

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

The Privacy of your health information is important to us. We understand your protected health information is personal and we are committed to protecting it.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information, to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information, and to notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured protected health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect September 23rd, 2013, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law, and to make new Notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. When we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and post the new Notice clearly and prominently at our practice location, and we will provide copies of the new Notice upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

We may use and disclose your health information for different purposes, including treatment, payment, and health care operations. For each of these categories, we have provided a description and an example. Some information, such as HIV-related information, genetic information, alcohol and/or substance abuse records, and mental health records may be entitled to special confidentiality protections under applicable state or federal law. We will abide by these special protections as they pertain to applicable cases involving these types of records.

Treatment. We may use and disclose your health information for your treatment. For example, we may disclose your health information to a specialist providing treatment to you.

Payment. We may use and disclose your health information to obtain reimbursement for the treatment and services you receive from us or another entity involved with your care. Payment activities include billing, collections, claims management, and determinations of eligibility and coverage to obtain payment from you, an insurance company, or another third party. For example, we may send claims to your dental health plan containing certain health information.

Appointment Reminders. We may use or disclose your health information when contacting you to remind you of a dental appointment. We may contact you by using a postcard, letter, phone call, voice messages, text or email.

Healthcare Operations. We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. For example, healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, conducting training programs, and licensing activities.

Public Health Activities. We may disclose your health information for public health activities, including disclosures to:

- Prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
- Report child abuse or neglect;
- Report reactions to medications or problems with products or devices;
- Notify a person of a recall, repair, or replacement of products or devices;
- Notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or condition; or
- Notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care. We may disclose your health information to your family or friends or any other individual identified by you when they are involved in your care or in the payment for your care. Additionally, we may

disclose information about you to a patient representative. If a person has the authority by law to make health care decisions for you, we will treat that patient representative the same way we would treat you with respect to your health information.

Disclosure to Business Associates. We may disclose your protected health information to our third-party service providers (called, "business associates") that perform functions on our behalf or provide us with services if the information is necessary for such functions or services. For example, we may use a business associate to assist us in maintaining our practice management software. All of our business associates are obligated, under contract with us, to protect the privacy of your information and are not allowed to use or disclose any information other than as specified in our contract.

Required by Law. We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law, such as; National Security and investigations by Health and Human Services.

Worker's Compensation. We may disclose your PHI to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose your PHI to an oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include audits, investigations, inspections, and credentialing, as necessary for licensure and for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process instituted by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made, either by the requesting party or us, to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Your Health Information Rights

Access. You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You must make the request in writing. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. If you request information that we maintain on paper, we may provide photocopies. If you request information that we maintain electronically, you have the right to an electronic copy. We will use the form and format you request if readily producible. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for the cost of supplies and labor of copying, and for postage if you want copies mailed to you. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for an explanation of our fee structure.

If you are denied a request for access, you have the right to have the denial reviewed in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

Disclosure Accounting. With the exception of certain disclosures, you have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your health information in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. To request an accounting of disclosures of your health information, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Official. 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 the additional requests.

Right to Request a Restriction. You have the right to request additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your PHI by submitting a written request to the Privacy Official. Your written request must include (1) what information you want to limit, (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both, and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply. **We are not required to agree to your request except in the case where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you, or a person on your behalf (other than the health plan), has paid our practice in full.** Please keep in mind that when limiting information to insurance, you must pay for your services upfront.

Alternative Communication. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation of how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. However, if we are unable to contact you using the ways or locations you have requested we may contact you using the information we have.

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 agree to your request, we will amend your record(s) and notify you of such. If we deny your request for an amendment, we will provide you with a written explanation of why we denied it and explain your rights.

Right to Notification of a Breach. You will receive notifications of breaches of your unsecured protected health information as required by law.

Electronic Notice. You may receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail).

Questions and Complaints

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we have violated your privacy rights, or if you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information, you may complain to us or the Secretary of Health and Human Services. You May file a complaint with us by notifying our Privacy Official in writing. **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.**

We support your right to the 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. Department of Health and Human Services.

Patient Giving Consent:

I have had full opportunity to read and consider the contents of this Notice of Privacy Practices. I understand that, by signing this form, I am giving my consent to your use and disclosure of my PHI to carry out treatment, payment activities and health care operations.

Patient/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____