

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.

We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of your medical information, and are required by law to do so. This notice describes how we may use your medical information within the Clinic and how we may disclose it to others outside the Clinic. This notice also describes the rights you have concerning your own medical information. Please review it carefully and let us know if you have questions.

HOW WILL WE USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION?

Treatment: We may use your medical information to provide you with medical services and supplies. We may also disclose your medical information to others who need that information to treat you, such as other doctors, physician assistants, nurses, medical and nursing students, technicians, therapists, emergency service and medical transportation providers, medical equipment providers, and others involved in your care.

We also may use and disclose your medical information to contact you to remind you of an upcoming appointment, to inform you about possible treatment options or alternatives, or to tell you about health-related services available to you.

Family Members and Others Involved in Your Care: We will only disclose your medical information to a family member or friend who is involved in your medical care, or to someone who helps to pay for your care with your permission.

Payment: We may use and disclose your medical information to get paid for the medical services and supplies we provide to you. For example, your health plan or health insurance company may ask to see parts of your medical record before they will pay us for your treatment.

Research: We may use or disclose your medical information for research projects, such as studying the effectiveness of a treatment you received. These research projects must go through a special process that protects the confidentiality of your medical information.

Required by Law: Federal, state, or local laws sometimes require us to disclose patients' medical information.

Public Health: We also may report certain medical information for public health purposes. We also may need to report patient problems with medications or medical products to the FDA, or may notify patients of recalls of products they are using.

Public Safety: We may disclose medical information for public safety purposes in limited circumstances. We may disclose medical information to law enforcement officials in response to a search warrant or a grand jury subpoena. We also may disclose medical information to assist law enforcement officials in identifying or locating a person, to prosecute a crime of violence, to report deaths that may have resulted from criminal conduct, and to report criminal conduct at the Clinic. We also may disclose your medical information to law enforcement officials and others to prevent a serious threat to health or safety.

Health Oversight Activities: We may disclose medical information to a government agency, such as the State Department of Health, the federal agencies that oversee Medicare, the Board of Medical Examiners or the Board of Nursing. These agencies need medical information to monitor the Clinic's compliance with state and federal laws.

Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors: We may disclose medical information concerning deceased patients to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors to assist them in carrying out their duties.

Organ and Tissue Donation: We may disclose medical information to organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue donation or transplantation.

Military, Veterans, National Security and Other Government Purposes: If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release your medical information as required by military command authorities or to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Clinic may also disclose medical information to federal officials for intelligence and national security purposes, or for presidential Protective Services.

Judicial Proceedings: The Clinic may disclose medical information if the Clinic is ordered to do so by a court or if the Clinic receives a subpoena or a search warrant. You will receive advance notice about this disclosure in most situations so that you will have a chance to object to sharing your medical information.

Information with Additional Protection: Certain types of medical information have additional protection under state or federal law. For instance, medical information about communicable disease and HIV/AIDS, and evaluation and treatment for a serious mental illness is treated differently than other types of medical information. For those types of information, the Clinic is required to get your permission before disclosing that information to others in many circumstances.

Other Uses and Disclosures: If the Clinic wishes to use or disclose your medical information for a purpose that is not discussed in this Notice, the Clinic will seek your permission. If you give your permission to the Clinic, you may take back that permission any time, unless we have already relied on your permission to use or disclose the information. If you ever would like to revoke your permission, please notify the Privacy Official in writing.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

Right to Request Your Medical Information: You have the right to look at your own medical information and to get a copy of that information. (The law requires us to keep the original record.) This includes your medical record, your billing record, and other records we use to make decisions about your care. To request your medical information, write to the Privacy Official. If you request a copy of your information, we will charge you for our costs to copy the information. We will tell you in advance what this copying will cost. You can look at your record at no cost.

Right to Request Amendment of Medical Information You Believe Is Erroneous or Incomplete: If you examine your medical information and believe that some of the information is wrong or incomplete, you may ask us to amend your record. To ask us to amend your medical information, write to the Privacy Official.

Right to Get a List of Certain Disclosures of Your Medical Information: You have the right to request a list of many of the disclosures we make of your medical information. If you would like to receive such a list, please write to us. We will provide the first list to you free, but we may charge you for any additional lists you request during the same year. We will tell you in advance what this list will cost.

Right to Request Restrictions on How the Clinic Will Use or Disclose Your Medical Information for Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations: You have the right to request us not to make uses or disclosures of your medical information to treat you, to seek payment for care, or to operate the Clinic. We are not required to agree to your request, but if we do agree, we will comply with that agreement. If you want to request a restriction, write to us and describe your request in detail.

Right to Request Confidential Communications: You have the right to ask us to communicate with you in a way that you feel is more confidential. For example, you can ask us not to call your home, but to communicate only by mail. To do this, write to us.

Right to a Paper Copy: If you have received this notice electronically, you have the right to a paper copy at any time. You may download a paper copy of the notice from our Web site, at surgoncsouthtexas.com, or you may obtain a paper copy from us.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

From time to time, we may change our practices concerning how we use or disclose patient medical information, or how we will implement patient rights concerning their information. We reserve the right to change this Notice and to make the provisions in our new Notice effective for all medical information we maintain. If we change these practices, we will publish a revised Notice of Privacy Practices. You can get a copy of our current notice of Privacy Practices at any time by contacting us.

DO YOU HAVE PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS?

Please tell us about any problems or concerns you have with your privacy rights. Please contact us at (210) 946-1400.

If for some reason we cannot resolve your concern, you may also file a complaint (in writing) with the federal government at the OCR/DHHS regional office.

We will not penalize you or retaliate against you in any way for filing a complaint with the federal government.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

The Clinic is required by law to give you this Notice and to follow the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect. If you have any questions about this Notice, or have further questions about how the Clinic may use and disclose your medical information, please contact us.