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NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY, THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

OUR LEGAL DUTY

Federal and state law requires us to maintain the privacy of your health information. That law also requires us to give you this notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices we describe in this notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this notice at any time, provided such applicable law permits the changes. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our policy practices, we will change this notice and make the new notice available upon request. You may request a copy of our notice at any time.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you and your family for treatment, payment, and health care operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use your health information for treatment or disclose it to a dentist, physician or other health care provider providing treatment to you.

Payment: We may use your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you. We may also disclose your health information to another health care provider or entity that is subject to the federal Privacy Rules for its payment activities.

Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose your health information for our health care operations. Health care operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities. We may disclose your health information to another health care provider or organization that is subject to the federal privacy rules and that has a relationship with you to support some of their health care operations. We may disclose your information to help these organizations conduct quality assessment and improvement activities, review the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, or detect or prevent health care fraud and abuse.

On Your Authorization: You may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any uses or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this notice.

To Your Family and Friends: We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your health care or with payment for your health care. Before we disclose your health information to these people, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to our use or disclosure. If you are not present, or in the event of your incapacity or an emergency, we will disclose your medical information based on our professional judgement of whether the disclosure would be in your best interest. We may use our professional judgement and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information. We may use or disclose information about you to notify or assist in notifying a person involved in your care, of your location or general condition.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information to remind you of scheduled appointments, or that it is time to make a routine appointment. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will mail you an appointment reminder on a postcard, and/or leave you a reminder message on your home or work answering machine or with someone who answers the phone if you are not available to take our call.

Disaster Relief: We may use or disclose your health information to a public or private entity authorized by law or by its charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Public Benefit: We may use or disclose your medical information as authorized by law for the following purposes deemed to be in the public interest or benefit:

- *As required by law;
- *for public health activities, including disease and vital statistic reporting, child abuse reporting, FDA oversight, and to employers regarding work-related illness or injury;
- *to report adult abuse, neglect, or domestic violence;
- *to health oversight agencies;
- *in response to court and administrative orders and other lawful processes;
- *to law enforcement officials pursuant to subpoenas and other lawful processes, concerning crime victims, suspicious deaths, crimes on our premises, reporting crimes in emergencies, and for purposes of identifying or locating a suspect or other person;
- *to coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors;
- *to an organ procurement organizations;
- *to avert a serious threat to health or safety;
- *in connection with certain research activities;
- *to the military and to federal officials for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and national security activities;
- *to correctional institutions regarding inmates; and
- *as authorized by state worker's compensation laws.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may request access by sending us a letter the address at the beginning of this notice. If you request copies, we may charge you a reasonable cost-based fee that includes labor, copying costs, and postage.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information over the past 6 years (but not before April 14, 2003). That list will not include disclosures for treatment, payment, health care operations, as authorized by you, and for certain activities. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency). Any agreement we may make to a request for additional restrictions must be put in writing signed by the person authorized to make such an agreement on our behalf. Your request is not binding unless our agreement is in writing.

Alternative Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. You must specify in your request the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how you will handle payment under the alternative means or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why we should amend the information. We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us at the address or number shown at the beginning of this Notice.

If you believe that:

- *we may have violated your privacy rights,
- *we made a decision about access to your or your families health information incorrectly,
- *our response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information was incorrect or,
- *we should communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations,

you may contact us or you may also submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office For Civil Rights. We support your right to privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.