

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.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and its implementing regulations (HIPAA), as amended, is a federal program that requires that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper or orally, are kept properly confidential. This Act gives you, the patient, significant new rights to understand and control how your health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse Protected Health Information (PHI).

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information. "Protected health information" is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information

Your Protected Health Information may be used and disclosed by your physician, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you, to pay your health care bills, to support the operation of the physician's practice, and any other use required by law.

Treatment: We will use and disclose your Protected Health Information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party. For example, your protected health information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you.

Payment: Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for health care services. 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 your physician's practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. We may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your physician 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 call your home and leave a message (either on an answering machine or with the person answering the phone) to remind you of an upcoming appointment, the need to schedule a new appointment or to call our office. We may also mail a postcard reminder to your home address. If you would prefer that we call or contact you at another telephone number or location, please let us know.

We may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include: as Required By Law, Public Health issues required by law, Communicable Diseases: Health Oversight: Abuse or Neglect: Food and Drug Administration requirements: Legal Proceedings: Law Enforcement: Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation: Research: Criminal Activity: Military Activity and National Security: Workers' Compensation: Inmates: 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 HIPAA.

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures Will Be Made Only With Your Consent, Authorization, or Opportunity to Object unless required by law. Use and disclosures of PHI for marketing purposes, as well as disclosures that constitute a sale of PHI, require an authorization from you.

You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

Your Rights

The Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your protected health information.

You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information. 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. If such information is maintained in an Electronic Health Record (EHR), your access rights include the right to a copy in an electronic format. We have the right to charge you a fee for the copying of paper records, and in the case of a request for an electronic copy of your PHI maintained in an EHR (or a summary or explanation of such information) we have the right to charge you the amount of labor costs in responding to your request. Your right to inspect and obtain a copy of your PHI extends only to your PHI contained in our Designated Record Set for you. A "Designated Record Set" is the HIPAA term for medical and billing records and any other records that we use for making health care decisions about you.

You have the right to request a restriction of your health information. This means you may ask us 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 PHI not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction and to whom you want the restriction to apply. Any such request for restrictions must be in writing, be addressed to the Privacy Officer, and state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. However, we are not required to comply with your request, unless you are asking us to restrict the use and disclosure of your PHI to a health plan for payment or health care operation purposes and such information you wish to restrict pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you have paid us "out-of-pocket" in full.

Your physician is not required to agree to a restriction you may request. If your physician believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. You then have the right to use another Healthcare Professional.

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. However, we may condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or a specification of an alternate address or other method of contact. We will not request an explanation from you as to the basis for the request. Your request must be in writing, be addressed to the Privacy Officer, and state the specific alternate means or location.

You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this Notice from us, upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this Notice alternatively (i.e. electronically).

You may have the right to have your physician amend your protected health information contained in your Designated Record Set if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete. However, we are not required to make any such amendments. 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 and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal. All of these documents will be placed in the appropriate part of your Designated Record Set. If you are requesting that we amend your records because you believe that you are a victim of medical identity theft, we will use reasonable efforts to assist you in making corrections to your record which are determined to be appropriate under the circumstances.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information. Affected individuals have the right to be notified in the event of a breach of unsecured PHI.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice and will inform you of any changes. You then have the right to object or withdraw as provided in this Notice.

To exercise any of your rights above, please contact our privacy officer in writing.

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 officer of your complaint at our office and main telephone number. **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.**

This Notice was originally published and became effective on April 14, 2003, as amended from time to time.

Last Revision 08/26/2013