

# HIPPA HAPPENINGS

This notice describes how your health information may be used and how you can gain access to this information. Please review it carefully.

## ***Our Promise To You Our Valued Patient.....***

This is not meant to alarm you. Quite the opposite we want to assure you that we take the new Federal [HIPPA-Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act] laws seriously. These laws were written to protect the confidentiality of your health information. We trust you will never delay treatment in our offices because of fear that your personal health information might be unnecessarily disclosed to others outside our office.

## **Why A Privacy Policy Now?**

The most significant variable that has motivated the Federal Government to legally enforce the privacy of health information is the rapid evolution of the use of electronic technology in the administration of healthcare business. The government has appropriately sought to standardize and protect the electronic exchange of your health information. This has challenged us to review not only how your information is used within our computers but also with the Internet, phones, fax machines and any device used to copy or transfer that data. We want to advise you that we have developed policies and procedures for our practice to assure that your personal or health information will be shared only as required and only for the purpose of administering your case. Our office is subject to State and Federal laws regarding the confidentiality of your health information and we will assure adherence to those laws and we want you to understand our procedures and your rights as a valued patient. Your health information will be communicated only for the purpose of obtaining payment for services and conducting healthcare business. Be assured that without your written permission, your health information will not be used for any other purpose.

## ***How Your Health Information May Be Used To Provide Treatment***

Within our office, your health information will be used to provide you the best care and services possible. This may include administrative and clinical procedures designed to optimize scheduling and coordination between you and all office personnel. In addition, we may share this information with referring physicians, clinical pathology laboratories or other health professionals providing you treatment.

## ***To Obtain Payment***

Your health information may be included with an invoice for the purpose of collecting payment for services provided to you in this office. We may do this with insurance forms filed for you by mail or electronically. We will make all effort to work with companies with a similar commitment to the security of your health information.

## ***To Conduct Healthcare Operations***

Your health information may be used during performance evaluations of our staff. Some of our best teaching opportunities use clinical situations experienced by patients receiving care in our office. As a result, your health information may be included in the training programs for students, interns, associates, as well as business and clinical employees. It is also possible that your health information will be disclosed during audits by insurance companies or government appointed agencies as part of their quality assurance and compliance reviews. Your health information may be reviewed during the routine process of certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

## ***In Patient Reminders***

Because we believe regular care is very important to your general health, we will remind you of a scheduled appointment or that it is time for you to contact us and make an appointment. Additionally, we may contact you to follow up on your care and inform you of treatment options or services that may be of interest to you or members of your family. These communications are an important part of our philosophy of partnering with our

patients to be sure they receive the best care chiropractic can provide. They may include postcards, newsletters, flyers, telephone or electronic reminders such as e-mail [unless you tell us in writing that you prefer not to receive reminders.]

### ***Public Health and National Security***

We may be required to disclose to Federal officials or military authorities health information necessary to complete an investigation related to public health and or national security.

### ***For Law Enforcement***

As permitted or required by State or Federal law, we may disclose your health information to a proper authorities for the purpose of law enforcement including under certain circumstances, if you are a victim of a crime or in order to report a suspected crime.

### ***Family, Friends and Caregivers***

We may share your health information with those you tell us will be assisting you with your home hygiene, care, treatment or payment. We will be certain to obtain your permission prior to sharing your information. In the event of an emergency, where you are unable to tell us what you want, we will use our very best judgment when sharing your health information with anyone participating in your care.

### ***Medical Research***

Advancing healthcare knowledge often involves learning from the careful study of health histories or prior patients. Formal review and study of health histories as a part of research study will happen only under the ethical guidance, requirements, and approval of an Institutional Review Board.

## **Authorization to Use or Disclose Health Information**

Other than is stated above or where Federal, State or Local law requires us, we will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. *You may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.*

### ***Patient Rights***

This law is careful to describe that you have the following rights related to your health information. Be assured that our office will make every effort to honor reasonable restriction from our patients. Confidential Communications *You have the right* to request that we communicate with you in a specific way. You may request that we only communicate your health information privately with or without other family members present or through sealed mail communications. We will make all reasonable effort to honor your request.

