

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.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information, to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information, and to notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured protected health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect 01/01/2017, 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 changes are permitted by applicable law, and to make new notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. When we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this notice and post the new notice clearly and prominently at our practice location, and we will provide copies of the new notice upon request.

You may request a copy of our notice at any time. For more information about or for additional copies of this notice, please contact us.

HOW WE MAY SEND HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Your protected health information ("PHI") includes information relating to your mental or physical health and to the health care provided to you, including materials like your dental records, dental x-rays, and payment records. Some documents containing PHI may include such sensitive personal information as a Social Security number, medical history, genetic information, alcohol/substance abuse records, and other kinds of sensitive information.

Sometimes our dental practice needs to send PHI to the patient or to someone else, such as a specialist. There are various ways to send PHI, including email and other electronic means. Our dental practice does not encrypt email or other electronic forms of communication.

There is a risk that unencrypted information may be acquired by hackers or received by unintended recipients. If you are concerned about the security of PHI that may be sent unencrypted, please let us know and we will send it a different way.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

We may use and disclose your health information for different purposes, including treatment, payment, and health care operations.

Treatment. We may disclose your health information to a specialist providing treatment to you.

Payment. Payment activities include billing, collections, claims management, and determinations of eligibility and coverage to obtain payment from you, an insurance company, or another third party. For example, we may send claims to your dental health plan containing certain health information.

Healthcare Operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, conducting training programs, and licensing activities.

Emergencies. We may disclose your health information to notifying a family member, or another person responsible for your care about your medical condition or in the event of an emergency.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care. We may disclose your health information to your family or friends or any other individual identified by you when they are involved in your care or in the payment for your care. Additionally, we may disclose information about you to a patient representative. If a person has the authority by law to make health care decisions for you, we will treat that patient representative the same way we would treat you with respect to your health information.

Required by Law. We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

Public Health Activities. We may disclose your health information for public health activities, including disclosures to: Prevent or control disease, injury or disability; Report child abuse or neglect; Report reactions to medications or problems with products or devices; Notify a person of a recall, repair, or replacement of products or devices; Notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or condition; or Notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

National Security. We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody the protected health information of an inmate or patient.

Secretary of HHS. We will disclose your health information to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when required to investigate or determine compliance with HIPAA.

Worker's Compensation. We may disclose your PHI to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Law Enforcement. We may disclose your PHI for law enforcement purposes as permitted by HIPAA, as required by law, or in response to a subpoena or court order.

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose your PHI to an oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include audits, investigations, inspections, and credentialing, as necessary for licensure and for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process instituted by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made, either by the requesting party or us, to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Research. We may disclose your health information to researchers conducting research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board.

Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors. We may release your PHI to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also disclose PHI to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to enable them to carry out their duties.

Change of Ownership. In the event that this practice is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record will become the property of the new owner.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION RIGHTS

Access. You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You must make the request in writing. If you request information that we maintain on paper, we may provide photocopies. If you request information that we maintain electronically, you have the right to an electronic copy. We will use the form and format you request if readily producible. If you are denied a request for access, you have the right to have the denial reviewed in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

Right to Request a Restriction. You have the right to request additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your PHI by submitting a written request. Your written request must include (1) what information you want to limit, (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both, and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply. We are not required to agree to your request except in the case where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you, or a person on your behalf (other than the health plan), has paid our practice in full.

Alternative Communication. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation of how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. However, if we are unable to contact you using the ways or locations you have requested we may contact you using the information we have.

Amendment. You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request under certain circumstances. If we agree to your request, we will amend your record(s) and notify you of such. If we deny your request for an amendment, we will provide you with a written explanation of why we denied it and explain your rights.

Right to Notification of a Breach. You will receive notifications of breaches of your unsecured protected health information as required by law.

Electronic Notice. You may receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail).

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or if you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means, you may complain to us directly or submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.