



Morehouse School of Medicine Notice of Privacy Practices

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 WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE?

This notice describes the practices of:

- Any Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) healthcare professional authorized to enter information into your medical record; and support staff authorized to handle your medical information.
- All departments and units of the MSM Research Community.
- All employees, staff and faculty members of the MSM Research Community.

The Research Community's sites and locations will follow the terms of this notice. In addition, these sites and locations may share medical information with each other for treatment, payment or hospital operational purposes described in this notice.

OUR PLEDGE REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION:

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting medical information about you. We create a record of the care and services you receive from us. We need the record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all records of your care generated by us.

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

We are required by law to:

- Protect the privacy of medical information that identifies you;

- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION 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 medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. We may however request that you suspend your access rights while a clinical trial (in which you are a participant) is in progress. Your right to access your protected health information will be reinstated at the conclusion of the clinical trial.

To inspect and copy your medical information, submit a written request to the Administrative Director of the Clinical Research Center. If you request a copy of your medical information, you will be charged a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request.

- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the Administrative Director of the Clinical Research Center. You must also provide a reason that supports your request. 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;
 - Is not a part of the medical information kept by our facility;
 - Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect or 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 disclosures of your protected health information for purposes other than treatment, payment and operations.

To request an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Administrative Director of the Clinical Research Center. Your request should state the time period, which may not be longer than 6 years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list within a 12-month period will be free. For additional list, we may charge you for the costs involved.

- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request restrictions or limitations on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical 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. **We are not required to agree to your request.** If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide necessary emergency care.

To request restrictions, submit your request in writing to the Administrative Director of the Clinical Research Center. The request must state a) what information you want to restrict; b) whether you want to restrict our use, disclosure or both and c) to whom you want the restrictions to apply.

- **Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have a 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.

Requests must be made in writing to the Administrative Director of the Clinical Research Center. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how and where you wish to be contacted.

- **Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this privacy notice. You may request a copy from any member of our staff at any time.

HOW MAY WE USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU?

Except for situations later discussed in this notice we will use and disclose your medical information, only with your written authorization. If you authorize us to use or disclose your medical information, you may revoke your authorization, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for reasons covered in 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 we provided you.

The following categories describe different ways that we may use and disclose medical information without your authorization:

- **For Treatment.** We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment and services. We may disclose your information to doctors, nurses, technicians, residents and medical students, clergy and others who are involved in your care. We may share medical information about you in order to coordinate the different things you need, for example, lab work or x rays. We also disclose medical information about you to others in the community who may be involved in your medical care, such as long-term care facilities.

- **For Payment.** We may use or disclose medical information about you, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. We may also notify your health insurance plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment.

- **For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose your medical information for everyday operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the facility and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. We may disclose your information to doctors, nurses, technicians, residents and medical students, and other clinic personnel for review and learning purposes. For example, we may use medical information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff. We may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when the physician is ready to see you.

- **Business Associates.** There are some services provided to our organization through contracts with business associates. Examples include physician services, radiology, and certain laboratory tests. When these services are contracted, we disclose your medical information to our business associates so that they can perform the job requested of them and bill you or your third party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your medical information.

- **Appointment Reminders.** We may use or disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care at one of our facilities.

- **Treatment Alternatives.** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

- **Health-Related Benefits and Services.** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about health-related benefits, services or medical education classes that may be of interest to you.

- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** We may release medical information about you to a caregiver who may be a friend or family member. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care.

- **Research.** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose your medical information for research purposes. All research projects are subject to approval by our Institutional Review Board. To participate in a given research project, we must obtain your authorization.

- **As Required by Law.** We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law. You will be notified, if required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS.

- **Military.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities.

- **Worker’s Compensation.** We may release your medical information to comply with worker’s compensation laws or similar legally established programs.

- **Public Health Risks.** We may disclose medical information about you for public health activities. We may use and disclose medical information about you to agencies when necessary to prevent serious threat to your health and the safety of the public or another person. These activities generally include the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury, disability;
- To report births and deaths;
- To report child abuse or neglect;
- To report reactions to medications or product defects;
- To enable product recalls ;
- To notify a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease or condition; or
- 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 when required by law.

- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose your medical 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 medical information about you in response to a court order or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute.

- **Law Enforcement.** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process;
 - To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
 - About a victim of crime, if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person’s agreement;
 - About a death we may believe to be the result of criminal conduct;
 - About criminal conduct at the facility;
 - 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 and Medical Examiners.** We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or to determine the cause of death.

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 medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice throughout the facility. The notice will contain on the first page, the effective date.

COMPLAINTS.

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may call our Compliance Line (1-888-756-1364) or submit your complaint in writing to our Compliance Office, 22 Piedmont Ave, Room 125, Atlanta, Georgia 30303.

If we cannot resolve your concern, you also have the right to file a written complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Region IV, Atlanta Federal Center, Forsyth Street, SW., Suite 5B95, Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909.

The quality of your care will not be jeopardized nor will you be penalized for filing a complaint

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONTACT US.

We welcome the opportunity to answer additional questions you may have about this notice. You may call us at (404) 756-5787 or write to us at:

Morehouse School of Medicine
720 Westview Drive, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30310-1495

Attn: Administrative Director, Clinical Research Center