



## NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

EFFECTIVE DATE: APRIL 14, 2003

*This notice describes how information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.*

### **Your Medical Record/Health Information**

Records are kept of your visits with the physician or healthcare providers in this practice. These records contain your health information such as symptoms, diagnosis, exams, procedures, test results and treatment plans. This health information is called your medical record and serves as a:

- Basis for forming treatment plans
- Means of communication among healthcare professionals who are involved in your care
- Legal document describing care you received
- Means by which you or a third party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- Source of data for medical research
- Source of information for public health officials
- Source of data for marketing
- Tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve type of care given and outcomes achieved

Understanding what is in your medical record and how the information is used helps you to ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, when, where and why others may access your health record and make informed decisions regarding disclosure of this information to others.

### **Your Health Information Rights**

Although your medical records are the physical property of the healthcare provider or practice that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the rights to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522
- Obtain a paper copy of the *Notice of Privacy Practices* upon request
- Inspect and obtain a copy of your medical record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.524
- Amend your health record as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken

**Our Responsibilities**

This practice is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information
- Provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms of this notice
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our privacy practices change, we will supply you with a revised copy upon your next visit.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

**Example of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations**

Example #1: *We will use your health information to obtain payment.*

A bill may be sent to you or a third party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, your diagnosis, procedures, tests and supplies used.

Example #2: *We will use your health information for regular health operations.*

Members of the medical staff and quality improvement team may use information in your health records to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it.

**Other Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures**

**Business Associates:** There are some services provided by this practice through contacts with business associates. Examples include: physician services in emergency departments, radiology, laboratories, copy services and billing services. When these services are utilized, we may disclose your health information to our business associates so that they can perform the job we have asked them to do and bill you or your third party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, we require that our business associates safeguard your information.

**Communication with family:** Using their best judgment, the physicians and health care providers may disclose to a family member, other relative or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

**Research:** We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

**Marketing:** We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, products and product defects.

**Workers Compensation:** We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or similar programs established by law.

**Public Health:** As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities' charges with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

**Law Enforcement Agencies:** We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law on in response to a valid subpoena. Federal law makes provisions for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a work force member or business

associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, employees or the public.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT A PROBLEM**

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact our office at (972) 682-3909. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with Kyle Everett, Office Manager at (972) 682-3909 or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.