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**Notice of Privacy Practices**

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**This notice describes how healthcare information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information.**

**Please review carefully!**

**The privacy of your health information is important to us.**

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**OUR LEGAL DUTY**

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information.

We are also required 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 that are described in this notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect **12/01/02** and will remain in effect until further notice.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and applicable law permits the terms of this notice at any time, provided such 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 significant change in our privacy 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. For more information about notice of privacy practices, or for additional copies of this notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice.

**Uses and Disclosures of Health Information**

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations.

For example:

**Treatment:** We may use or disclose health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.

**Healthcare Operations:** We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, and certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

**Your Authorization:** In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment of healthcare operations, you may give in written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us in written authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosure permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a 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 must disclose your health information to you as described in the patients' rights section of this notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend, or other person to the extent necessary to help you with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

**Persons Involved in Care:** We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We will also use our professional judgment 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.

**Marketing Health-Related Service:** We will not use your health information for marketing communications, without your written authorization.

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

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

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

**Appointment Reminders:** We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters). We may use or disclose your health information in faxing or writing, school and work medical excuses.

#### **Patient Rights**

**Access:** You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited expectations. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practically do so. (You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information). You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this notice.

**Disclosure Accounting:** You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclose your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last six (6) years, but not **before April 2003**. If you request this accounting more than that 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 agree **not** required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency).

**Alternative Communication:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative locations. (You must make your request in writing). Your request must specify the alternative means or location and provide satisfactory explanation how payment will be handled 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 the information should be amended). We may deny your request under certain circumstances.