



# 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.

**WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE:** This notice describes our practices and that of (1) any healthcare professional authorized to enter information into your medical record that we maintain at this office; and (2) all employees, staff, and other healthcare personnel.

**YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION:** We create a record of the care and services you receive at this office. We need this record to provide you with quality service and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records about you maintained by this office. Other physicians or healthcare providers that you use may have different policies or notices regarding the use and disclosure of your medical information. This notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information. We are required by law to (1) make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept; (2) give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and (3) follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

**HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:** The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose medical information. "Use" is what we do with your information in this office. "Disclose" means sharing your information with others outside this office. All of our permitted uses and disclosures of information fall within one of the categories.

**FOR TREATMENT:** We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, office staff, or other personnel who are involved in your care.

**FOR PAYMENT:** We may use and disclose health information about you so that the treatment and services you receive from us may be billed to and payment collected from you, an insurance company, or a third party.

**FOR HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS:** We may use and disclose medical information about you as reasonably necessary. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the office and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care.

**TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS):** We must disclose your medical information when requested by HHS when it is undertaking a compliance investigation, review, or enforcement action.

**TO YOU:** We must disclose your medical information to you when you request it as described below. We may disclose your medical information to you in other situations.

**OPPORTUNITY TO AGREE OR OBJECT:** We may disclose your medical information in front of others with your informal permission when you are present. If you are not present or otherwise unable to give permission, we may disclose your medical information to others if, in a healthcare provider's professional judgment, disclosure is determined to be in your best interest. This includes telling family or friends involved in your care about your current medical condition.

**FOR APPOINTMENT REMINDERS:** We may use medical information about you to remind you about appointments using phone calls or text messages. This also allows us to leave appointment reminders and messages with limited information on your voicemail and answering machines.

**INCIDENTAL USE:** Although we try to limit communications of your medical information to the minimum necessary, we can disclose information that is incidental to an otherwise permissible use.

**VALID AUTHORIZATION:** We may disclose your medical information pursuant to your written authorization. For authorization to be valid, you must sign a form containing certain statements.

**PUBLIC INTEREST AND BENEFIT ACTIVITIES:** We may disclose medical information about you for 12 national priority purposes, including when required by law, such as statute or court order; for public health activities, such as providing immunization records to a school with a parent's permission; to government agencies regarding victims of abuse; to health oversight agencies to carry out legally authorized audits and investigations; pursuant to court orders and subpoenas that meet certain requirements; to law enforcement as described below; to a coroner or medical examiner; as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation; for research purposes under certain circumstances; to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person; for certain essential government functions; and for workers' compensation or similar programs.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** We may disclose your Health Information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official (1) in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons, or similar process; (2) about a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct; (3) about criminal conduct at the office; or (4) in emergency circumstances, in order to report a crime, the location of the crime or victims, or the identity, description, or location of the person who committed the crime.

**LIMITED DATA SET:** In certain situations we may disclose your medical information within a limited data set for research, healthcare operations, and public health purposes. A limited data set is medical information about you from which certain identifying information about you, your relatives, household members, and employers has been removed.



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## DISCLOSURES THAT REQUIRE AUTHORIZATION FROM YOU:

**PSYCHOTHERAPY NOTES, MARKETING, AND SALES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION:** Most uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes, protected health information for marketing purposes, and that constitute a sale of protected health information require authorization.

**OTHER:** Other uses and disclosures not described in this notice will be made only with your authorization.

## YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you:

**RIGHT TO INSPECT & COPY:** You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes prescriptions and billing records. To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. We will select a licensed health care professional to review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

**RIGHT TO AMEND:** If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for this office. To request an amendment, complete and submit an AMENDMENT REQUEST form to the Privacy Officer. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that (1) was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment; (2) is not part of the medical information kept by or for the office; (3) is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (4) is accurate and complete.

**RIGHT TO AN ACCOUNTING OF DISCLOSURES:** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you. To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at the time before any costs are incurred.

**RIGHT TO REQUEST RESTRICTIONS:** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. We are not required to agree to your request unless (1) the disclosure is for the purposes of carrying out payment or healthcare operations, and (2) the protected health information pertains to an item or service which you, or another person other than your health insurance, have paid for in full. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you may complete and submit the REQUEST FOR LIMITATION AND RESTRICTION OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION to the Privacy Officer. We will not ask you the reason for your request. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

**RIGHT TO REQUEST CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. To request confidential communications, you may complete and submit the PATIENT'S REQUEST TO LIMIT CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS to the Privacy Officer. We will not ask you the reason for your request. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

**RIGHT TO A PAPER COPY OF THIS NOTICE:** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact the Privacy Officer.

**RIGHT TO RECEIVE NOTICE OF BREACH:** You will receive notification of breaches of your unsecured protected health information unless we determine there is a low probability your PHI was compromised.

**CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE:** We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a summary of the current notice in the office. The summary will contain, in the top right-hand corner the effective date. You are entitled to a copy of the current notice in effect.

**COMPLAINTS:** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with the office, contact the Privacy Officer. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

**OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION** Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.