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# HIPAA – 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. THIS IS A REMINDER OF THE PRIVACY NOTICE YOU RECEIVED BY APRIL 18, 2010. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

## **Our Company's Pledge to You**

This notice is intended to inform you of the privacy practices followed by the (the Plan) and the Plan's legal obligations regarding your protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), as amended by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH). This notice has been drafted in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule, contained in the Code of Federal Regulations of 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164. Terms not defined in this Notice have the same meaning as they have in the HIPAA Privacy Rule. The notice also explains the privacy rights you and your family members have as participants of the Plan. It is effective on [Note: the effective date may not be earlier than the date on which the privacy notice is printed or otherwise published.]

The Plan often needs access to your protected health information in order to provide payment for health services and perform plan administrative functions. We want to assure the plan participants covered under the Plan that we comply with Federal privacy laws and respect your right to privacy. requires all members of our workforce and third parties that are provided access to protected health information to comply with the privacy practices outlined below.

## **Protected Health Information**

Your protected health information is protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule. Generally, protected health information is information that identifies an individual created or received by a health care provider, health plan or an employer on behalf of a group health plan that relates to physical or mental health conditions, provision or health care, or payment for health care, whether past, present or future.

## **How We May Use Your Protected Health Information**

Under the HIPAA Privacy Rule, we may use or disclose your protected health information for certain purposes without your permission. This section describes the ways we can use and disclose your protected health information:

**Payment.** We use or disclose your protected health information without your written authorization in order to determine eligibility for benefits, seek reimbursement from a third party, or coordinate benefits with another health plan under which you are covered. For example, a health care provider that provided treatment to you will provide us with your health information. We use that information in order to determine whether those services are eligible for payment under our group health plan.

**Health Care Operations.** We use and disclose your protected health information in order to perform plan administration functions such as quality assurance activities, resolution of internal grievances, and evaluating plan performance. For example, we review claims experience in order to understand participant utilization and to make plan design changes intended to control health care costs.

**Treatment.** Although the law allows use and disclosure of your protected health information for purposes of treatment, as a health plan we generally do not need to disclose your information for treatment purposes. Your physician or health care provider is required to provide you with an explanation of how they use and share your health information for purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations.

**As permitted or required by law.** We may also use or disclose your protected health information without your written authorization for other reasons as permitted by law. We are permitted by law to share information, subject to certain requirements, in order to communicate information on health related benefits or services that may be of interest to you, response to a court order, or provide information to further public health activities (e.g. preventing the spread of disease) without your written authorization. We are also permitted to share protected health information during a corporate restructuring such as a merger, sale or acquisition. We will also disclose health information about you when required by law, for example, in order to prevent serious harm to you or others.

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**Pursuant to your Authorization.** When required by law, we will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing your protected health information. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose information, you can later revoke that authorization to prevent any future uses or disclosures.

**To Business Associates.** We may enter into contracts with entities known as Business Associates that provide services to or perform functions on behalf of the plan. We may disclose protected health information to Business Associates once they have agreed in writing to safeguard the protected health information. For example, we may disclose your protected health information to a Business Associate to administer claims. Business Associates are also required by law to protect protected health information.

**To the Plan Sponsor.** We may disclose protected health information to certain employees of \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of administering the Plan. These employees will use or disclose the protected health information only as necessary to perform plan administration functions or as otherwise required by HIPAA, unless you have authorized additional disclosures. Your protected health information cannot be used for employment purposes without your specific authorization.

### **Your Rights**

**Right to Inspect and Copy.** In most cases, you have the right to inspect and copy the protected health information we maintain about you. If you request copies, we will charge you a reasonable fee to cover the costs of copying, mailing, or other expenses associated with your request. Your request to inspect or review your health information must be submitted in writing to the person listed below. In some circumstances, we may deny your request to inspect and copy your health information. To the extent your information is held in an electronic health record, you may be able to receive the information in electronic format.

**Right to Amend.** If you believe that information within your records is incorrect or if important information is missing, you have the right to request that we correct the existing information or add the missing information. Your request to amend your health information must be submitted in writing to the person listed below. In some circumstances, we may deny your request to amend your health information. If we deny your request, you may file a statement of disagreement with us for inclusion in any future disclosures of the disputed information.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures of your protected health information. The accounting will include disclosures that were made **(1)** for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations; **(2)** to you; **(3)** pursuant to our authorization; **(4)** to our friends or family in your presence or because of an emergency; **(5)** for national security purposes; or **(6)** incidental to otherwise permissible disclosures.

Your request for an accounting must be submitted in writing to the person listed below. You may request an accounting of disclosures made within the last six years. You may request one accounting free of charge within a 12-month period.

**Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request that we not use or disclose information for treatment, payment, or other administrative purposes except when specifically authorized by you, when required by law, or in emergency circumstances. You also have the right to request that we limit the protected health information that we disclose to someone involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as a family member or friend.

Your request for restrictions must be submitted in writing to the person listed below. WE will consider your request, but in most cases are not legally obligated to agree to those restrictions. However, we will comply with any restriction request if the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of payment or health care operations (not for treatment) and the protected health information pertains solely to a health care item or service that has been paid for out-of-pocket and in full.

**Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to receive confidential communications containing your health information. Your request for restrictions must be submitted in writing to the person listed below. We are required to accommodate reasonable requests. For example, you may ask that we contact you at your place of employment or send communications regarding treatment to an alternate address.

