**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.**

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA), all medical records and other individually identifiable protected health information (PHI) of which we have knowledge must be kept confidential. All PHI used by us or disclosed by us is covered by this ACT regardless of whether this PHI is electronic, oral or paper form. Several new rights are granted to patients under this ACT, allowing control over how your PHI is used, how you can access it, and in some cases amend it.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI.

We may be assessed a penalty for any misuse or unauthorized disclosures of your personal health information as regulated by HIPPA.

This Notice of Privacy Practices is effective from December 27, 2021 forward.

We are bound to abide by the terms of this notice and reserve the right to make revisions to this policy. Should revisions be made, you will be notified in writing and a copy of the revised policy will be made available at your request.

Should any breach of unsecured PHI ever occur, we will notify the patient(s) involved within 10 business days of discovery of this breach.

You will be asked to sign a consent form authorizing us to use and disclose your personal health information only for the following purposes, as defined under the Act:

* **Treatment** means the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services by one or more healthcare providers, including the coordination of management of health care by a healthcare provider with a third party; consultation between healthcare providers relating to a patient; or the referral of a patient for health care from one healthcare provider to another. An example of this would be a dentist referral to an orthodontist.
* **Payment** means obtaining reimbursement for the provision of health care; determinations of eligibility of coverage; billing; claims management; collection activities; justification of charges; and disclosure to consumer reporting agencies; protected health information relating to the collection of reimbursements (only certain information may be disclosed). An example of this would be submitting your bill for health care services to your insurance company.
* **Health care operations** are any activity related to covered functions in which we participate in the function of our offices, such as conducting quality assessment activities; protocol development; case management and care coordination; auditing functions, business management and general administrative activities, including implementation of this regulation; customer service evaluations; resolution of grievances; fundraising; and marketing for which an authorization is not required. An example of this would be evaluation customer service given to patients.

We may, without prior consent use or disclose your PHI to carry our treatment, payment or health care operations:

* Directly to you at your request.
* In an emergency treatment situation, if we attempt to obtain such consent as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of such treatment, if we are required by law to treat you and attempts to obtain consent are unsuccessful, or if we attempt to obtain consent but are unable, due to barriers of communication, but we determine in our professional opinion that treatment is clearly inferred from the circumstances.
* Pursuant to and in compliance with an authorization signed by you.
* Provided that you are informed in advance of the use and disclosure and have the opportunity to agree to or prohibit or restrict the use of disclosure. This may be an oral agreement between us and may include a directory maintained at our facility containing specific information allowed by the Act.

We may de-identify your personal health information by using codes or removing all individually identifiable health information.

All other uses and disclosures will be made only upon securing a written authorization form signed by you. You have the right to revoke this authorization, at any time, upon written notice and we will abide by that request.

However, exception would be any actions already taken, relying on your authorization, and prior to revocation notice.

If you have paid for services out of pocket, in full, and request that we not disclose PHI related solely to these services to a health plan, we will abide by this request except where required by law to make a disclosure.

We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or to inform you about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.