



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

OUR LEGAL DUTY

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect 4/14/2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted

By applicable law, we reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use and disclose your health information to a dentist, hygienist or other healthcare provider for reasonably necessary or beneficial clinical purposes, including treatment consultations and to facilitate second opinions.

Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to account for, bill for or collect payment for services or coverage we provide to you.

Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your protected health information in order to operate our dental practices and dental benefit companies. Such operational activities include creation and administration of dental records, eligibility records, billing records, peer review, quality improvement, provider credentialing, coordination of benefits, claims administration, dispute resolution, and risk management.

Your Authorization: In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may authorize us to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

To Your Family and Friends: We may disclose health information about you to your family members or friends if we obtain your verbal agreement to do so or if we give you an opportunity to object and you do not object. We also may disclose health information to your family or friends if we can infer from the circumstances, based on our reasonable judgment that you would not object, for example when you bring your spouse with you when treatment is discussed. We may use our professional judgment to infer that it is in your best interest to allow another person to pick-up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays or recommend that they take you to your physician or an emergency room. We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, regarding your location, or your general condition. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment, disclosing only health information that is relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare.

Marketing Health-Related Services: We will not use or disclose your health information for sales or marketing communication.

Required by Law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law or Legal process, for example, subpoena, court order, administrative order, warrant, or summons, and pursuant to workers' compensation laws.

Abuse or Neglect: We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

Governmental Officials and Law Enforcement: We may disclose to: governmental officials health information required for lawful investigation, military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel, a correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody of an inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, email or letters) or information about oral health care and related benefits and services.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies, postage and staff time. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. If you request an alternative format that we can practicably provide, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format. If you prefer, we will prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these proposed restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency).

Alternative Communications: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. (Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended.) We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

Electronic Notice: You are entitled to receive this Notice in written form. If you received this Notice on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail), you may request a written form and one will be mailed to you.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices, or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your

Health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request.

We support your right to the privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.