

# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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Effective Date: April 14, 2003

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.

## WHO MUST FOLLOW THIS NOTICE

This notice describes our privacy practices.

## OUR OBLIGATIONS

We are required by law to:

- Make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept private (with certain exceptions);
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and
- Follow the terms of our notice that is currently in effect.

## HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION

The following categories describe different ways that we may use and disclose medical information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

- ***Disclosure at Your Request.*** We may disclose information when requested by you. This disclosure at your request may require a written authorization by you.
- ***For Treatment.*** We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, health care students, or other hospital personnel who are involved in taking care of you at the hospital. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken leg may need to know if you have diabetes because diabetes may slow the healing process. In addition, the doctor may need to tell the dietitian if you have diabetes so that we can arrange for appropriate meals. Different departments of the hospital also may share medical information about you in order to coordinate the different things you need, such as prescriptions, lab work and x-rays. We also may disclose medical information about you to people outside the hospital who may be involved in your medical care after you leave the hospital, such as other acute facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and physicians or other practitioners. For example, we may give your physician access to your health information to assist your physician in treating you.
- ***For Payment.*** We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at the hospital 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 your surgery you received at the hospital so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for the surgery. 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 cover the treatment. We may also provide basic information about you and your health plan, insurance company or other

source of payment to practitioners outside the hospital who are involved in your care, to assist them in obtaining payment for serviced they provide to you.

- **For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose Health Information for health care operation purposes. These uses and disclosures are necessary to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care and for our operation and management purposes. For example, we may use Health Information to review the treatment and services we provide to ensure that the care you receive is of the highest quality.
- **Fundraising Activities.** We may use medical information about you, or disclose such information to a foundation related to the hospital, to contact you in an effort to raise money for the hospital and its operations. We only would release contact information, such as your name, address and phone number and the dates you received treatment or services at the hospital.
- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** We may release medical information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. Unless there is a specific written request from you to the contrary, we may also tell your family or friends your condition and that you are in the hospital. We also may notify your family about your location or general condition or disclose such information to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort.
- **Research.** Under certain Circumstances, we may use and disclose Health Information for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health recovery of all patients who received one medication or treatment to those who received another, for the same condition. Before we use or disclose medical information for research, the project will go through a special approval process, but we may, however, disclose medical information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project, for example, to help them look for patients with specific medical needs, as long as the medical information they review does not leave the hospital.
- **As Required by Law.** We will disclose Health Information when required to do so by international, federal, state, or local law.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose Health Information when necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to your health and safety or to the health and safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, will be to someone who may be able to help prevent the threat.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- **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 organ or tissue donation and transplantation.
- **Military and Veterans.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release Health Information as required by military command authorities. We may also release Health Information to the appropriate foreign military authority if you are a member of a foreign military.
- **Workers' Compensation.** We may release Health Information for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illnesses.
- **Public Health Risks.** We may disclose Health Information for public health activities. These activities generally include disclosures to prevent or control disease, injury or disability; report births and deaths; report child abuse or neglect; report reactions to medications or problems with products; notify people of recalls of products they may be using; track certain products and

monitor their use and effectiveness; notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition; and conduct medical surveillance of the hospital in certain limited circumstances concerning workplace illness or injury. We also may release Health Information to an appropriate government or authority if we believe a patient has been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence; however, we will only release this information if you agree or when we are required or authorized by law.

- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose Health Information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government 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 in response to a court or administrative order. We also may disclose Health Information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.
- **Law Enforcement.** We may release Health Information if asked by a law enforcement official for the following reasons: (1) in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process; (2) limited information to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person; (3) about the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement; (4) about a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct; (5) about criminal conduct on our premises; and (6) in emergency circumstances to report a crime, the location of the crime or victims, or the identity, description, or location of the person who committed the crime.
- **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. We also may release Health Information to funeral directors as necessary for the duties.
- **National Security and Intelligence Activities.** We may release Health Information to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counter-intelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.
- **Protective Services for the President and Others.** We may disclose Health Information to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state or conduct special investigations.
- **Inmates or Individuals in Custody.** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release Health Information to the appropriate correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be made only if necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

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 Health Information that may be used to make decisions about your care or payment for your care.
- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that Health Information we have is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for us.

- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an accounting of certain disclosures of Health Information we made.
- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the Health Information we use or disclose for treatment, payment, or health care operations. In addition, you have the right to request a limit on the Health Information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not share information about your surgery with your spouse. **We are not required, however, to agree to your request.** If we agree, we will comply with your request unless we need to use the information in certain emergency treatment situations.
- **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 contact you only by mail or at work. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. We will accommodate reasonable requests.
- **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. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice. You may obtain a copy of this notice on our website.

**To request any of the above, you must make your request, in writing, to the Privacy Officer.**

### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for Health Information we already have as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice at the hospital. The notice will contain the effective date on the first page, in the top right-hand corner.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with this hospital and/or the Department of Health and Human Services. All complaints must be made in writing. To file a complaint with:

- This hospital, contact the Privacy Officer.
- The Department of Health and Human Services, contact:  
Office of Civil Rights  
Attention: Regional Manager  
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 322  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**You will not be penalized for filing a complaint**