### ***Inspect and Copy Your Health Information***

*You have the right* to read, review and copy your health information, including your complete chart, x-rays and billing records. If you would like a copy of your health information, please let us know. We may need to charge you a reasonable fee to duplicate and assemble your copy.

### ***Amend Your Health Information***

*You have the right* to ask us to update or modify your records if you believe your health information is incorrect or incomplete. We will be happy to accommodate you as long as our office maintains this information. In order to standardize our process, please provide us with your request in writing and describe as completely as possible your reason for the request. Your request may be denied if the health information record in question was not created by our office, is not part of our records, or if the records containing your health information have been requested sealed and or delivered to any authority for review.

### ***Documentation of Health Information***

*You have the right* to request from us a description of how and where your health information was used by our office for any reason other than for treatment or payment, or healthcare operations. Our documentation procedures will enable us to provide information on your health information usage from April 14, 2003 and forward. Please let us know in writing the time period for which you are interested. We will greatly appreciate you limiting your request to no more than six years at a time. We may need to charge you a reasonable fee for your request.

### ***Request a Paper Copy of this Notice***

*You have the right* to request and obtain a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices directly from our office at any time. Just let us know of your request. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide to you and your representative this Notice of our Privacy Practices. We are required to practice the policies and procedures described in this notice but we do reserve the right to change the terms of our notice. Patients would be notified of any such changes. *You have the right* to express concerns or complaints to us or the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been compromised. We encourage you to express in writing, any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your health information.

## **HIPAA Information and Consent Form**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA] provides safeguards to protect your privacy. Implementation of HIPAA requirements officially began on April 14, 2003. Many of the policies have been *our* practice for years. This form is a “friendly” version. A more complete text is posted in the office. What this is all about: Specifically, there are rules and restrictions on who may see or be notified of your Protected Health Information [PHI]. These restrictions do not include the normal interchange of information necessary to provide you with office services. HIPAA provides certain rights and protections to you as the patient. We balance these needs with our goal of providing you with quality professional service and care. Additional information is available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)  
We have adopted the following policies:

1. Patient information will be kept confidential except as is necessary to provide services or to ensure that all administrative matters related to your care are handled appropriately. This specifically includes the sharing of information with other healthcare providers, laboratories, health insurance payers as is necessary and appropriate for your care. Patient files may be stored in open file racks and will not contain any coding which identifies a patient's condition or information which is not already a matter of public record. The normal course of providing care means that such records may be left, at least temporarily, in administrative areas such as the front office, examination room, etc. Those records will not be available to persons other than office staff. You agree to the normal procedures utilized within the office for the handling of charts, patient records, PHI and other documents or information.
2. It is the policy of this office to remind patients of their appointments. We may do this by telephone, e-mail, U.S mail, or by any means convenient for the practice and/or as requested by you. We may send you other communications informing you of changes to office policy and new technology that you might find valuable or informative.
3. The practice utilizes a number of vendors in the conduct of business. These vendors may have access to PHI but must agree to abide by the confidentiality rules of HIPAA.
4. You understand and agree to inspections of the office and review of documents which may include PHI by government agencies or insurance payers in normal performance of their duties.
5. You agree to bring any concerns or complaints regarding privacy to the attention of the office manger or the doctor.
6. Your confidential information will not be used for the purposes of marketing or advertising of products, goods or services.
7. We agree to provide patients with access to their records in accordance with state and federal laws.
8. We may change, add, delete or modify any of these provisions to better serve the needs of the both the practice and the patient.
9. You have the right to request restrictions in the use of your protected health information and to request change in certain policies used within the office concerning your PHI. However, we are not obligated to alter internal policies to conform to your request.