

We are required by law to:

- make sure that health information that identifies you is kept private;
- give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information;
- follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

#### HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION:

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose health information. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

**For Treatment.** We may use information about you to provide you with health treatment or services. We may disclose health information about you to the practice's office personnel who are involved in taking care of you at the office or elsewhere. We may also disclose health information about you to people outside our office who may be involved in your care after you leave the office, such as family members or others we use to provide services that as part of your care provided you have consented to such disclosure. These entities include third party physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, pharmacies or clinical labs with whom the office consults or makes referrals.

**For Payment.** We may use disclose health information so that the treatment and services you receive at our office may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party. For example, we may need to give your health plan information on procedures you received at the office so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for the services. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment.

**For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose health for office operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run our office and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. For example, we may use health information to review our treatment and services to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine health information about many patients to decide what additional services the office should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective. We may also disclose information to our physicians, staff and other office personnel for review and learning purposes.

**Appointment Reminders.** We may use and disclose health information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment of health care at the office.

**Treatment Alternatives.** We may use and disclose health information to tell you about recommended possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

**Health-Related Benefits and Services.** We may use and disclose health information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

**Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** We may release health information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your health care. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. In addition, we may disclose health information about you to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort so that your family can be notified about your condition, status and location.

**As Required By Law.** We will disclose health information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.

**To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

#### SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

**Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

**Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose health information about you in a response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information in a response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in a dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

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

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process;
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement;
- About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct;