

**Philadelphia Health Associates – Adult Medicine, P.C.  
1740 South Street, Suite 300  
Philadelphia, PA 19146**

## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

As Required by the Privacy Regulations Created as a Result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (AS A PATIENT OF THIS PRACTICE) MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION (MEDICAL INFORMATION).**

**PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

### **A. Our Commitment to Your Privacy**

Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your individually identifiable health information (medical information). In conducting our business, we will create records regarding you and the treatment and services we provide to you. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your medical information. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information.

- How we may use and disclose your medical information
- Your privacy rights in your medical information
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your medical information

**The terms of this notice apply to all records containing medical information that are created or retained by our practice. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practices. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all your records that our practice has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we create or maintain in the future. Our practice will post a copy of our current Notice in our office in a visible location at all times, and you may request a copy our most current Notice at any time.**

### **B. If You Have Any Questions About this Notice, Please Contact:**

Our Privacy Officer at 215-732-0876.

## **C. We May Use and Disclose Your Individually Identifiable Health Information (medical information) in the Following Ways**

- 1. Treatment.** Our practice may use your medical information to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, we may ask you to have laboratory tests (such as blood or urine tests), and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We might use your medical information in order to write a prescription for you, or we might disclose your medical information to a pharmacy when we order a prescription for you. Many of the people who work for our practice – including, but not limited to, our doctors and nurses – may use or disclose your medical information in order to treat you or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your medical information to others who may assist in your care, such as family members. Finally, we may also disclose your medical information to other health care providers for purposes related to your treatment.
- 2. Payment.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. For example, we may contact your health insurer to certify that you are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for, your treatment. We also may use and disclose your medical information to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such cost, such as family members. Also, we may use your medical information to bill you directly for services and items. We may disclose your medical information to other health care providers and entities to assist in their billing and collection efforts.
- 3. Health Care Operations.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information to operate our business. For example, our practice may use your medical information to evaluate the quality of care you received from us, or to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice. We may disclose your medical information to other health care providers and entities to assist in their health care operations.
- 4. Appointment Reminders.** We may contact to remind you that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care at the office.
- 5. Treatment Options.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.
- 6. Health-Related Benefits and Services.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
- 7. Release of Information to Family/Friends.** Our practice may release your medical information (we will share only the health information that is directly necessary for your health care) to a friend or family member that is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. We will obtain your written or verbal permission if possible before we release your medical information, or give you the opportunity to refuse permission.

Using our professional judgment we can infer from the circumstances that you would not object to disclosure of health information to family or friend. For example, we can assume you

agree to disclosure of your health information to your spouse if your spouse is with you in the exam room during treatment or present while treatment is discussed.

In situations where you are not capable of giving consent (because you are not present or due to your incapacity or medical emergency) we may use our professional judgment to determine that a disclosure to your family or friend is in your best interest. For example, we may inform an individual who accompanies you to the ER that you suffered a heart attack and provide updates on your progress and prognosis.

We will also use our professional judgment to make to decisions in your best interest about allowing someone (s son/daughter or spouse who may care for you) to pick up medicine, medical supplies, test results or medical instructions.

**8. Disclosures Required by Law.** Our practice will use and disclose your medical information when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law.

## **D. Use and Disclosure of Your IIHI in Certain Special Circumstances**

**1. Public Health Risks.** Our practice may disclose your medical information to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for purposes such as:

- Maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths
- Reporting child abuse or neglect
- Preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
- Notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease
- Notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition
- Reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices
- Notifying individuals if a product or device that may be using has been recalled
- Notifying appropriate government agency(ies) and authority(ies) regarding the potential abuse or neglect of and adult patient (including domestic violence), however, we will only disclose this information if the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to disclose this information
- Notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance

**2. Health Oversight Activities.** Our practice may disclose your medical information to health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions, civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions, or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.

**3. Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your medical information in response to a discovery request, subpoena, warrant, summons, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to

obtain a court or administrative order protecting the information the party has requested.

**4. Law Enforcement.** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- Regarding a crime victim in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
- Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct
- Regarding criminal conduct at our offices
- In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process
- To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive or missing person
- In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of the perpetrator)

**5. Deceased Patients.** Our practice may release medical information to a medical examiner or coroner to identify a deceased individual or to identify the cause of death. If necessary, we also may release information in order for funeral directors to perform their jobs.

**6. Organ and Tissue Donation.** Our practice may release your medical information to Organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.

**7. Research.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information for research purposes in certain limited circumstances. We will obtain your written authorization to use your IIHI for research purposes except when an Internal Review Board or Privacy Board has determined that the waiver of your authorization satisfies the following: (i) the use or disclosure involves no more than a minimal risk to your privacy based on the following: (A) an adequate plan to protect the identifiers from improper use and disclosure; (B) an adequate plan to destroy the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the research (unless there is a health or research justification for retaining the identifiers or such retention is otherwise required by law); and (C) adequate written assurances that the PHI will not be re-used or disclosed to any other person or entity (except as required by law) for authorized oversight of the research study, or for other research for which the use and disclosure would otherwise be permitted; (ii) the research could not practicably be conducted without the waiver; and (iii) the research could not practicably be conducted without access to and use of the PHI.

**8. Serious Threats to Health or Safety.** Our practice may use and disclose your medical information when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the treat.

**9. Military.** Our practice may disclose your medical information if you are a member of the U.S. or foreign Military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.

**10. National Security.** Our practice may disclose your medical information to federal officials

for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We also may disclose your medical information to federal officials in order to protect the President, other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.

**11. Inmates.** Our practice may disclose your medical information to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate or under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you, (b) for the safety and security of the institution, and/or (c) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.

**12. Workers' Compensation.** Our practice may release your medical information for workers' compensation and similar programs that pay benefits for work related illness or injury.

## **E. Your Rights Regarding Your Medical Information**

**1. Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request to our Privacy Officer specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate **reasonable** requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.

**2. Requesting Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your medical information for treatment, payment or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your IIHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. **We are not required to agree to your request**, however, if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your medical information, you must make your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:

- (a) the information you wish restricted;
- (b) whether you are requesting to limit our practice's use, disclosure or both, and
- (c) to whom you want the limits to apply.

**3. Inspection and Copies.** You have the right to request and obtain a copy of the medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, including patient medical records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your medical information. Our practice may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain limited circumstances; however' you may request a review of our denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct reviews.

- 4. Amendment.** You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our Privacy Officer. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the medical information kept by or for the practice; (c) not part of the medical information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.
- 5. Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice.** You are entitled to receive a paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. You may ask us to give a copy of this notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact our Privacy Officer.
- 6. Accounting of Disclosures.** All of our patients have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." An "accounting of disclosures" is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our practice has made of your IIHI for non-treatment, non-payment or non-operations purposes. Use of your IIHI as part of the routine patient care in our practice is not required to be documented. For example, the doctor sharing information with the nurse, or the billing department using your information to file your insurance claim. In order to obtain an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. All requests for an "accounting of disclosures" must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period is free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists within the same 12-month period. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.
- 7. Right to File a Complaint.** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our practice or with the Secretary of the Department Of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our practice, contact our Privacy officer. All complaints must be submitted in writing. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**
- 8. Right to Provide an Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures.** Our practice will obtain your written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your medical information may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclosure your medical information for the purposes described in the authorization. Please note, we are required to retain records of your care.

Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please contact our Privacy Officer.

