

Protecting Your Confidential Health Information is Important to Us

To The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

We may disclose your health information to HHS, the government agency responsible for overseeing compliance with federal privacy law and regulations regulating the privacy and security of health information.

For Research

We may use or disclose your health information for research, subject to conditions. “Research” means systemic investigation designed to contribute to generalized knowledge.

In Connection With Your Death or Organ Donation

We may disclose your health information to a coroner for identification purposes, to a funeral director for funeral purposes, or to an organ procurement organization to facilitate transplantation of one of your organs.

If applicable State law does not permit the disclosure described above, we will comply with the stricter State law.

Authorization to Use or Disclose Health Information

We are required to obtain your written authorization in the following circumstances: (a) to use or disclose psychotherapy notes (except when needed for payment purposes or to defend against litigation filed by you); (b) to use your PHI for marketing purposes; (c) to sell your PHI; and (d) to use or disclose your PHI for any purpose not previously described in this Notice. We also will obtain your authorization before using or disclosing your PHI when required to do so by (a) state law, such as laws restricting the use or disclosure of genetic information or information concerning HIV status; or (b) other federal law, such as federal law protecting the confidentiality of substance abuse records. You may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.

PATIENT RIGHTS

You have the following rights related to your health information.

Restrictions

You have the right to request restrictions on the use or disclosure of your health information for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations in addition to the restrictions imposed by federal law. Our office is not required to agree to your request, unless (a) you request that we not disclose your PHI to a health insurance company, Medicare or Medicaid for payment or healthcare operations purposes; (b) you, or someone on your behalf, has paid us in full for the healthcare item or service to which the PHI pertains; and (c) we are not required by law to disclose to the insurer, Medicare, or Medicaid the PHI that is the subject of your request, but we will endeavor to honor reasonable requests. We generally are not required to agree to a requested restriction. Our office will honor your request that we not disclose your health information to a health plan for payment or healthcare operation purposes if the health information relates solely to a healthcare item or service for which you have paid us out-of-pocket in full.

Confidential Communications

You have the right to request that we communicate with you by alternative means or at an alternative location. You may, for example, request that we communicate your health information only privately with no other family members present or through mailed communications that are sealed. We will honor your reasonable requests for confidential communications.

Inspect and Copy Your Health Information

You have the right to read, review, and copy your health information, including your complete chart, x-rays and billing records. If you would like a copy of your health information, please let us know. We may need to charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee to duplicate and assemble your copy. If there will be a charge, we will first contact you to determine whether you wish to modify or withdraw your request.

Amend Your Health Information

You have the right to ask us to update or modify your records if you believe your health information records are incorrect or incomplete. We will be happy to accommodate you as long as our office maintains this information. In order to standardize our process, please provide us with your request in writing and describe the information to be changed and your reason for the change.

Your request may be denied if the health information record in question was not created by our office, is not part of our records or if the records containing your health information are determined to be accurate and complete. If we deny your request, we will provide you with a written explanation of the denial.

Accounting of Disclosures of Your Health Information

You have the right to ask us for a description of how and where your health information was disclosed. Our documentation procedures will enable us to provide information on health information disclosures that we are required to disclose to you. Please let us know in writing the time period for which you are interested. Thank you for limiting your request to no more than six years at a time. We will provide the first accounting during any 12-month period without charge. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for each additional accounting during the same 12-month period. If there will be a charge, the Privacy Official will first contact you to determine whether you wish to modify or withdraw your request.

Request a Paper Copy of this Notice

You have the right to obtain a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices directly from our office at any time. Stop by or give us a call and we will mail or email a copy to you.

Receive Notice of a Security Breach

You have the right to receive notification of a breach of your unsecured health information.

Changes to the Notice

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide to you or your personal representative with this Notice of our Privacy Practices. We are required to practice the policies and procedures described in this notice but we do reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice. If we change our privacy practices we will be sure all of our patients receive a copy of the revised Notice.

Complaints

You have the right to express complaints to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been compromised. We encourage you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your information. We will not retaliate against you for submitting a complaint. Please let us know of your concerns or complaints in writing by submitting your complaint to our Privacy Officer.

Patient Acknowledgment

Patient Name(s): _____

Thank you very much for taking time to review how we are carefully using your health information. If you have any questions we want to hear from you. If not, we would appreciate very much your acknowledging your receipt of our policy by signing this form.

Patient Signature _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____

For additional information about the matters discussed in this notice, please contact our Privacy Officer.