

EXAMPLE: You are seen at our practice for a procedure. We will need to provide a listing of services such as x-rays to your insurance company so that we can get paid for the procedure. We may at times contact your health care plan to receive approval PRIOR to performing certain procedures to ensure the services will be paid for. This will require sharing of your PHI.

We may use or disclose, as-needed, your PHI in order to support the business activities of this practice which are called health care operations.

EXAMPLES:

- Training students, other health care providers, or ancillary staff such as billing personnel to help them learn or improve their skills.
- Quality improvement processes which look at delivery of health care and for improvement in processes which will provide safer, more effective care for you.
- Use of information to assist in resolving problems or complaints within the practice.

We may use and disclose your PHI in other situations without your permission:

- If required by law: The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. For example, we may be required to report gunshot wounds or suspected abuse or neglect.
- Public health activities: The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability and only to public health authorities permitted by law to collect or receive information. We may also notify individuals who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition.
- Health oversight agencies: We may disclose protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.
- Legal proceedings: To assist in any legal proceeding or in response to a court order, in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, or other lawful process.
- Police or other law enforcement purposes: The release of PHI will meet all applicable legal requirements for release.
- Coroners, funeral directors: We may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, determining cause of death or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law.
- Medical research: We may disclose your PHI to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research protocol and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your PHI.
- Special governmental purposes: Information may be shared for national security purposes, or if you are a member of the military, to the military under limited circumstances.
- Correctional institutions: Information may be shared if you are an inmate or under custody of law which is necessary for your health or the health and safety of other individuals.
- Workers' Compensation: Your PHI may be disclosed by us as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally-established programs.

Other uses and disclosures of your health information.

- Business Associates: Some services are provided through the use of contracted entities called "business associates." We will always release only the minimum amount of PHI necessary so that the business associate can perform the identified services. We require the business associate(s) to appropriately safeguard your information. Examples of business associates include billing companies or transcriptions services.

- Health Information Exchange: We may make your health information available electronically to other healthcare providers outside of our facility who are involved in your care.
- Fundraising activities: We may contact you in an effort to raise money. You may opt out of receiving such communications.
- Treatment alternatives: We may provide you notice of treatment options or other health related services that may improve your overall health.
- Appointment reminders: We may contact you as a reminder about upcoming appointments or treatment.

We may use or disclose your PHI in the following situations UNLESS you object.

- We may share your information with friends or family members, or other persons directly identified by you at the level they are involved in your care or payment of services. If you are not present or able to agree/ object, the healthcare provider using professional judgment will determine if it is in your best interest to share the information. For example, we may discuss post procedure instructions with the person who drove you to the facility unless you tell us specifically not to share the information.
- We may use or disclose PHI to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or any other person that is responsible for your care of your location, general condition, or death.
- We may use or disclose your PHI to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts.

The following uses and disclosures of PHI require your written authorization:

- Marketing
- Disclosures for any purposes which require the sale of your information
- Release of psychotherapy notes: Psychotherapy notes are notes by a mental health professional for the purpose of documenting a conversation during a private session. This session could be with an individual or with a group. These notes are kept separate from the rest of the medical record and do not include: medications and how they affect you, start and stop time of counseling sessions, types of treatments provided, results of tests, diagnosis, treatment plan, symptoms, prognosis.

All other uses and disclosures not recorded in this Notice will require a written authorization from you or your personal representative.

Written authorization simply explains how you want your information used and disclosed. Your written authorization may be revoked at any time, in writing. Except to the extent that your doctor or this practice has used or released information based on the direction provided in the authorization, no further use or disclosure will occur.

Your Privacy Rights

You have certain rights related to your PHI. All requests to exercise your rights must be made in writing.

You have the right to see and obtain a copy of your PHI.

This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of PHI about you that is contained in a designated record set for as long as we maintain the PHI. If requested, we will provide you a copy of your records in an electronic format. There are some exceptions to records which may be copied and the request may be denied. We may charge you a reasonable cost based fee for a copy of the records.

You have the right to request a restriction of your PHI.

You may request for this practice not to use or disclose any part of your PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. We are not required to agree with these requests. If we agree to a restriction, we will honor the restriction request unless the information is needed to provide emergency treatment.

There is one exception: We must accept a restriction request to restrict disclosure of information to a health plan if you pay out of pocket in full for a service or product unless it is otherwise required by law.

You have the right to request for us to communicate in different ways or in different locations.

We will agree to reasonable requests. We may also request alternative address or other method of contact such as mailing information to a post office box. We will not ask for an explanation from you about the request.

You may have the right to request an amendment of your health information.

You may request an amendment of your health information if you feel that the information is not correct along with an explanation of the reason for the request. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment at which time you will have an opportunity to disagree.

You have the right to a list of people or organizations who have received your health information from us.

This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You have the right to obtain a listing of these disclosures that occurred after March 17, 2017. You may request them for the previous six years or a shorter timeframe. If you requested more than one list within a 12-month period, you may be charged a reasonable fee.

Additional Privacy Rights

- You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us, upon request. We will provide you a copy of this Notice the first day we treat you at our facility. In an emergency situation, we will give you this Notice as soon as possible.
- You have a right to receive notification of any breach of your PHI.

Complaints

If you think we have violated your rights or you have a complaint about our privacy practices you can contact Dr. Brandon Castor, DDS.

You may also complain to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us.

If you file a complaint, we will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

This Notice was published and becomes effective on March 17, 2017.