



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

OUR LEGAL DUTY

Federal and state law requires us to maintain the privacy of your health information. The law also requires us to give you this notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices we describe in this notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this notice any time, provided such applicable law permits the change. We reserve the right to make the 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 the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this notice and make the new notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our notice any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this notice, please contact us.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and health care operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use your health information for treatment or disclose it to a dentist, physician or other health care provider providing treatment to you.

Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you. We may also disclose your health information to another healthcare provider or entity that is subject to the federal Privacy Rules for its payment activities.

Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose your health information for our health care operations, which may include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities. We may disclose your health information to another health care provider or organization that is subject to the federal privacy rules and that has a relationship with you to support some of their health care operations. We may disclose your information to help these organizations conduct quality assessment and improvement activities, review the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, or detect or prevent health care fraud and abuse.

On Your Authorization: You may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect and uses or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us written authorization, we cannot disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this notice.

To Your Family and Friends: We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend, or other person to the extent necessary to help with your health care or payment for your health care. Before we disclose your information to these people, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to our use or disclosure. If you are not present, or in the event of your incapacity or an emergency, we will disclose your medical information based on our professional judgement of whether the disclosure would be in your best interest. We may use our professional judgement 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. We may use or disclose information about you to notify or assist in notifying a person involved in your care, of your general location and condition.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders, such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters.

Disaster Relief: We may use or disclose your health information to a public or private entity authorized by law or by its charters to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Public Benefit: We may use or disclose your medical information as authorized by law for the following purposes deemed to be in the public interest or benefit

- as required by law;
- for public health activities, including disease and vital statistic reporting, child abuse reporting, FDA oversight, and to employers regarding work-related illness or injury;
- to report adult abuse, neglect, or domestic violence;
- to health oversight agencies;
- in response to court and administrative orders and other lawful processes;
- to law enforcement officials pursuant to subpoenas and other lawful processes concerning crime victims, suspicious deaths, crimes on our premises, reporting crimes in emergencies, and for purposes of identifying or locating a suspect or other person;
- to coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors;
- to an organ procurement organization;
- to avert a serious threat to health or safety;
- in connection with certain research activities;
- to the military and federal officials for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and national security activities;
- to correctional institutions regarding inmates; and as authorized by state worker's compensation laws.

PATIENTS RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may request access by sending us a letter. If you request copies, we will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee that may include labor, copying costs and postage. If you request an alternative format, we will charge you a cost-based fee for providing information in that format. If you prefer, we may—but are not required to—prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your information over the last 6 years (but not before April 14, 2003). That list will not include disclosures for treatment, payment, or health care operations, as authorized by you, and for certain other activities. If you request this information more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restrictions: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency). Any agreement that we make to request additional restrictions must be in writing signed by a person authorized to make such an agreement on our behalf. Your request is not binding unless our agreement is in writing.

Alternate Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. You must specify in your request the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how you will handle payment under the alternative means or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why we should amend the information. We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you believe that we have violated your privacy rights, or that we made a decision about access to your health information incorrectly, or our response to a request you made to restrict or amend was incorrect, you may contact us. You may also file a written complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will support your right to privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U. S. Health and Human Services Department.

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