

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

INTRODUCTION

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information (PHI). PHI includes any identifiable information that we obtain from you or others that relates to your physical or mental health, the health care you have received, or payment for your health care.

As required by law, this notice provides you with information about your rights and our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to the privacy of PHI. This notice also discusses the uses and disclosures we will make of your PHI. We must comply with the provisions of this notice, although we reserve the right to change the terms of this notice from time to time and to make the revised notice effective for all PHI we maintain. A copy of our most current privacy notice will be posted in the office. You can always request a copy of our most current privacy notice from our Practice.

PERMITTED USES AND DISCLOSURES

The following categories describe the different ways in which we may use and disclose your PHI without obtaining your authorization.

- **Treatment** means the provision, coordination of management of your health care, including consultations between health care providers regarding your care and referrals for health care from one health care provider to another. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken leg may need to know if you have diabetes, because diabetes may slow the healing process. Therefore, the doctor may review your medical records to assess whether you have potentially complicating conditions like diabetes.
- **Payment** means activities we undertake to obtain reimbursement for the health care provided to you, including determinations of eligibility and coverage and other utilization review activities. For example, prior to providing health care services, we may need to provide your HMO information about your medical condition to determine whether the proposed course of treatment will be covered. When we subsequently bill the HMO for the services rendered to you, we can provide the HMO with information regarding your care if necessary to obtain payment.
- **Health care operations** means the support functions of our Practice related to treatment and payment, such as quality assurance activities, case management, receiving and responding to patient complaints,

physician review, compliance programs, audits, business planning, development, management and administrative activities. For example, we may use your medical information to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine medical information about many patients to decide what additional services we should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective.

- We have an indirect treatment relationship with you, that is, we provide health care to you based on the orders of another health care provider. For example, if you have come to us for a diagnostic procedure, we can disclose the results of that test to the physician who ordered the procedure.

OTHER DISCLOSURES OF PHI

We may contact you to notify you of lab or test results, to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

We may disclose your PHI only to those people that you have authorized. We will only disclose the PHI directly relevant to their involvement in your care or payments. We may also use or disclose your PHI to notify, or assist in the notification of a family member, a personal representative, or another person responsible, we will give you an opportunity to object to these disclosures, and we will not make these disclosures if you object. If you are not available, we will determine whether a disclosure to your family or friends is in your best interest, and we will disclose only the PHI that is directly relevant to their involvement in your care. When permitted by law, we may coordinate our uses and disclosures of PHI with public or private entities authorized by law or by charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

We will allow your family and friends to act on your behalf to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, X-rays, and similar forms of PHI with your authorization.

We may contact you as part of our marketing efforts as permitted by applicable law.

Except for the special situations listed below, or as provided by Florida law, we will not use or disclose your PHI for any other purpose unless you provide written authorization. You have the right to revoke that authorization at any time, provided that the revocation is in writing, except to the extent that we already have taken action in reliance on your authorization.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- **Organ and Tissue Donation:** If you are an organ donor, we may release medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation, or to an organ donation bank as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.
- **Military and Veterans:** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities. We may also release medical information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.
- **Worker's Compensation:** We may release medical information about you for programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- **Public Health Risks:** We may disclose the medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:
 - To prevent or control disease, injury or disability
 - To report births and deaths
 - To report child abuse or neglect
 - To report reactions to medications or problems with products
 - To notify people of product recalls, repairs or replacements
 - To notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition
 - To notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.
- **Health Oversight Activities:** We may disclose medical information to federal or state agencies that oversee our activities. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws. We may disclose PHI to persons under the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction to track products or to conduct post-marketing surveillance.
- **Lawsuits and Disputes:** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.
- **Law Enforcement:** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process
 - To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person(s)
 - About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
 - About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct
 - About criminal conduct on our premises
 - In emergency circumstances to report a crime; the location of the crime or victims; or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors:** We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.
 - **National Security and Intelligence Activities:** We may release medical information about you to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, or other national security activities authorized by law.
 - **Protective Services for the President and Others:** We may disclose medical information about you to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President; other authorized persons, or foreign heads of state; or conduct special investigations.
 - **Inmates:** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.
 - **Serious Threats:** As permitted by applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, we may use and disclose PHI if we, in good faith, believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of others.

