

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective Date: August 14, 2014

Revised on:



This Notice of Privacy Practices is NOT an authorization. It describes how we, our Business Associates, and their subcontractors may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI) 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 your PHI. "Protected Health Information" or "PHI" is information that identifies you individually, including demographic information that relates your past, present, or future physical or mental health condition and related health care services.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

We may use and disclose your PHI in the following situations:

- **Treatment:** We may use or disclose your PHI to provide medical treatment and/or services in order to manage and coordinate your medical care. For example, we may share your medical information with other physicians and health care providers, surgery centers, hospitals, rehabilitation therapists, home health providers, laboratories, nurse case managers, worker's compensation adjusters, etc. to ensure that the medical provider has the necessary medical information to treat you.
- **Payment:** Your PHI will be used to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, we will provide your health care plan with the information it requires prior to paying us for the services we have provided to you. This use and disclosure may also include certain activities that your health plan requires prior to approving a service, such as determining benefits eligibility and prior authorization, etc.
- **Health Care Operations:** We may use and disclose your PHI to manage, operate, and support the business activities of our practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment, employee review, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. In addition, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your physician is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment, and inform you about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.
- **Minors:** PHI of minors will be disclosed to their parents or legal guardians unless prohibited by law.
- **Required by Law:** We will use or disclose your PHI when required to do so by local, state, federal, and international law.
- **Abuse, Neglect, and Domestic Violence:** Your PHI will be disclosed to the appropriate government agency if there is belief that a patient has been or is currently the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence and the patient agrees or it is required by law to do so. In addition, your information may also be disclosed when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health or safety or the health and safety of others to someone who may be able to help prevent the threat.

- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings:** As sometimes required by law, we may disclose your PHI for the purpose of litigation to include: disputes and lawsuits; in response to a court or administrative order; response to a subpoena; request for discovery; or other legal processes. However, disclosure will only be made if efforts have been made to inform you of the request or obtain an order protecting the information requested. Your information may also be disclosed if required for our legal defense in the event of a lawsuit.
- **Law Enforcement:** We will disclose your PHI for law enforcement purposes when all applicable legal requirements have been met. This includes, but is not limited to, law enforcement due to identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order or warrant, and grand jury subpoena.
- **Public Health:** Your PHI may be disclosed and may be required by law to be disclosed for public health risks. This includes: reports to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the purpose of quality and safety of an FDA-regulated product or activity; to prevent or control disease; report births and deaths; report child abuse and/or neglect; reporting of reactions to medications or problems with health products; notification of recalls of products; reporting a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk of contracting and/or spreading a disease or condition.
- **Health Oversight Activities:** We may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency for audits, investigations, inspections, licensures, and other activities as authorized by law.
- **Inmates:** If you are or become an inmate of a correctional facility or under the custody of the law, we may disclose PHI to the correctional facility if the disclosure is necessary for your institutional health care, to protect your health and safety, or to protect the health and safety of others within the correctional facility.
- **Military, National Security, and other Specialized Government Functions:** If you are in the military or involved in national security or intelligence, we may disclose your PHI to authorized officials.
- **Worker's Compensation:** We will disclose only the PHI necessary for Worker's Compensation in compliance with Worker's Compensation laws. This information may be reported to your employer and/or your employer's representative regarding an occupational injury or illness.
- **Practice Ownership Change:** If our medical practice is sold, acquired, or merged with another entity, your PHI will become the property of the new owner. However, you will still have the right to request copies of your records and have copies transferred to another physician. Please note that there may be a fee for this in some cases.
- **Breach Notification Purposes:** If for any reason there is an unsecured breach of your PHI, we will utilize the contact information you have provided us with to notify you of the breach, as required by law. In addition, your PHI may be disclosed as a part of the breach notification and reporting process.
- **Research:** Your PHI may be disclosed to researchers for the purpose of conducting research when the research has been approved by an Institutional Review or Privacy Board and in compliance with law governing research.

- **Business Associates:** We may disclose your PHI to our business associates who provide us with services necessary to operate and function as a medical practice. We will only provide the minimum information necessary for the associate(s) to perform their functions as it relates to our business operations. For example, we may use a separate company to process our billing or transcription services that require access to a limited amount of your health information. Please know and understand that all of our business associates are obligated to comply with the same HIPAA privacy and security rules in which we are obligated. Additionally, all of our business associates are under contract with us and committed to protect the privacy and security of your PHI.

USES AND DISCLOSURES IN WHICH YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO OBJECT AND OPT OUT

- **Communication with family and/or individuals involved in your care or payment of your care:** Unless you object, disclosure of your PHI may be made to a family member, friend, or other individual involved in your care or payment of your care in which you have identified.
- **Disaster:** In the event of a disaster, your PHI may be disclosed to disaster relief organizations to coordinate your care and/or to notify family members or friends of your location and condition. Whenever possible, we will provide you with an opportunity to agree or object.

PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION AND YOUR RIGHTS

The following are statements of your rights, subject to certain limitations, with respect to your PHI:

- **You have the right to inspect and request a copy of your PHI (fees may apply per FL State Statutes):** Pursuant to your written request, you have the right to inspect and request a copy of your PHI in paper or electronic format (if applicable). Under federal law, you may not inspect or copy the following types of records: psychotherapy notes, information compiled as it relates to civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding; information restricted by law; information related to medical research in which you have agreed to participate; information obtained under a promise of confidentiality; and information whose disclosure may result in harm or injury to yourself or others. We have up to 30 days to provide the PHI and may charge a fee for the associated costs per FL State Statutes. Information not available in electronic format will be provided in hard copy form.