



TILLAMOOK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

NOTICE: PATIENT PRIVACY

We are required by law to protect the privacy of your medical information and to provide you with written Notice describing:

HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THIS INFORMATION.

- * We may use or disclose to others your medical information for purposes of providing or arranging for your health care, the payment for or reimbursement of the care that we provide to you, and the related administrative activities supporting your treatment.
- * We may be required or permitted by certain laws, regulations, or circumstances to use and disclose your medical information for certain purposes without your authorization. Under other circumstances we may need your written authorization (that you may later revoke) in order to use or disclose your medical information.
- * As our patient, you have important rights relating to inspecting and copying your medical information that we maintain, amending or correcting that information, obtaining an accounting of our disclosures of your medical information, requesting that we communicate with you confidentially, requesting that we restrict certain uses and disclosures of your health information, and complaining if you think your rights have been violated.
- * We have available a detailed NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES which fully explains your rights and our obligations under the law. We may revise our NOTICE from time to time. The Effective Date at the bottom of this page indicates the date of the most current NOTICE in effect.
- * You have the right to receive a copy of our most current NOTICE in effect. If you have not yet received a copy of our current NOTICE, please ask at the front desk and we will provide you with a copy.
- * If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the NOTICE or your medical information, please contact Marlene Putman, Administrator at (503) 842-3922.

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.

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact:

Marlene Putman, Administrator and HIPAA Privacy Official
Tillamook County Health Department, P.O. Box 489, Tillamook, OR 97141
(503) 842-3922

WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE

This notice describes the information privacy practices followed by our employees, staff and other office personnel.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

This notice applies to the information and records we have about your health, health status, and the health care and services you receive at this office. Your health information may include information created and received by this office, may be in the form of written or electronic records or spoken words, and may include information about your health history, health status, symptoms, examinations, test results, diagnoses, treatments, procedures, prescriptions, related billing activity and similar types of health-related information.

We are required by law to give you this notice. It will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose health information about you and describes your rights and our obligations regarding the use and disclosure of that information.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

We may use and disclose health information for the following purposes:

- **For Treatment.** We may use health information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose health information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, office staff or other personnel who are involved in taking care of you and your health.

For example, your doctor may be treating you for a heart condition and may need to know if you have other health problems that could complicate your treatment. The doctor may use your medical history to decide what treatment is best for you. The doctor may also tell another doctor about your condition so that doctor can help determine the most appropriate care for you.

Different personnel in our office may share information about you and disclose information to people who do not work in our office in order to coordinate your care, such as phoning in prescriptions to your pharmacy, scheduling lab work and ordering x-rays. Family members and other health care providers may be part of your medical care outside this office and may require information about you that we have.

- **For payment.** We may use and disclose health information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at this office may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party.

For example, we may need to give your health plan information about a service you received here so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for the service. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval, or to determine whether your plan will pay for the treatment.

- **For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose health information about you in order to run the office and make sure that you and our other patients receive quality care.

For example, we may use your health information to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also use health information about all or many of our patients to help us decide what additional services we should offer, how we can become more efficient, or whether certain new treatments are effective.

Healthcare operations includes reporting information for public health activities, such as immunization reporting and communicable disease reporting.

We may also disclose your health information to health plans that provide you insurance coverage and other health care providers that care for you. Our disclosures of your health information to plans and other providers may be for the purpose of helping these plans and providers provide or improve care, reduce cost, coordinate and manage health care and services, train staff and comply with the law.

- **Appointment Reminders.** We may contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care at the office, unless you tell us not to.
- **Treatment Alternatives.** We may tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.
- **Health-Related Products and Services.** We may tell you about health-related products or services that may be of interest to you.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

We may use or disclose health information about you for the following purposes, subject to all applicable legal requirements and limitations:

- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.
- **Required By Law.** We will disclose health information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law. If we suspect abuse, neglect or domestic violence, we may disclose health information, including psychotherapy notes, about you as required or permitted by law.
- **Research.** We may use and disclose health information about you for research projects that are subject to a special approval process. We will ask you for your permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at the office.
- **Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, we may release health information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an

organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate such donation and transplantation.

