

# Notice of Privacy Practices

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**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.**

**If you have any questions about this Notice please contact our Privacy Contact who is Dr. Ari Taitz**

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your PHI. Protected Health Information is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health condition and related health care services.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP). We may change the terms of our notice at any time. The new notice will be effective for all PHI that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised NPP by calling the office and requesting that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or asking for one at the time of your next appointment.

## **1. Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information**

Your PHI may be used and disclosed by your provider, our office staff, and others outside of our office who are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you. Your PHI may also be used and disclosed to pay your health care bills and to support the operation of our practices.

Following are examples of the types of uses and disclosures of your protected health care information that our office is permitted to make. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive, but to describe the types of uses and disclosures that may be made.

**Treatment:** We will use and disclose your PHI to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party that has already obtained your permission to have access to your PHI. For example, we would disclose your PHI, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you. We will also disclose PHI to other providers who may be treating you when we have the necessary permission from you to disclose your PHI. For example, your protected health information may be provided to a provider from whom, or to whom, you have been referred to ensure that the provider has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you. Communications may be in oral, written, or electronic form.

In addition, we may disclose your PHI from time-to-time to another physician or health care provider (e.g., an audiologist, specialist, or laboratory) who, at the request of your provider, becomes involved in your care by providing assistance with your health care diagnosis or treatment.

**Payment:** Your PHI will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. This may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it

approves or pays for the health care services we recommend for you such as: making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant PHI be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.

**Healthcare Operations:** We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order to support the business activities of our practices. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of students, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities.

For example, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you may be asked to sign your name. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when ready to see you. We may use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment, to schedule follow-up visits or surgery, to inform you about the status of your hearing aid(s), and other similar business operations. We may leave messages on your voice mail, answering machine, or other recording device. Also, we may send you reminders of your appointment(s) by e-mail or regular mail.

We will share your PHI with third party “business associates” that perform various activities (e.g., billing, transcription services, etc.) for the practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your Protected Health Information, we will have a written contract that contains terms that will protect the privacy of your PHI.

Our providers participate in the Lake Forest Managed Care Association (LFMCA) under the organized health care arrangement (OHCA). Protected Health Information may be used and disclosed for the healthcare operations of the OHCA. Each covered entity shall only be liable for its own violations of applicable law.

We may use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. For example, your name and address may be used to send you a newsletter or e-mail about our practice and the services we offer. We may also send you information about hearing aid products, assistive listening devices, or services that we believe may be beneficial to you. You may contact our Privacy Contact to request that these materials not be sent to you.

### **Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information Based upon Your Written Authorization**

Other uses and disclosures of your PHI will be made only with your written authorization unless otherwise permitted or required by law, as described below. You may revoke this authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your provider or the provider’s practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made With Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

We may use and disclose your PHI in the following instances. You have the opportunity to agree or object to the use or disclosure of all or part of your PHI. If you are not present or able to agree or object to the use or disclosure of the PHI, then your provider may, using professional judgment, determine whether the disclosure is in your best interest. In this case, only the PHI that is relevant to your health care will be disclosed.

**Others Involved in Your Healthcare:** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend, or any other person you identify, your PHI that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may use or disclose PHI to notify, or assist in notifying, a family member, personal representative, or any other person who is responsible for your care of your location, general condition, or death. Finally, we may use or disclose your PHI to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts and to coordinate uses and disclosures to family or other individuals involved in your health care.

**Emergencies:** We may use or disclose your PHI in an emergency treatment situation, using professional judgment.

### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made Without Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

We may use or disclose your PHI in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include:

**Required By Law:** We may use or disclose your PHI to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

**Public Health:** We may disclose your PHI for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information. The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury, or disability. We may also disclose your PHI, if directed by the public health authority, to a foreign government agency that is collaborating with the public health authority.

**Communicable Diseases:** We may disclose your PHI, if authorized by law, to 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.

**Health Oversight:** We may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs, and civil rights laws.

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your PHI to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose your PHI if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information. In this case, the disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.

**Food and Drug Administration:** We may disclose your PHI to a person or company required by the Food and Drug Administration to report adverse events, product defects or problems, biologic product deviations, and track products; to enable product recalls; to make repairs or replacements, or to conduct post-marketing surveillance, as required.

**Legal Proceedings:** We may disclose PHI in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized) in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process.

**Law Enforcement:** We may also disclose PHI, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes. These law enforcement purposes include (1) legal processes and otherwise required by law, (2) limited information requests for identification and location purposes, (3) pertaining to victims of a crime, (4) suspicion that death has occurred as a result of criminal conduct, (5) in the event that a crime occurs on the premises of the practice, and (6) medical emergency (not on the Practice's premises) and it is likely that a crime has occurred.

**Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation:** We may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, determining cause of death, or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law. We may also disclose PHI to a funeral director, as authorized by law, in order to permit the funeral director to carry out his/her duties. We may disclose such information in reasonable anticipation of death. Protected Health Information may be used and disclosed for cadaveric organ, eye, or tissue donation purposes.

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

**Criminal Activity:** Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, we may disclose your PHI if we believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. We may also disclose PHI if it is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.

**Military Activity and National Security:** When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose PHI of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel (1) for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities; (2) for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs of your eligibility for benefits, or (3) to foreign military authority if you are a member of that foreign military services. We may also disclose your PHI to authorized federal officials for conducting national security and intelligence activities, including for the provision of protective services to the President or others legally authorized.

**Workers' Compensation:** Your PHI may be disclosed by us as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally-established programs.

**Inmates:** We may use or disclose your PHI if you are an inmate of a correctional facility and your physician created or received your PHI in the course of providing care to you.

**Required Uses and Disclosures:** Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500 et. seq.

## **2. Your Rights**

Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your PHI and a brief description of how you may exercise these rights.

**You have the right to inspect and copy your Protected Health Information.** This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of PHI about you that is contained in a designated record set for as long as we maintain the PHI. A "designated record set" contains medical and billing records and any other records that your provider and the practices use for making decisions about you.

Charges for records are limited to the amounts allowed under Illinois law at the prevailing rate

Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records; psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and PHI that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information. Depending on the circumstances, a decision to deny access may be reviewable. In some circumstances, you may have a right to have this decision reviewed. Please contact our Privacy Contact, Dr. Ari Taitz, if you have questions about access to your medical record.

**You have the right to request a restriction of your Protected Health Information.** This means you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your PHI not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.

Your provider is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If your provider believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your PHI, your Protected Health Information will not be restricted. If your provider does agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your PHI in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. With this in mind, please discuss any restriction you wish to request with your provider. You may request a restriction by completing a **Restriction of Protected Health Information Form**.

**You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location.** We will accommodate reasonable requests. We may also condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact. We will not request an explanation from you as to the basis for the request. Please make this request in writing to our Privacy Contact.

**You may have the right to have your provider amend your Protected Health Information.** This means you may request an amendment of PHI about you in a designated record set for as long as we maintain this information. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal. Please contact our Privacy Contact to determine if you have questions about amending your medical record.

**You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your Protected Health Information.** This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. It excludes disclosures we may have made to you, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. You have the right to receive specific information regarding these disclosures that occurred after April 14, 2003. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations.

**You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us,** upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice electronically.

### **3. Complaints**

You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our privacy contact of your complaint. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

You may contact our Privacy Contact, Dr. Ari Taitz at (847) 433-5555 for further information about the complaint process.

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