

- **To Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation** - We may disclose protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, determining cause of death or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law. We may also disclose protected health information to a funeral director, as authorized by law, in order to permit the funeral director to carry out their duties. We may disclose such information in reasonable anticipation of death. Protected health information may be used and disclosed for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes.
- **For Research** - We may disclose your protected health information to researchers when an institutional review board has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your protected health information.
- **In Cases of Criminal Activity** - Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, we may disclose your protected health information if we believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. We may also disclose protected health information if it is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.
- **For Military Activity and National Security** - When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose protected health information of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel:
  - (1) for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities: (2) for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs of your eligibility for benefits: or (3) to foreign military authority if you are a member of that foreign military services. We may also disclose your protected health information to authorized federal officials for conducting national security and intelligence activities, including for the provision of protective services to the President or others legally authorized.
- **For Workers' Compensation** - Your protected health information may be disclosed as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally established programs.
- **When an Inmate** - We may use or disclose your protected health information if you are an inmate of a correctional facility and your Healthcare Provider created or received your protected health information in the course of providing care to you.
- **Required Uses and Disclosures** - Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule.

## Complaints

You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our Privacy Manager of your complaint. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.