

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

HEALTH INFORMATION 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.

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996, as amended by the HITECH Act and the final omnibus rule ("HIPAA"), is a federal program that requires that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally, are kept properly confidential. HIPAA gives you significant rights to understand and control how your health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities and business associates that misuse personal health information.

As required by HIPAA, we have prepared this explanation of how we are required to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may use and disclose your health information.

The following are situations where the law allows us to make use or disclosure of your health information without obtaining your permission:

We may use and disclose your medical records for each of the following purposes: treatment, payment, and health care operations.

- Treatment means providing, coordinating, or managing health care and related services by one or more health care providers. An example of this would include case management.
- Payment means such activities as obtaining reimbursement for services, confirming coverage, billing or collection activities, and utilization review. An example of this would be adjudicating a claim and reimbursing a provider for an office visit.
- Health care operations include the business aspects of running the Plan, such as conducting quality assessment and improvement activities, auditing functions, cost-management analysis, and customer service. An example would be an internal quality assessment review.

We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all references to individually identifiable information.

We may contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you without your prior authorization unless such communications are considered to be "marketing" as described below.

In some instances, we may contract with business associates for the payment and health care operations services we provide. For example, we may use an outside company to administer and manage the Plan. We may disclose your health information to our business associates so that they can perform the work that we ask them to. However, to protect your health information, we require that our business associates protect the privacy of your information and HIPAA requires that they do

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so as well.

Uses or Disclosures Required or Permitted by Law. We may use or disclose health information if the law requires us to use or disclose it for certain reasons. We may also disclose health information if a state law requires us to audit or monitor situations and for licensing or certifying health care facilities or professionals.

Public Health Authorities. We may disclose your health information to public health authorities that need the information to prevent or control disease, injury, or disability or handle situations where children are abused or neglected.

Food and Drug Administration(FDA). We may disclose health information when there are problems with a product that is regulated by the FDA. For instance, when the product has harmed someone, is defective, or needs to be recalled, we may disclose certain information.

Communicable Diseases. We may disclose health information to a person who has been exposed to a communicable disease or may be at risk of spreading or contracting a disease or condition. *Employment-Related Situations.* We may disclose health information to an employer when the employer is allowed by law to have that information for work related reasons. We may also disclose health information for workers' compensation programs.

Disclosures About Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence. We may disclose health information to appropriate authorities if we have reason to believe that a person has been a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

Disclosures/or Health Care Oversight. We may disclose health information so that government agencies can monitor or oversee the health care system and government benefit programs and be sure that certain health care entities are following regulatory programs or civil rights laws like they should.

Disclosures for Judicial or Administrative Proceedings. We may disclose health information in a court or other type of legal proceeding if it is requested through a legal process, such as a court order or a subpoena.

Disclosures for Law Enforcement Purposes. We may disclose health information to law enforcement if it is required by law; if needed to help identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person; if it is about an individual who is or is suspected to be the victim of a crime; if we think that a death may have resulted from criminal conduct; or if we think the information is evidence that criminal conduct occurred on our premises.

Uses or Disclosures in Situations Involving Decedents. We may use or disclose health information to coroners, medical examiners, or funeral directors so that they can carry out their responsibilities.

Uses or Disclosures Relating to Organ Donation. We may use or disclose health information to organizations involved in organ donation or organ transplants.

Uses or Disclosures Relating to Research. We may use or disclose health information for research purposes if the privacy of the information will be protected in the research.

Uses or Disclosures to Avert Serious Threat to Health or Safety. We may use or disclose your health information to appropriate persons or authorities if we have reason to believe it is needed to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public.