

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: 4/1/03



HIPAA—HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT: PRIVACY NOTICE

I. 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.

II. WE HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

We are required to protect the privacy of you and your family's health information. (All references to "you" will also mean "your family.") We call this information "protected health information," or "PHI" for short, and it includes information that can be used to identify you. We must provide you with this notice about our privacy practices that explains how, when, and why we use and disclose your PHI. With some exceptions, we may not use or disclose any more of your PHI than is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the use or disclosure.

However, we reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and our privacy policies at any time. Any changes will apply to the PHI we already have. When we make an important change to our policy, we will promptly change this notice and post a new notice in the reception area. You can also request a copy of this notice from any of our employees at any time.

III. HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information for many different reasons. For some of these uses or disclosures, we need your prior consent or specific authorization. Below, we describe the different categories of our uses and disclosures and give you some examples of each category.

A. Uses and Disclosures Relating to Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations Require Your Prior Written Consent.

We may use and disclose your PHI with your consent for the following reasons:

1. **Fortreatment.** We may disclose your PHI to specialist dentists, dental assistants, hygienists and other health care personnel who provide you with health care services or are involved in your care. For example, if you're being referred for a root canal, we may disclose your PHI to the endodontist in order to coordinate your care.
2. **Toobtain payment for treatment.** We may use and disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for the treatment and services provided to you. For example, we may provide portions of your PHI to our billing department and your dental plan to get paid for the health care services we provided to you. We may also provide your PHI to our business associates, such as billing companies, claims processing companies, and others that process health care claims.
3. **Forhealth care operations.** We may disclose your PHI in order to operate this facility. For example, we may use your PHI in order to evaluate the quality of health care services that you received or to evaluate the performance of the health care professionals who provided health care services to you. We may also provide your PHI to our accountants, attorneys, consultants, and others in order to make sure we're complying with the laws that affect us.
4. **Exceptions to consent requirement for treatment, payment, and health care operations.** Although your consent is required for numbers 1-3 of this section, above, we may disclose your PHI to others without your consent in certain situations. For example, your consent isn't required if you need emergency treatment, as long as we try to get your consent after treatment or we try to get your consent but you are unable to communicate with us (for example, if you are unconscious or in severe pain) and we think you would consent if you were able to do so.

B. CertainUses and Disclosures Do Not Require Your Consent. We may use and disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization for the following reasons:

1. **Whena disclosure is required by federal, state, or local law, judicial or administrative proceedings, or law enforcement.** For example, we make disclosures when a law requires that we report information to government agencies and law enforcement personnel about victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence; when dealing with gunshot and other wounds; or when ordered in judicial or administrative proceedings.
2. **Forpublic health activities.** For example, we report information about births, deaths, and various diseases, to government officials in charge of collecting that information, and we provide coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors necessary information relating to an individual's death.

3. **For health oversight activities.** For example, we will provide information to assist the government when it conducts an investigation or inspection of a health care provider or organization.
4. **For research/educational purposes.** In certain circumstances, we may provide PHI in order to conduct research or to fulfill requirements for educating our employees.
5. **To avoid harm.** In order to avoid a serious threat to the health or safety of a person or the public, we may provide PHI to law enforcement personnel or persons able to prevent or lessen such harm.
6. **For specific government functions.** We may disclose PHI of military personnel and veterans in certain situations. And we may disclose PHI for national security purposes, such as protecting the president of the United States or conducting intelligence operations.
7. **For workers' compensation purposes.** We may provide PHI in order to comply with workers' compensation laws.
8. **Appointment reminders and health-related benefits or services.** We may use PHI to provide appointment reminders or give you information about treatment alternatives, or other health care services or benefits we offer.

C. This Disclosure Requires You to Have the Opportunity to Object.

1. **Disclosures to family, friends, or others.** We may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person that you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part. The opportunity to consent may be obtained retroactively in emergency situations.

D. All Other Uses and Disclosures Require Your Prior Written Authorization. In any other situation not described in sections III A, B, and C above, we will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing any of your PHI. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose your PHI, you can later revoke that authorization in writing to stop any future uses and disclosures (to the extent that we haven't taken any action relying on the authorization).

IV. WHAT RIGHTS YOU HAVE REGARDING YOUR PHI

You have the following rights with respect to your PHI:

- A. **The Right to Request Limits on Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI.** You have the right to ask that we limit how we use and disclose your PHI. We will consider your request but are not legally required to accept it. If we accept your request, we will put any limits in writing and abide by them except in emergency situations. You may not limit the uses and disclosures that we are legally required or allowed to make.
- B. **The Right to Choose How We Send PHI to You.** You have the right to ask that we send information to you to an alternate address or by alternate means (for example, e-mail instead of regular mail). We must agree to your request so long as we can easily provide it in the format you requested.
- C. **The Right to See and Get Copies of your PHI.** In most cases, you have the right to look at or get copies of your PHI that we have, but you must make the request in writing. In certain situations, we may deny your request. If we do, we will tell you, in writing, our reasons for the denial and explain your right to have the denial reviewed. There may be charges for any copies made.
- D. **The Right to Get a List of the Disclosures We Have Made.** You have the right to get a list of instances in which we have disclosed your PHI. The list will not include uses or disclosures that you have already consented to, such as those made for treatment, payment, or health care operations, directly to you, to your family, or in our facility directory. The list also won't include uses and disclosures made for national security purposes, to corrections, or law enforcement personnel.
- E. **The Right to Correct or Update your PHI.** If you believe there is a mistake in your PHI or that a piece of important information is missing, you have the right to request that we correct the existing information or add the missing information. You must provide the request and your reason for the request in writing. We will respond within 60 days of receiving your request. We may deny your request in writing if the PHI is (i) correct and complete, (ii) not created by us, (iii) not allowed to be disclosed, or (iv) not part of our records. Our written denial will state the reasons for the denial and explain your right to file a written statement of disagreement with the denial. If you don't file one, you have the right to request that your request and our denial be attached to all future disclosures of your PHI. If we approve your request, we will make the change to your PHI, tell you that we have done it, and tell others that need to know about the change to your PHI.

V. HOW TO COMPLAIN ABOUT A PRIVACY RIGHTS VIOLATION

If you think that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your PHI, you may file a complaint with the person listed in Section VI below. You also may send a written complaint to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

VI. PERSON TO CONTACT FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS NOTICE OR TO COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR PRIVACY PRACTICES

If you have any questions about this notice or any complaints about our privacy practices, or would like to know how to file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, please contact: *Paul Arel, HIPAA Compliance and Risk Officer, (513) 367-4441.*

By signing below, I state that I have received a copy of this HIPAA Privacy Notice:

Signature of patient (parent) _____ Date _____

Please print your name here: _____

DIANE *Arel* DDS MAGD