- **Military, Veterans, National Security and Intelligence.** If you are or were a member of the armed forces, or part of the national security or intelligence communities, we may be required by military command or other government authorities to release health information about you. We may also release information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.
- **Workers' Compensation.** We may release health information about you for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- **Public Health Risks.** We may disclose health information about you for public health reasons in order to prevent or control disease, injury or disability; or report births, deaths, suspected abuse or neglect, non-accidental physical injuries, reactions to medications or problems with products.
- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose health information to a health oversight agency for audits, investigations, inspections, or licensing purposes. These disclosures may be necessary for certain state and federal agencies to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.
- **Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose health information about you in response to a court or administrative order. Subject to all applicable legal requirements, we may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena.
- **Law Enforcement.** We may release health information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process, subject to all applicable legal requirements.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors.** We may release health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death.
- **Information Not Personally Identifiable.** We may use or disclose health information about you in a way that does not personally identify you or reveal who you are.
- **Family and Friends.** We may disclose health information about you to your family members or friends if we obtain your verbal agreement to do so or if we give you an opportunity to object to such a disclosure and you do not raise an objection. We may also disclose health information to your family or friends if we can infer from the circumstances, based on our professional judgment that you would not object. For example, we may assume you agree to our disclosure of your personal health information to your spouse when you bring your spouse with you into the exam room during treatment or while treatment is discussed.

In situations where you are not capable of giving consent (because you are not present or due to your incapacity or medical emergency), we may, using our professional judgment, determine that a disclosure to your family member or friend is in your best interest. In that situation, we will disclose only health information relevant to the person's involvement in your care. For example, we may inform the person who accompanied you to the emergency room that you suffered a heart attack and provide updates on your progress and prognosis. We may also use our professional judgment and experience to make reasonable inferences that it is in your best interest to allow another person to act on your behalf to pick up, for example, filled prescriptions, medical supplies, or X-rays.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We will not use or disclose your health information for any purpose other than those identified in the previous sections without your specific, written *Authorization*. If you give us *Authorization* to use or disclose health information about you, you may revoke that *Authorization*, **in writing**, at any time. If you revoke your *Authorization*, we will no longer use or disclose information about you for the reasons covered by your written *Authorization*, but we cannot take back any uses or disclosures already made with your permission.

In some instances, we may need specific, written authorization from you in order to disclose certain types of specially-protected information such as HIV, substance abuse, mental health, and genetic testing information.

Sale of Protected Health Information. We are required to obtain your authorization for the sale of your protected health information in exchange for payment. The authorization must state that such disclosure will result in remuneration to us.

Marketing. We are required to obtain your authorization if marketing involves financial remuneration to us from a third party. The authorization must state that such remuneration is involved.

Fundraising. Some clinics participate in fundraising activities using individuals' names and treatment dates. If our clinic chooses to participate in any fundraising campaigns using your information, you will be sent a notice about the fundraising activity and you will be given an opportunity to tell us that you don't want your information used that way. Doing that will mean that you have opted out of participating. You may also request to opt out of all future fundraising communications, but if you do that, you will need to opt back in if you change your mind, by sending us a letter telling us that you would like to start getting those letters or notices again.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

You have the following rights regarding health information we maintain about you:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, such as medical and billing records, that we keep and use to make decisions about your care. You must submit a written request in order to inspect and/or copy records of your health information. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other associated supplies. You also have a right to request your records in an electronic format.

We may deny your request to inspect and/or copy records in certain limited circumstances. If you are denied copies of or access to, health information that we keep about you, you may ask that our denial be reviewed. If the law gives you a right to have our denial reviewed, we will select a licensed health care professional to review your request and our denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request, and we will comply with the outcome of the review.

- **Right to Amend.** If you believe health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment as long as the information is kept by this office. To request an amendment, complete and submit a MEDICAL RECORD AMENDMENT/CORRECTION FORM.

We may deny your request for an amendment if your request is not **in writing** or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- We did not create, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer

available to make the amendment

- Is not part of the health information that we keep
- You would not be permitted to inspect and copy
- Is accurate and complete

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures.” This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you for purposes other than treatment, payment, health care operations, and a limited number of special circumstances involving national security, correctional institutions and law enforcement. The list will also exclude any disclosures we have made based on your written authorization. To obtain this list, you must submit your request **in writing**. It must state a time period, which may not be longer than six years. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the health information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. This includes your right to limit disclosure of information for treatment or services you (or a family member or friend) paid for in-full out of your own pocket. This does not include services that have been paid for in-whole or in-part by your health plan.

We are not required to agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment or we are required by law to use or disclose the information.

To request restrictions, you may complete the REQUEST FOR RESTRICTION ON USE/DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION.

- **Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail.

To request confidential communications, you may complete the REQUEST FOR RESTRICTION ON USE/DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

- **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time.
- **Right to Notification of Breach of Protected Health Information.** You have the right to be notified following any unauthorized disclosure of your protected health information. It is the intention of our clinic to notify affected individuals immediately following the discovery of a breach of protected health information.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice, and to make the revised or changed notice effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post the current notice in the office with its effective date on the bottom of each page. You are entitled to a copy of the notice currently in effect.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington D.C. To file a complaint with our office, contact:

Marlene Putman, Administrator and HIPAA Privacy Official

Tillamook County Health Department, P.O. Box 489, Tillamook, OR 97141
(503) 842-3922

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.