

This Joint Notice of Privacy Practices (“Notice”) explains how Hackensack Meridian Health (collectively “HMH”) uses information about you and when HMH can share that information with others. It also informs you about your rights as a valued customer.

This Notice is being provided to you on behalf of HMH, which includes our hospitals (see below listing), Meridian Home Care Services, Inc., Meridian Nursing and Rehabilitation, Inc., and the independent members and independent health professional affiliates of the medical staffs of HMH (collectively with “HMH” referred to herein as “us”, “we” or “our”) with respect to services provided by HMH. Please note that the independent members and independent health professional affiliates of the medical staffs are neither employees nor agents of HMH, but are joined under this Notice for the convenience of explaining to you your rights relating to the privacy of your protected health information (“PHI”).

HMH respects the privacy and confidentiality of your PHI. The federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”), sets rules about who can look at and receive your health information. This law, and applicable state law, gives you rights over your health information, including the right to get a copy of your health information, make sure it is correct, and know who has seen it.

Please review this Notice carefully.

ORGANIZED HEALTH CARE ARRANGEMENT (“OHCA”)

An Organized Health Care Arrangement (“OHCA”) is an arrangement or relationship that allows two or more HIPAA covered entities to use and disclose PHI. A HIPAA covered entity is any organization or corporation that directly handles PHI or Personal Health Records (PHR). The most common examples of covered entities include hospitals, doctors’ offices and health insurance providers. The entities participating in the HMH OHCA are covered entities under HIPAA and will share PHI with each other, as necessary to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations relating to the OHCA.

The entities participating in the HMH OHCA agree to abide by the terms of this Notice with respect to PHI created or received by the entity as part of its participation in the OHCA. The entities, which comprise the HMH OHCA, are in numerous locations throughout the greater New Jersey area. This Notice applies to all of these sites. For a complete list of locations, please refer to last page of this Notice.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HEALTH RECORD/INFORMATION

Each time you visit or interact with a hospital, physician, or other health care 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 payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- A tool in educating health professionals
- 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
- A tool with which we can assess 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 health care 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, however, HMH is not required to agree to such a request if the facts do not warrant it.
- Obtain a paper copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices upon request
- Inspect and obtain a paper or electronic copy of your health record usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.
- Request an amendment (correction) to your health record if you believe information is incorrect or incomplete
- Obtain a list (an accounting of disclosures) of the times we have shared your health information for six years prior to the date you asked, who we shared it with, and why. Exceptions: treatment, payment and health care operations.
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. For example, you may request that we send correspondence to a post office box rather than your home address.
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken. If you pay for a service out-of-pocket in full, you can request that information not be shared for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer.

You will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that you have received this Notice. We are required by law to make a good faith effort to provide you with the Notice and to obtain your acknowledgment. Your refusal to accept the Notice or to sign the acknowledgment will in no way affect your care or treatment in our facility.

HACKENSACK MERIDIAN HEALTH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain the privacy and security 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 a requested restriction
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative location
- Notify you if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all PHI we maintain. Should our information practices change, revisions will be available at www.HackensackMeridianHealth.org and you may request a revised copy from the Office of Privacy, the Office of Patient Experience or any patient registration areas. The HMH Chief Compliance Officer is responsible for maintaining the Notice of Privacy Practices and for archiving previous versions of the Notice.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this Notice and for treatment, payment, or health care operations.

Note: HIV-related information, genetic information, alcohol and/or substance abuse records, mental health records or other specially protected health information may have additional confidentiality protections under applicable State and Federal law. We will obtain your specific authorization before using or disclosing these types of information where we are required to do so by such applicable State and Federal laws. However, we may be permitted to use and disclose such information to our physicians to provide you with treatment.

EXAMPLES OF PERMITTED DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TREATMENT, PAYMENT AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS

We will use your health care information for **Treatment**.

For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your health care team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment. Members of your health care team will record the actions they took, their observations, and their assessments. In that way, your health care team will know how you are responding to treatment. We will also provide your physician or a subsequent health care provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you once you are discharged from this facility.

We will use your health care information for **Payment**.

For example: A bill will be sent to you and/or a third-party payer (insurance company). The information on the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used. We may provide copies of the applicable portions of your medical record to your insurance company in order to validate your claim.

