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The Renewal Point**

**Effective Date of this Notice: April 14, 2003**

**Notice of Privacy Practices**

As required by the Privacy Regulations created as a result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (AS A PATIENT OF THIS PRACTICE) MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION.**

**PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

**A. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY**

Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your individually identifiable health information (IIHI). In conducting our business, we will create records regarding you and the treatment and services we provide to you. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your IIHI. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your IIHI
- Your privacy rights in your IIHI
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your IIHI

**The terms of this notice apply to all records containing your IIHI that are created or retained by our practice. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practice. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all your records that our practice has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we may create or maintain in the future. Our practice will post a copy of our current Notice in our offices in a visible location at all times, and you may request a copy of our most current Notice at any time.**

**A. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT OUR HIPAA COMPLIANCE OFFICER AT 941.926.4905.**

**B. WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION (IIHI) IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

The following categories describe the different ways in which we may use and disclose your IIHI.

- 1. Treatment.** Our practice may use your IHI to treat you. For example, we may ask you to have laboratory tests (such as blood or urine tests), and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We might use your IHI in order to write a prescription for you, or we might disclose your IHI to a pharmacy when we order a prescription for you. Many of the people who work for our practice – including but not limited to, our doctors and nurses – may use or disclose your IHI in order to treat you or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your IHI to other who may assist in your care, such as your spouse, children, or parents. Finally, we may also disclose your IHI to other health care providers for purposes related to your treatment.
- 2. Payment.** Our practice may use and disclose your IHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. We may also use and disclose your IHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Also, we may use your IHI to bill you directly for services and times. We may disclose your IHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their billing and collection efforts.
- 3. Health Care Operations.** Our practice may use and disclose your IHI to operate our business. As examples of the ways in which we may use and disclose your information for our operations, our practice may use your IHI to evaluate the quality of care you received from us, or to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice. We may disclose your IHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their health care operations.

**OPTIONAL:**

- 4. Appointment Reminders.** Our practice may use and disclose your IHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment.

**OPTIONAL:**

- 5. Treatment Options.** Our practice may use and disclose your IHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.

**OPTIONAL:**

- 6. Health Related Benefits and Services.** Our practice may use and disclose your IHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

**OPTIONAL:**

- 7. Release of Information to Family/Friends.** Our practice may release your IHI to a friend or family member that is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a babysitter take their child to the pediatrician's office for treatment of a cold. In this example, the babysitter may have access to this child's medical information.

- 8. Disclosures Required By Law.** Our practice will use and disclose your IHI when we are required to do so by federal, state, or local law.

## **C. USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR IHI IN CERTAIN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The following categories describe unique scenarios in which we may use or disclose your identifiable health information:

- 1. Public Health Risks.** Our practice may disclose your IHI to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:
  - Maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths
  - Reporting child abuse or neglect
  - Preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
  - Notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease

- Notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition
  - Reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices
  - Notifying individuals if a product or device they may be using has been recalled
  - Notifying appropriate government agencies and authorities regarding the potential abuse or neglect of an adult patients (including domestic violence); however, we will only disclose this information if the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to disclose this information
  - Notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.
2. **Health Oversight Activities.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and health care systems in general.
3. **Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your IIHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to obtain an order protecting the information the party has requested.
4. **Law Enforcement.** We may release IIHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:
- Regarding a crime victim in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
  - Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct
  - Regarding criminal conduct at our offices
  - In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process
  - To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive, or missing person
  - In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of the perpetrator)

**OPTIONAL:**

5. **Deceased Patients.** Our practice may release IIHI to a medical examiner or coroner to identify a deceased individual or to identify the cause of death. If necessary, we also may release information in order for funeral directors to perform their jobs.

**OPTIONAL:**

6. **Organ and Tissue Donation.** Our practice may release your IIHI to organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.

**OPTIONAL:**

7. **Research.** We may disclose your protected health information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your protected health information.
8. **Serious Threats to Health or Safety.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.

9. **Military.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI if you are a member of U.S. or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.
10. **National Security.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI to federal officials for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We may also disclose your IIHI to federal officials in order to protect the President, or other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.
11. **Inmates.** We may use or disclose your IIHI if you are an inmate of a correctional facility and your physician created or received your IIHI in the course of providing care to you.
12. **Workers Compensation.** Our practice may release your IIHI for worker's compensation and similar programs.

#### **D. YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR IIHI**

You have the following rights regarding the IIHI that we maintain about you:

1. **Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a confidential communication, you must make a written request to us specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate **reasonable** requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.
2. **Requesting Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your IIHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. **We are not required to agree to your request;** however, if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI, you must make your request in writing.
3. **Inspection and Copies.** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the IIHI that may be used to make a decision about you, including patient medical records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing in order to inspect or obtain a copy of your IIHI. Our practice may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and or copy in certain limited circumstances; however, you may request a review of our denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct the reviews.
4. **Amendment.** You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our office at 4905 Clark Rd., Sarasota, FL, 34233. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the IIHI kept by or for the practice, (c) nor part of the IIHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.

- 5. Accounting of Disclosures.** All of our patients have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures.” This is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our practice has made of your PHI for non-treatment, non-payment or non-operations purposes. Use of your PHI as part of the routine patient care in our practice is not required to be documented. For example, the doctor shares information with the nurse; or the billing department using your information to file your **insurance claim**. In order to obtain an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our office. All request for an “accounting of disclosures” must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within 12 month period is free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists.
- 6. Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** A paper copy of this notice is available at any time upon request.
- 7. Right to File a Complaint.** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated you may file a complaint with our practice or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.
- 8. Right to Provide and Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures.** Our practice will obtain your written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your PHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will not longer use or disclose your PHI for the reasons described in the authorization. Please note, we are required to retain records of your care.

Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please ask to speak with our Compliance Officer.