

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

Texas Occupational Medicine Institute
9225 Katy Freeway, Suite 404
Houston, Texas 77024-1531

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.

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how Texas Occupational Medicine Institute may use and disclose your protected health information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for your purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information. "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 or condition and related health care services. This notice was published and becomes effective on/or before August 1, 2009.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by your physician, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you, to pay your health care bills, to support the operation of the physician's practice, and any other use required by law. Except for the following purposes, we will use and disclose your protected health information only with your written permission. You may revoke such permission at any time by writing to:

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Treatment

We will use and disclose your protected health information 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. For example, we would disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you. For example, your protected health information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you.

Payment

Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant protected health information be disclosed to your health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.

Healthcare Operations

We may use or disclose, as needed, your protected health information in order to support the business activities of your physician's practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of medical students, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we may disclose your protected health information to medical school students that see patients at our office. In addition, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your physician is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information as necessary to contact you to remind you or your appointment.

We may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include: as required by law, public health issues as required by law, communicable diseases, health oversight, abuse or neglect, Food and Drug Administration requirements, legal proceedings, law enforcement, coroners, funeral directors, and organ donation, research, criminal activity, military activity and national security, Worker's Compensation, inmates, 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.

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures will be made only with your consent, authorization or opportunity to object unless required by law.

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You may revoke this authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your protected health information. Such requests should be in writing and addressed to:

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You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information

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 protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information.

You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information

This means that you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in the Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. Your physician is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If the physician believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. You then have the right to use another Healthcare Professional.

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. 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 alternatively, i.e. electronically.

You have the right to have your physician amend your protected health information. 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.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information.

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.**

Changes to this notice

We may change this notice and make it effective for medical information we already have about you, as well as new information. The current notice will be posted and available at all times. You have a right to request a paper copy of the current notice at any visit or by written request.

Texas Occupational Medicine Institute is required by law to maintain the privacy of and provide individuals with this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information. If you have any objections to this form, please ask to speak with our HIPAA Compliance Officer in person or by phone at 713-932-8664 (TOMI).