

# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES (page 1)

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, AS YOU WILL ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THIS NOTICE WITH YOUR SIGNATURE.

\*\*\*\*\*Please print this copy for your records and bring a signed copy to your first appointment.\*\*\*\*\*

## **I. Our Legal Responsibilities:**

This Privacy Notice is being provided to you as a requirement of a federal law known as the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)**. The privacy notice describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control protected health information in some cases. Your **“protected health information”** means any written and oral health information about you, including demographics data that can be used to identify you.

We are required to follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect on April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

As permitted by law, we reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time. We reserve the right to make changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available to you at your next visit to our practice. You may request a copy of our Notice at any time.

## **II. Examples of Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information:**

Our practice may use your protected health information for purposes of providing treatment, obtaining payment for treatment and conducting health care operations.

**A. Treatment** – We may use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare practitioner providing treatment to you. For example, a doctor to whom we refer you for ongoing or further care may need your medical record. We also may disclose medical information about you to people who may be involved in your medical care, which may include your family member, or other personal representatives.

**B. Payment** – We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you. For example, we may need to give your healthcare information, regarding the treatment you received from us, to obtain payment or reimbursement for the care.

**C. Healthcare Operations** - We may use and disclose your health information in connection with healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include such activities as: quality assessment and improvement activities, training programs medical reviews, and employee review activities, licensing and credentialing programs.

**D. Use of Information** – We may use a sign in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name. We may also call you by name in the waiting area when your physician is ready to see you, to contact you to remind you of an appointment

**E. Your Authorization** – In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or disclose it to anyone for any purpose. You may revoke your authorization in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

**F. To your Family and Friends** – We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

**G. Persons Involved in Care** – Unless you object, we may use or disclose your protected health information to notify, or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or other person responsible for your care, about your location, and about your general condition, or your death. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only that which is relevant to the person’s involvement in your healthcare. We will also use our professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information.

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**H. Marketing, Health-Related Services** – We will not use your protected health information for marketing communications without your written authorization.

**I. Required by Law** – We may disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

**J. Abuse and Neglect** – We may disclose your health information to public authorities as allowed by law to report abuse or neglect. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

**K. National Security** – We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials, health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials having lawful custody of protected health information of inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

### **III. Your Health Information Rights:**

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

**A. Right to Inspect and Copy** – You have a right to inspect and copy your protected health information, with limited exceptions. (The request to review your records must be made in writing to the Privacy Officer. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information at the bottom of this Notice). We may deny your request under certain circumstances. If you request a copy of your information, we may charge you a fee for the costs incurred by us in complying with your request. If you prefer, we may prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee.

**B. Right to an Accounting Disclosure** – You have the right to receive a list of instances in which our business associates or we disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

**C. Right to Request Restrictions** – You may have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use and disclosure of your protected health information. We are not required to agree with these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency).

**D. Right to Request Alternative Communication** – You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health care information by alternative means or to alternative location. (You must make your request in writing.) Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative means or locations you request.

**E. Right to Request an Amendment** – You have the right to request that we amend your health information. (Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended.) We may deny your request under certain circumstances. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of such rebuttal.

**F. 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.

### **IV. Questions and Complaints:**

If you have any questions, would like additional information, or want to report a problem regarding the handling of your information, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made or amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us by addressing a written complaint to the Privacy Officer at 830-625-2583. You may also submit a written complaint to the Secretary of the United States Department of health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the United States Department of health and Human Services upon request.

We support the right to the privacy of your protected health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**I acknowledge receipt and understanding of this Notice of Privacy Practices**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patient Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date