

Asheville Internal Medicine Notice of Privacy Practices

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEALTH RECORD/INFORMATION: Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a basis for planning your care and treatment, means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care, legal document describing the care you received, means by which you or a third-party can verify that services billed were actually provided, a source of data for medical research, a source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation, a source of data for facility planning and marketing, and a tool with which we can access and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve. Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION RIGHTS: Although your health record is the physical property of the healthcare practitioner or facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the right to request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information. This includes the right to obtain a paper copy of the notice of information practices upon request, inspect, and obtain a copy of your health record. It includes the right to obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information, request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations, revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES: This organization is required to maintain the privacy of your health information, provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you, abide by the terms of this notice, notify you if we are unable to agree to requested restriction, accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you've supplied us. We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorizations, except as described in this notice.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT A PROBLEM: If you have questions and would like to have additional information, you may contact us at 828-253-4851. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

EXAMPLES OF DISCLOSURES FOR TREATMENT, PAYMENT AND HEALTH OPERATIONS:

We will use your health information for treatment. For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that will work best for you. Your physician will document in your record his or her expectations of the members of your healthcare team. Members of your healthcare team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, the physician will know how you are responding to treatment.

We will use your health information for payment. For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

We will use your health information for regular health operations. For example: Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and service we provide.

Business associates: There are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. Examples include physician services in the emergency department and radiology, certain laboratory tests, our billing company (Solor), and our ACO (Aledade Inc). When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for the services rendered. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

Notification: We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, your location, and general condition.

Communication with family: Health professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in our care or payment related to your care.

Confirming Appointments: All appointments will be confirmed by telephone or text message. If unable to reach you, we will leave a message on an answering machine or with a person as to when the appointment is and with whom. If you do not want a message left on a machine or with a person please notify our office as to how you would like your appointment confirmed (253-4851).

Research: We may disclose information to researchers when an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal, and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information has approved their research.

Funeral Directors: We may disclose health information to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to carry out their duties.

Organ procurement organizations: Consistent with applicable law, we may disclose health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of organs for the purpose of tissue donation and transplant.

Marketing: We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA): We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, product and product defects, or post marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement.

Workers compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public Health: As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

Correctional Institution: Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents there of health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.

Law enforcement: We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena. Federal law makes provision for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a workforce member or business associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one of more patients, workers or public.

Cell phone usage: As you may know, cell phones are not private and conversations can be overheard. Please use your judgment when calling in to discuss personal health information with a cellular phone.

EFFECTIVE DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2003.

Revised 11/20/2022.