



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.
THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

OUR LEGAL DUTY

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information (PHI), and to notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured PHI. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law, and to make new Notice provisions effective for all PHI that we maintain. When we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and post the new Notice clearly and prominently at our practice location, and we will provide copies of the new Notice upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

HOW WE MAY SEND HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Your PHI includes information relating to your mental and physical health and to the health care provided to you, including materials like your dental records, dental x-rays, and payment records.

Sometimes our dental practice needs to send PHI to the patient or to someone else, such as a specialist. There are various ways to send PHI, including email and other electronic means. If it is necessary for our dental practice to transmit your PHI via email, we will use an encrypted method for your protection.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

We may use and disclose your health information for different purposes, including treatment, payment, and healthcare operations.

Treatment. We may use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.

Payment. Payment activities include billing, collections, claims management, and determinations of eligibility and coverage to obtain payment from you, an insurance company, or another third party. For example, we may send claims to your dental health plan containing certain health information.

Healthcare Operations. We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

Your Authorization. In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

To Your Family and Friends. We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

Persons Involved In Care. We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We will also use our professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information.

Marketing Health-Related Services. We will not use your health information for marketing communications without your written authorization.

Disaster Relief. We may use or disclose your health information to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Required by Law. We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

Abuse or Neglect. We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

National Security. We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody of protected health information of inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

Secretary of HHS. We will disclose your health information to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when required to investigate or determine compliance with HIPAA.

Worker's Compensation. We may disclose your PHI to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Law Enforcement. We may disclose your PHI for law enforcement purposes as permitted by HIPAA, as required by law, or in response to a subpoena or court order.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process instituted by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made, either by the requesting party or us, to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors. We may release your PHI to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also disclose PHI to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to enable them to carry out their duties.

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose your PHI to an oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include audits, investigations, inspections, and credentialing, as necessary for licensure and for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

Appointment Reminders. We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters).

PATIENT RIGHTS

Access. You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. (You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. If you request copies, we will charge a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time to locate and copy your health information, and postage if you want the copies mailed to you. If you request an alternative format, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format. If you prefer, we will prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.)

Disclosure Accounting. You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Right to Request a Restriction. You have the right to request additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your PHI by submitting a written request. Your written request must include what information you want to limit, whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both, and to whom you want the limits to apply. We are not required to agree to your request except in the case where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you, or a person on your behalf (other than the health plan), has paid our practice in full.

Alternative Communication. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation of how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. However, if we are unable to contact you using the ways or locations you have requested we may contact you using the information we have.

Amendment. You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request under certain circumstances. If we agree to your request, we will amend your record(s) and notify you of such. If we deny your request for an amendment, we will provide you with a written explanation of why we denied it and explain your rights.

Right to Notification of a Breach. You will receive notifications of breaches of your unsecured protected health information as required by law.

Electronic Notice. You may receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail).

Policy Regarding Use of Social Security Numbers. We are required to obtain patient's social security numbers in order to submit dental insurance claims. It is also our policy to obtain all patients' social security numbers, as our dental software provides a space for entering social security numbers for patients without dental insurance as well. The purpose of this is to flag duplicate social security numbers in order to prevent errors in registering new patients. In the case of marriage, divorce, adoption or inactive accounts, if a duplicate social security number is entered, an error message will appear.

Dental Health Professionals will do everything possible to safeguard patient's social security numbers. We will not publicly display any patient's social security number. We will never use a social security number or any part thereof for an account number. We will not mail any documents that contain a patient's social security number, where it is visible from outside of the envelope or package. We will not e-mail any documents that contain a patient's social security number.

Patient social security numbers will be used to submit a dental claim to an insurance company on behalf of the patient or a member of the patient's immediate family, unless the insurance company has replaced the social security number with an alternate contract number. All social security numbers submitted electronically are done so securely. Patient social security numbers may also be used when necessary to pursue a legal right of the practice such as an audit, collection, debt, claim, or receivable.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request.

We support your right to the privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

ATTN: HIPAA COORDINATOR

7800 U.S. 131 SOUTH

P.O. BOX 889

CADILLAC, MI 49601

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NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Dental Health Professionals complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Dental Health Professionals does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

For languages other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Purpose: This form is used to obtain acknowledgement of receipt of our Notice of Privacy Practices or to document our good faith effort to obtain that acknowledgement.

****You May Refuse to Sign This Acknowledgement****

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of Dental Health Professional's Notice of Privacy Practices.

{Please Print Name}

{Signature}

{Date}

Please list the names of your family members or any other person that has your permission to have access to your personal health and account information:

Name

Relationship

Please return this form to:

Dental Health Professionals, P.O. Box 889, Cadillac, MI 49601

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