YOUR RIGHTS

1. **Requesting Restrictions:** You have the right to request restrictions on our uses and disclosures of PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations. However, we are not required to agree to your request. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI, you must make

your request in writing to the Practice Office Manager. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:

- i. the information you wish restricted;
- ii. whether you are requesting to limit our Practice's use, disclosure or both; and
- iii. to whom you want the limits to apply

2. Confidential Communications: You have the right to reasonably request to receive communication of PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations. However, you are required to provide our office with a daytime telephone number.

3. Inspection and Copies: You have the right to inspect and copy the PHI contained in your medical and billing records, except for:

- i. Psychotherapy notes, which are notes recorded by a mental health professional documenting or analyzing the contents of conversation during a private counseling session or a group, joint or family counseling session and that have been separated from the rest of your medical record;
- ii. Information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding;
- iii. PHI involving laboratory test when your access is required by law;
- iv. If you are a prison inmate and obtaining such information would jeopardize your health, safety, security, custody or rehabilitation or that of other inmates, or the safety of any officer, employee, or other person at the correctional institution or person responsible for transporting you;
- v. If we obtained or created PHI as part of a research study for as long as the research is in progress, provided that you agreed to the temporary denial of access when consenting to participate in the research;
- vi. Your PHI is contained in records kept by a federal agency or contractor when your access is required by law; and
- vii. If the PHI was obtained by someone other than us under a promise of confidentiality and the access requested would be reasonably likely to reveal the source of the information.

We may also deny a request for access to PHI if:

- A licensed health care professional has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that the provision of access to such personal representative is reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to you or another person.
- The PHI makes reference to another person (unless such other person is a health care provider) and a licensed health care professional has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that the provision of access to such

- personal representative is reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to you or another person; or
- The request for access is made by the individual's personal representative and a licensed health care professional has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that the provision of access to such personal representative is reasonably likely to cause substantial harm to you or another person.

If we deny a request for access for any of the three reasons described above, then you have the right to have our denial reviewed in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

You will be financially responsible for copying charges and postage related to the production of your information. The charge for this service is \$1.00 per page for the first 25 pages and \$0.25 for each page in excess of 25 pages, in accordance with Florida Administrative Code 64B8-10.003.

4. **Requesting an Amendment.** You have the right to request an amendment (correction) to your PHI, but we may deny your request for correction, if determined that the PHI or record that is the subject of the request:

- i. Was not created by us, unless you provide a reasonable basis to believe that the originator of PHI is no longer available to act on the requested amendment;
- ii. Is not part of your medical or billing records;
- iii. Is not available for inspection as set forth above; or
- iv. Is accurate and complete.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the Practice Office Manager. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our Practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing.

In any event, any agreed upon correction will be included as an addition to, and not a replacement of, already existing records.

5. **Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI made by us to individuals or entities other than to you, except for disclosures:

- i. To carry out treatment, payment and health care operations as provided above;
- ii. To persons involved in your care or for other notification purposes as provided by law;

- iii. Made pursuant to your written authorization;
- iv. For national security or intelligence purposes as provided by law;
- v. To correctional institutions or law enforcement officials as provided by law; or
- vi. That occurred prior to April 14, 2003.

The first accounting requested within a 12-month period will be provided free of charge. For additional requested during the same 12-month period, you will be charged for the cost of providing the list. The Practice will notify you of the cost involved, so you may decide whether to withdraw or modify your request.

6. **Copy of Privacy Notice.** You have the right to request and receive a paper copy of this notice from us.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you should immediately contact the Practice Office Manager. We will not take action against you for filing a complaint. You also may file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

CONTACT PERSON

If you have any question or would like further information about this notice, please contact the Practice Manager at the Family Medical Center Clinic.

This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003.