

## **Notice of Health Information Practices**

### **Understanding Your Health Record/Information**

Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- 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 you received
- means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- a tool in educating health professionals
- a source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation
- a source of data for facility planning and marketing
- a tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve
- understanding of what is in your record and how your health information is used to help you to:
  - ensure its accuracy
  - better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information
  - make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

### **Your Health Information Rights**

Although your health record is the physical property of the health care practitioner or facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522
- obtain a paper copy of the notice of information practices upon request
- inspect and copy your health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.524
- amend your health record as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations
- revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken

## **Our Responsibilities**

This organization is required to:

- maintain the privacy of your health information
- provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- abide by the terms of this notice
- notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or alternative locations.

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you've supplied us.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

## **For More Information or to Report a Problem**

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the office manager at (337) 477-8861.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the director of health information management or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

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

*We will use your health information for treatment.*

**For example:** Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. Your physician will document in your record his or her expectations of the members of your health care team. Members of your health care team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, the physician will know how you are responding to treatment.

We will also provide your physician or a subsequent health care provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you once you're discharged from this hospital (if applicable).

*We will use your health information for payment.*

**For example:** A bill may be sent to your or a third-party payer. The information on or

accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

*We will use your health information for regular health operations.*

**For example:** Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and service we provide.

*Business Associates:* There are some services provided in our organization through contacts with Business Associates. Examples include diagnostic services, certain laboratory tests, and a copy service we use when making copies of your health record. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our Business Associates so that it can perform the job we've asked it to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, however, we require the Business Associate to appropriately safeguard your information.