



specialists in gastroenterology

## Patient Copy of Privacy Practices

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

### Protecting your privacy

Protecting your privacy and your medical information is at the core of our business. We recognize our legal and ethical obligation to keep your information secure and confidential whether on paper or in an electronic form.

### How we might use your medical information

Each time you visit our office 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 data for medical research,
- A source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of this state and the nation,
- A source of data for our 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 what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to: ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

### Safeguarding your information

Keeping the medical and health information we have about you secure is one of our most important responsibilities. We value your trust and handle your information with care. Our employee's access information about you only when necessary to provide treatment, verify eligibility, obtain authorization, process insurance claims and otherwise meet your needs. We may also access information about you when considering a request from you or when exercising our rights under the law or any agreement with you.

We safeguard information during all business practices according to established policies and procedures and we continually assess new technology for protecting information. Our employees are trained to understand and comply with these information principles.

### Working to meet your needs through information

In the course of doing business, we collect and use various types of information, like name and address and specific claims information such as your diagnosis. We use this information to provide service to you, to process your insurance claims and to bring you health information that might be of interest to you and help you stay healthy.

**Keeping information accurate**

Keeping your health information accurate and up-to-date is very important. You have the right to inspect and copy your medical information. If you believe the health information we have about you is incomplete, inaccurate or not current, please contact our Privacy Officer. Although we reserve the right to disagree with your request, we will take appropriate action to correct any erroneous information as quickly as possible through established policies and procedures.

**How and why information is shared**

We limit who receives information and what type of information is shared. Patient-specific personally identifiable data is released only when required to provide a service for you and only to those with a need to know (other physicians, hospitals and other entities directly or indirectly involved in your health care), or with your authorization. Data is released with the condition that the person receiving the data will not release it further, unless you give permission.

**Sharing information with companies that work for us**

There are some services provided in our Practice through contacts with business associates. Examples include our dictation service, certain laboratory tests, and claim processing. These associates act on our behalf and are obligated contractually to keep the information that we provide them confidential.

We are required by law to release your personal medical information to your legal representative, the Secretary of Health and Human Services as necessary to make sure your privacy is protected, for public activities (such as reporting disease outbreaks) or as otherwise required by law. If we receive a subpoena or similar legal process demanding release of any information about you, we will attempt to notify you unless we are prohibited from doing so. Except as required by law or as described above, we do not share information with other parties, including government agencies without your authorization.

Except as mentioned above, you may place restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. You may revoke your authorization to disclose your medical information at any time. You have the right to ask for a complete accounting of disclosures that were not authorized or otherwise permitted as listed above.

**About this notice**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your medical information and to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and responsibilities. You may request a copy of this notice at any time. We are required by law to follow the terms of this notice. We reserve the right to change and amend our notice of privacy and to make the new notice of privacy effective for all of our medical information.

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

If have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the practice's Privacy Officer, Paula Willis (314) 997-0554.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the practice's Privacy Officer, or with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with either the Privacy Officer or the Office for Civil Rights. The address for the OCR is listed below:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C. 20201