



## 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 VERY CAREFULLY.**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal program that requires all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by any form, whether electronically, on paper, or verbally, is kept properly confidential. This Act gives our patients and guardians significant new rights to understand and control how their health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse personal health information.

As required by HIPAA, we have prepared this explanation of how we are required to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may use and disclose your health information.

Generally, we may not use or disclose your personal health information without your permission. Further, once your permission has been obtained, we must use or disclose your personal health information in accordance with the specific terms of that permission. The following are the circumstances under which we are permitted by law to use or disclose your personal health information.

**Without your consent**, we may use or disclose your personal health information in order to provide you with services and the treatment you require or request, or to collect payment for those services, and to conduct other related health care operations otherwise permitted or required by law. Also, we are permitted to disclose your personal health information within and among our workforce in order to accomplish these same purposes. However, even with your permission, we are still required to limit such uses or disclosures to the minimal amount of personal health information that is reasonably required to provide those services or complete those activities.

**Examples of treatment activities include:** (a) the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services by health care providers; (b) consultation between health care providers relating to a patient; or (c) the referral of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

**Examples of payment activities include:** (a) billing and collection activities and related data processing; (b) actions by a health plan or insurer to obtain premiums or to determine or fulfill its responsibilities for coverage and provision of benefits under its health plan or insurance agreement, determinations of eligibility or coverage, adjudication or subrogation of health benefit claims; (c) medical necessity and appropriateness of care reviews, utilization review activities; and (d) disclosure to consumer reporting agencies of information relating to collection of premiums or reimbursement.

**Examples of health care operations include:** (a) development of clinical guidelines; (b) contacting patients with information about treatment alternatives or communications in connection with case management or care coordination; (c) reviewing the qualifications of and training health care professionals; (d) underwriting and premium rating; (e) medical review, legal services, and auditing functions; and (f) general administrative activities such as customer service and data analysis.

We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all references to individually identifiable information.

We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. For example: a call to remind you of a scheduled appointment or schedule change.

Any other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorization in writing and we are required to honor and abide by that written request, except to the extent that we have already taken actions relying on your authorization.

**As required by law:** we may use or disclose your personal health information to the extent that such use or disclosure is required by law and the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law. *Examples of instances in which we are required to disclose your personal health information include:* (a) public health activities including, preventing or controlling disease or other injury, public health surveillance or investigations, reporting adverse events with respect to food or dietary supplements or product defects or problems to the Food and Drug Administration, medical surveillance of the workplace or to evaluate whether the individual has a work-related illness or injury in order to comply with Federal or state law; (b) disclosures regarding victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence including, reporting to social service or protective services agencies; (c) health oversight activities including, audits, civil, administrative, or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary actions, or civil, administrative, or criminal proceedings or actions, or other activities necessary for appropriate oversight of government benefit programs; (d) judicial and administrative proceedings in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal, a warrant, subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process; (e) law enforcement purposes for the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person, or reporting crimes in emergencies, or reporting a death; (f) disclosure about descendants for purposes of cadaveric donation of organs, eyes or tissue; (g) for research purposes under certain conditions; (h) to avert a serious threat to health or safety; (i) military and veterans activities; (j) national security and intelligence activities, protective services of the President and others; (k) medical suitability determinations by entities that are components of the Department of State; (l) correctional institutions and other law enforcement custodial situations; (m) covered entities that are government programs providing public benefits, and for workers' compensation.

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information, which you can exercise by presenting a written request to the privacy officer.

