This notice describes our Practice’s policies, which extend to:

- All employees, staff and other personnel that work for or with our Practice;
- Our business associates (including a billing service, or facilities to which we refer patients), on-call physicians, and so on.

The Practice provides this Notice to comply with the Privacy Regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

**OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION:**

We understand that your medical information is personal to you, and we are committed to protecting the information about you. As our patient, we create medical records about your health, our care and treatment of you to provide for your care and to comply with certain legal requirements. Each category of the Practice also may share medical information about you to people outside the Practice who may be involved in your medical care after you leave the Practice; this may include your family members, or other personal representatives authorized by you or by a legal mandate (a guardian or other person who has been named to handle your medical decisions, should you become incompetent).

**HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:***

- **Payment.** We may use and disclose medical information about you for services and procedures so they may be billed and collected from you, an insurance company, or any other third party. For example, we may need to give your health care information, about treatment you received at the Practice, to obtain payment or reimbursement for the care. We may also tell your health plan and/or referring physician about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment, to facilitate payment of a referring physician, or the like.
- **Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose medical information about you so our Practice and our Practice’s business associates (including a billing service, or facilities to which we refer patients), on-call physicians, and so on. We shall endeavor, at all times when business associates are used, to advise you, refer patients), on
- **Emergency Situations.** In addition, we may disclose medical information about you to an organization assisting in a disaster relief effort or in an emergency situation so that your family can be notified about your condition, status and location.
- **Research.** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose medical information about you for research purposes regarding medications, efficiency of treatment protocols and the like. All research projects are subject to an approval process, which evaluates a proposed research project and its use of medical information. Before we use or disclose medical information for research, the project will have been approved through this research approval process. We will obtain an Authorization from you before using or disclosing your individually identifiable health information unless the authorization requirement has been waived. If possible, we will make the information non-identifiable to a specific patient. If the information has been sufficiently de-identified, an authorization for the use or disclosure is not required.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose medical information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat either to your or another person’s health and safety.
- **Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, we may release medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.
- **Workers’ Compensation.** We may release medical information about you for workers’ compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- **Public Health Risks.** Law or public policy may require us to disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:
  - to prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
  - to report births and deaths;
  - to report child abuse or neglect;
  - to report reactions to medications or problems with products;
  - to notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
  - to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition;
  - to notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.
- **Investigation and Government Activities.** We may disclose medical information to a local, state or federal agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the payor, the government and other regulatory agencies to ensure that the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.
You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION.

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission, unless those uses can be reasonably inferred from the intended uses above. If you have provided us with your permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.

PATIENT RIGHTS

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES YOUR RIGHTS AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF THIS PRACTICE REGARDING THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION.

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

Right to Inspect and Copy. You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. This includes your own medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. Upon proof of an appropriate legal relationship, records of others related to you or under your care (guardian or custodial) may also be disclosed.

To inspect and copy your medical record, you must submit your request in writing to our Compliance Officer. Ask the front desk person for the name of the Compliance Officer. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies (tapes, disks, etc.) associated with your request.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that our Compliance Committee review the denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by the Practice will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome and recommendations from that review.

Right to Amend. If you feel that the medical information we have about you in your record is incorrect or incomplete, then you may ask us to amend the information, following the procedure below. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the Practice maintains your medical record.

To request an amendment, your request must be submitted in writing, along with your intended amendment and a reason that supports your request to amend. The amendment must be dated and signed by you and notarized.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it 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:

- Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of the medical information kept by or for the Practice;
- Is not part of the information which you would 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, to others.

To request this list, you must submit your request in writing. Your request must state a time period not longer than six (6) years back and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). 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 medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request that we limit our use or disclose medical information about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care (a family member or friend). For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a particular treatment you received.

We are not required to agree to your request and we may not be able to comply with your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request except that we shall not comply, even with a written request, if the information requested is protected from the consent requirement or we are otherwise required to disclose the information by law.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing. In your request, you indicate:

- what information you want to limit;
- whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and
- to whom you want the limits to apply. (e.g., disclosures to your children, parents, spouse, etc.)

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, that we not leave voice mail or e-mail, or the like.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing. 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 us to contact you.

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.

Changes to This Notice. We reserve the right to change this notice at any time. If we change our notice, we will post a copy of the current notice in the Practice. The notice will contain on the first page, in the top right-hand corner, the date of last revision and effective date. In addition, each time you visit our Practice for treatment or health care services you may request a copy of the current notice in effect.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Practice or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with the Practice, contact our office manager who will direct you on how to file an office complaint. All complaints must be submitted in writing, and all complaints shall be investigated, without repercussion to you. The office manager can be reached at this number: (865) 483-2288.