

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

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

### **Understanding Your Medical Health Record Information**

Each time that you visit a hospital, a physician, or another health care provider, the provider makes a record of your visit. Typically, this record contains your health history, current symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your medical record, serves as the following:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment.
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care.
- Legal document describing the care that you received.
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that you actually received the services billed for.
- Tool in medical education.
- Source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the regions that they serve.
- Tool to assess the appropriateness and quality of care that you received.
- Tool to improve the quality of health care and achieve better patient outcomes.

Understanding what is in your health record and how your health information is used helps you to—

- Ensure its accuracy and completeness.
- Understand who, what, where, why, and how others may access your health information.
- Make informed decisions about authorizing disclosure to others.
- Better understand the health information rights detailed below.

## **Your Rights under the Federal Privacy Standard**

Although your health records are the physical property of the health care provider who completed the records, you have the following rights with regard to the information contained therein:

- Request restriction on uses and disclosures of your health information for treatment, payment, and health care operations. “Health care operations” consist of activities that are necessary to carry out the operations of the provider, such as quality assurance and peer review. The right to request restriction does not extend to uses or disclosures permitted or required under the following sections of the federal privacy regulations: § 164.502(a)(2)(i) (disclosures to you), § 164.510(a) (for facility directories, but note that you have the right to object to such uses), or § 164.512 (uses and disclosures not requiring a consent or an authorization). The latter uses and disclosures include, for example, those required by law, such as mandatory communicable disease reporting. In those cases, you do not have a right to request restriction. The consent to use and disclose your individually identifiable health information provides the ability to request restriction. We do not, however, have to agree to the restriction, except in the situation explained below. If we do, we will adhere to it unless you request otherwise or we give you advance notice. You may also ask us to communicate with you by alternate means, and if the method of communication is reasonable, we must grant the alternate communication request. You may request restriction or alternate communications on the consent form for treatment, payment, and health care operations. If, however, you request restriction on a disclosure to a health plan for purposes of payment or health care operations (not for treatment), we must grant the request if the health information pertains solely to an item or a service for which we have been paid in full.
- Obtain a copy of this notice of information practices. Although we have posted a copy in prominent locations throughout the facility and on our website, you have a right to a hard copy upon request.
- Inspect and copy your paper or electronic medical record.
- Request amendment or correction to your paper or electronic medical record.
- Obtain an accounting of nonroutine uses and disclosures, those other than for treatment, payment, and health care operations. We do not need to provide an accounting for the following disclosures:
  - To you for disclosures of protected health information (“PHI”) to you.
  - For the facility directory or to persons involved in your care or for other notification purposes as provided in § 164.510 of the federal privacy regulations (uses and disclosures requiring an opportunity for the



- individual to agree or to object, including notification to family members, personal representatives, or other persons responsible for your care of your location, general condition, or death).
- For national security or intelligence purposes under § 164.512(k)(2) of the federal privacy regulations (disclosures not requiring consent, authorization, or an opportunity to object).
  - To correctional institutions or law enforcement officials under § 164.512(k)(5) of the federal privacy regulations (disclosures not requiring consent, authorization, or an opportunity to object).

We must provide the accounting within 60 days. The accounting must include the following information:

- Date of each disclosure.
  - Name and address of the organization or person who received the protected health information.
  - Brief description of the information disclosed.
  - Brief statement of the purpose of the disclosure that reasonably informs you of the basis for the disclosure or, in lieu of such statement, a copy of your written authorization or a copy of the written request for disclosure.
- The first accounting in any 12-month period is free. Thereafter, we reserve the right to charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.
- Revoke your consent or authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that we have taken action in reliance on the consent or authorization.
  - Amend your consent to have someone else act on your behalf.
  - File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

### **Our Responsibilities under the Federal Privacy Standard**

In addition to providing you your rights, as detailed above, the federal privacy standard requires us to take the following measures:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information, including implementing reasonable and appropriate physical, administrative, and technical safeguards to protect the information.
- Provide you this notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to individually identifiable health information that we collect and maintain about you.
- Abide by the terms of this notice.
- Train our personnel concerning privacy and confidentiality.
- Implement a sanction policy to discipline those who breach privacy/confidentiality or our policies with regard thereto.
- Mitigate (lessen the harm of) any breach of privacy/confidentiality.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your consent or authorization, except as described in this notice or otherwise required by law. Other uses and disclosures *not described in this notice* will be made only with your written authorization.

#### Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations

- **We may use your health information for treatment.**  
Example: A physician, a physician's assistant, a therapist or a counselor, a nurse, or another member of your health care team will record information in your record to diagnose your condition and determine the best course of treatment for you. The primary caregiver will give treatment orders and document what he or she expects other members of the health care team to do to treat you. Those other members will then document the actions that they took and their observations. In that way, the primary caregiver will know how you are responding to treatment. We will also provide your physician, other health care professionals, or a subsequent health care provider copies of your records to assist them in treating you once we are no longer treating you. Note that some health information, such as substance abuse treatment information, may not be used or disclosed without your consent.
- **We may use your health information for payment.**  
Example: We may send a bill to you or to a third-party payer, such as a health insurer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, your diagnosis, treatment received, and supplies used. Note that some health information, such as substance abuse treatment information, may not be used or disclosed without your consent.
- **We may use your health information for health care operations.**  
Example: Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality assurance team may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your cases and the competence of the caregivers. We will use this information in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and services that we provide. Note that some health information, such as substance abuse treatment information, may not be used or disclosed without your consent.
- **Business associates.**  
We provide some services through contracts with business associates. Examples include certain diagnostic tests, a copy service to make copies of



medical records, and the like. When we use these services, we may disclose your health information to the business associates so that they can perform the function(s) that we have contracted with them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services provided. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associates to appropriately safeguard your information. After February 17, 2010, business associates must comply with the same federal security and privacy rules as we do.

- **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.

- **Funeral directors.**

We may disclose health information to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to enable them to carry out their duties.

- **Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”).**

We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse effects/events with respect to food, drugs, supplements, product or product defects, or postmarketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement.

- **Workers Compensation.**

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

- **Public health.**

As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

- **Correctional institution.**

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.

- **Law enforcement.**

We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

- **Health oversight agencies and public health authorities.**  
If members of our work force or business associates believe in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers, or the public, they may disclose your health information to health oversight agencies and/or public health authorities, such as the Department of health.
- **The federal Department of Health and Human Services (“DHHS”).**  
Under the privacy standards, we must disclose your health information to DHHS as necessary to determine our compliance with those standards.
- **Organ and Tissue Donation Requests.**

### **For Certain Information You May Share Your Choices**

If you have a clear preference for how we share information in the situations described below, please tell us what you want to do, and we will follow your instructions:

For these situations, you have the right, and we will follow your instructions regarding disclosures:

- To family, close friends or others involved in your care
- In disaster relief situations
- Information provided in a hospital directory

If you are not able to tell us your preferences because, for example, you have lost consciousness, we will share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to address an imminent threat to health or safety of you or others.

We will never share your information for the following purposes unless you give us additional written permission:

- Marketing
- Sale of your information
- Sharing of psychotherapy notes
- Fundraising efforts

*Effective date: April 27, 2015*