- **Right to request restrictions on use or disclosure:** You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information; (a) including those related to disclosures to family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you. We are not required to agree with a restriction however if we do agree with the restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it. (b) instances occur in which you are not present or your permission cannot practicably be obtained due to your incapacity or an emergency circumstance; (c) permitting other persons to act on your behalf to pick up medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of personal health information; or (d) disclosure to a public or private entity authorized by law or by its charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.
- **Right to receive confidential communications:** You have the right to receive confidential communications of your personal health information. We may require written requests. We may condition the provision of confidential communications on you providing us with information as to how payment will be handled and specification of an alternative address or other method of contact.
- **Right to inspect and copy your personal health information:** You have the right of access in order to inspect and obtain a copy of your personal health information contained in your designated record set, *except for* (a) psychotherapy notes, (b) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and (c) health information maintained by us to the extent to which the provision of access to you would be prohibited by law. We may require written requests. We must provide you with access to your personal health information in the form or format requested by you, if it is readily producible in such form or format, or, if not, in a readable hard copy form or such other form or format. We may provide you with a summary of the personal health information requested, in lieu of providing access to the personal health information or may provide an explanation of the personal health information to which access has been provided, if you agree in advance to such a summary or explanation and agree to the fees imposed for such summary or explanation. If you request a copy of your personal health information or agree to a summary or explanation of such information, we may charge a reasonable cost-based fee for copying, postage, if you request a mailing, and the costs of preparing an explanation or summary as agreed upon in advance. We reserve the right to deny you access to and copies of certain personal health information as permitted or required by law. We will reasonably attempt to accommodate any request for personal health information by, to the extent possible, giving you access to other personal health information after excluding the information as to which we have a ground to deny access. Upon denial of a request for access or request for information, we will provide you with a written denial specifying the legal basis for denial, a statement of your rights, and a description of how you may file a complaint with us.
- **Right to amend your personal health information:** You have the right to request that we amend your personal health information or a record about you contained in your designated record set, for as long as the designated record set is maintained by us. We have the right to deny your request for amendment, if: (a) we determine that the information or record that is the subject of the request was not created by us, unless you provide a reasonable basis to believe that the originator of the information is no longer available to act on the requested amendment, (b) the information is not part of your designated record set maintained by us, (c) the information is prohibited from inspection by law, or (d) the information is accurate and complete. We will require that you submit written requests and provide a reason to support the requested amendment. Upon approval, an Amendment form will be added to the patient's personal health information.
- **Right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your personal health information:** Such disclosures will include the date of each disclosure, the name and, if known, the address of the entity or person who received the information, a brief description of the information disclosed, and a brief statement of the purpose and basis of the disclosure or, in lieu of such statement, a copy of your written authorization or written request for disclosure pertaining to such information. *We are not required to provide accountings of disclosures for the following purposes:* (a) treatment, payment, and healthcare operations, (b) disclosures pursuant to your authorization, (c) disclosures to you, (d) for a facility directory or to persons involved in your care, (e) for national security or intelligence purposes, (f) to correctional institutions, and (g) with respect to disclosures occurring prior to 4/14/03. We reserve our right to temporarily suspend your right to receive an accounting of disclosures to health oversight agencies or law enforcement officials, as required by law. We will provide the first accounting to you in any twelve (12) month period without charge, but will impose a reasonable cost-based fee for responding to each subsequent request for accounting within that same twelve (12) month period.
- **The right to obtain and we have the obligation to provide to you a paper copy of this notice from us at your first service delivery date or the first service delivery date following implementation of this notice.**
- **The right to provide and we are obligated to receive a written acknowledgement that you have received a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices.**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information.

This notice is effective April 15, 2003 and we are required to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices and to make the new notice of provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. A revised copy of Privacy Practices will be posted and we will provide you with a copy of the most recent version of the Privacy Policy at any time upon your written request.

You have recourse if you feel that your privacy protections have been violated. You have the right to file a formal, written complaint with us at the address below, or with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, about violations of the provisions of this notice or the policies and procedures of our office. We will not retaliate against you for filing complaint.

Please contact us for more information:

Privacy Officer: Billie Jo Horner  
 Comprehensive Rehab  
 1377 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
 Phone: 1-563-241-4230

For more information about HIPAA or to file a complaint:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
 Office of Civil Rights  
 200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20201  
 Toll Free Phone: 1-877-696-6775