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**Right to be Notified of a Breach.** You have the right to be notified in the event that we (or one of our Business Associates) discover a breach of your unsecured protected health information. Notice of any such breach will be made in accordance with Federal requirements.

**Right to Receive a Paper Copy of this Notice.** If you have agreed to accept this notice electronically, you also have a right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us upon request. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, please contact the person listed below.

**Our Legal Responsibility.** We are requested by law to protect the privacy of your protected health information, provide you with certain rights with respect to your protected health information, provide you with this notice about our privacy practices, and follow the information practices that are described in this notice. We may change our policies at any time. In the event that we made a significant change in our policies, we will provide you with a revised copy of this notice. YOU can also request a copy of our notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, contact the following:

**Individual's Name or Person's Title:**

**Organization's Name:**

**Street Address:**

**City / State / Zip:**

**Phone Number:**

**e-Mail Address:**

#### **Complaints**

If you are concerned that we have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your records, you may contact the person listed above. You also may send a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Civil Rights. The person listed above can provide you with the appropriate address upon request or you may visit [www.hhs.gov/ocr](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr) for further information. You will not be penalized or retaliated against for filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights or with us.

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# HIPAA – Portability Rights and Special Enrollment Rights

**Right to get special enrollment in another plan.** Under HIPAA, if you lose your group health plan coverage, you may be able to get into another group health plan for which you are eligible (such as a spouse's plan), even if the plan generally does not accept late enrollees, if you request enrollment within 30 days. (Additional special enrollment rights are triggered by marriage, birth, adoption, and placement for adoption.)

- Therefore, once your coverage ends, if you are eligible for coverage in another plan (such as a spouse's plan), you should request special enrollment as soon as possible.

**Right to individual health coverage.** Under HIPAA, if you are an "eligible individual," you have a right to buy certain individual health policies (or in some states, to buy coverage through a high-risk pool) without a preexisting condition exclusion. To be an eligible individual, you must meet the following requirements:

- You have had coverage for at least 18 months without a break in coverage of 63 days or more;
- Your most recent coverage was under a group health plan (which can be shown by this certificate);
- Your group coverage was not terminated because of fraud or nonpayment of premiums;
- You are not eligible for COBRA continuation coverage or you have exhausted your COBRA benefits (or continuation coverage under a similar state provision); and
- You are not eligible for another group health plan, Medicare, or Medicaid, and do not have any other health insurance coverage.

The right to buy individual coverage is the same whether you are laid off, fired, or quit your job.

- Therefore, if you are interested in obtaining individual coverage and you meet the other criteria to be an eligible individual, you should apply for this coverage as soon as possible to avoid losing your eligible individual status due to a 63-day break.

**State flexibility.** This certificate describes minimum HIPAA protections under federal law. States may require insurers and HMOs to provide additional protections to individuals in that state.

**For more information.** If you have questions about your HIPAA rights, you may contact your state insurance department or the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) toll-free at **1-866-444-3272** (for free HIPAA publications ask for publications concerning changes in health care laws). You may also contact the CMS publication hotline at **1-800-633-4227** (ask for "Protecting Your Health Insurance Coverage"). These publications and other useful information are also available on the Internet at:

<http://www.dol.gov/ebsa>, the DOL's interactive web pages – Health Elaws or <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/HealthInsReformforConsume>.

**This notice is being provided to insure that you understand your right to apply for group health insurance coverage. You should read this notice even if you plan to waive coverage at this time.**

## Loss of Other Coverage

If you are declining coverage for yourself or your dependents (including your spouse) because of other health insurance or group health plan coverage, you may be able to enroll yourself and your dependents in this plan if you or your dependents lose eligibility for that other coverage (or if the employer stops contributing toward your or your dependents' other coverage). However, you must request enrollment within 30 days after your or your dependents' other coverage ends (or after the employer stops contributing toward the other coverage).

**Example:** You waived coverage because you were covered under a plan offered by your spouse's employer. Your spouse terminates his employment. If you notify your employer within 30 days of the date coverage ends, you and your eligible dependents may apply for coverage under our health plan.

## Marriage, Birth, or Adoption

If you have a new dependent because of a marriage, birth, adoption, or placement for adoption, you may be able to enroll yourself and your dependents. However, you must request enrollment within 30 days after the marriage, birth, or placement for adoption.

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**Example:** When you were hired by us, you were single and chose not to elect health insurance benefits. One year later, you marry. You and your eligible dependents are entitled to enroll in this group health plan. However, you must apply within 30 days from the date of your marriage.

**Medicaid or CHIP**

If you or your dependents lose eligibility for coverage under Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or become eligible for a premium assistance subsidy under Medicaid or CHIP, you may be able to enroll yourself and your dependents. You must request enrollment within 60 days of the loss of Medicaid or CHIP coverage or the determination of eligibility for a premium assistance subsidy.

**Example:** When you were hired by us, your children received health coverage under CHIP and you did not enroll them in our health plan. Because of changes in your income, your children are no longer eligible for CHIP coverage. You may enroll them in this group health plan if you apply within 60 days of the date of their loss of CHIP coverage.

**For More Information or Assistance**

To request special enrollment or obtain more information, please contact:

**Name:**

**Street Address:**

**City / State / Zip:**

**Telephone:**

**Note:** If you and your eligible dependents enroll during a special enrollment period, as described above, you are not considered a late enrollee. Therefore, your group health plan may not require you to serve a pre-existing condition waiting period of more than 12 months. Any preexisting condition waiting period will be reduced by time served in a qualified plan.