

## Notice of Privacy Practices

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

### *Understanding your health record information*

Each time you visit a 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 data for medical research
- 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 outcome 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
- make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

### *Your health information rights*

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

- request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information (Note: the Catholic Schools are not required to agree to a requested restriction)
- request alternate communications of your health information
- inspect and obtain a copy of your health information
- amend your health information
- receive an accounting of the disclosures of your health information
- obtain a paper copy of the notice of privacy practices upon request
- revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken

## *Our responsibilities*

The Catholic Schools Office 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
- 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 at alternative locations

Examples of how the Catholic Schools Office may disclose your information without your written authorization:

- We will use your health information for treatment. Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other healthcare provider acting through the Catholic Schools will be recorded in your record to be used to provide treatment or other services to you.
- We will use your health information for payment. In some circumstances a bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identified you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.
- We will use your health information for regular health care operations. We may use the information in your health record to assess any health care provided to you. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and service we provide.

Other uses may include:

- **Business associates:** There may be some services provided in our organization through contacts with business associates. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.
- **Notification:** We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, your location, and general condition.
- **Communication with family:** Health professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care.
- **Research:** We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.
- **Funeral directors:** We may disclose health information to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to carry out their duties.
- **Organ donor organizations:** Consistent with applicable law, we may disclose health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of organs for the purpose of tissue donation and transplants.

- **Workers compensation:** We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.
- **Public health:** As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.
- **Correctional institution:** Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.
- **Law enforcement and legal:** We may disclose health information for law enforcement or legal purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena or similar process. We may disclose your information to law enforcement officials for such purposes as reporting a crime occurring on Catholic Schools premises or to help locate a criminal suspect.

This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003. 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 post the revised notice on our premises and we will mail you a copy of the revised notice upon request. We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, or the authorization of a parent or legal guardian if appropriate, except as described in this notice.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may contact our Superintendent of Catholic Schools at 814-824-1240 or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint. Your privacy is very important to us. If you have any questions or would like to exercise any of your health information rights, please contact our Superintendent of Catholic Schools at 814-824-1240.