We will use your health care information for regular **Health Care Operations**.

For example: We may use and disclose PHI for activities that HMH engages in to operate its business, such as quality assurance, case management, receiving and responding to patient comments and complaints, physician reviews, compliance programs, audits, business planning, development and the management of health outcomes, including the identification of opportunities to improve the health of individuals or groups of individuals. In addition, we may remove information that identifies you from your patient information so that others can use the de-identified information to study health care and health care delivery and implement quality improvement initiatives without learning who you are.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

HMH, along with other health care providers in New Jersey participate in Jersey Health Connect, a health information exchange (“HIE”) which allows patient information to be shared electronically through a secured network that is accessible to the providers treating you. We may disclose your PHI to the HIE unless you opt out of participating. To opt out, please contact Jersey Health Connect at (855) 624-6542.

PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD

A personal health record (PHR) is an electronic application used by patients to maintain and manage their health information in a private, secure, and confidential environment. PHRs:

- Are managed by patients
- Can include information from a variety of sources, including health care providers and patients themselves
- Can help patients securely and confidentially store and monitor health information, such as diet plans or data from home monitoring systems, as well as patient contact information, diagnosis lists, medication lists, allergy lists, immunization histories, and much more
- Are separate from, and do not replace, the legal record of any health care provider
- Are distinct from portals that simply allow patients to view provider information
- or communicate with providers

Note: In addition to the HIE, HMH uses MyChart which allows you to exchange secure electronic messages with your physician or allows you to request medical appointments. Kindly check with your HMH provider to see which PHR applies to you.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

We may disclose your health information to contractors, agents and other associates who need this information to assist us in carrying our business operations. Our contracts with them require that they protect the privacy of your health information in the same manner as we do.

FACILITY DIRECTORY

Unless you notify us that you object, HMH will release your name and location to the general visiting public while you are a patient in a HMH facility. In addition, your religious affiliation will be made available to the visiting clergy.

NOTIFICATION

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

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY

As long as you do not object, your health care provider is permitted to share or discuss your health information with your family, friends, or others to the extent that they are involved in your care or payment for your care. Your provider may ask your permission or may use his or her professional judgment to determine the extent of that involvement. In all cases, your health care provider may discuss only the information that the person involved needs to know about your care or payment for your care.

RESEARCH

We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by HMH.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (“IRB”)

The IRB reviews the research proposals and establishes protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OR CORONERS

We may disclose health information to funeral directors or coroners consistent with applicable law to carry out their duties.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

If you are an organ donor, we may release PHI to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

TELEPHONE CONTACT/APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

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. We may call you after you have been a patient to ask about your clinical condition or to assess the quality of care that you received.

FUNDRAISING

The Hospitals of HMH affiliated Foundations may contact you as part of a fundraising effort. The information used for this purpose will not disclose any health condition, but may include your name, address, phone number, email address, etc. When contacted, you may ask that we stop any future fundraising requests if you so desire.

IMAGES

The hospitals of HMH may record digital or film images of you, in whole or in part, for identification, diagnosis or treatment purposes and for internal purposes such as performance improvement or education. Such images may be used for documenting or planning care, teaching, or research. The medical center will obtain your authorization for any other use your identifiable image that is unrelated to treatment, payment or health care operations.

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 and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker’s compensation or other similar programs established by law.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

We may disclose your PHI to your employer in accordance with applicable law, if we are retained to conduct an evaluation relating to medical surveillance of your workplace or to evaluate whether you have a work-related illness or injury. You will be notified of these disclosures by your employer or HMH as required by applicable law.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

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

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release PHI about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

We may release PHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process;
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- About the victim of a crime under certain limited circumstances;
- About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct;
- About criminal conduct on our premises; and
- To report a crime, the location of the crime or the victims, or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.

Federal law makes provision for your PHI to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a work force 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 or more patients, workers or the public

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT A PROBLEM

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you should immediately contact the Office of Patient Experience with the entity from which you received services or the HMH Privacy Office. You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at (877) 696-6775 or by visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

HACKENSACK MERIDIAN HEALTH HOSPITALS

- HackensackUMC
- Jersey Shore University Medical Center
- Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital
- K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital
- Ocean Medical Center
- Riverview Medical Center
- HackensackUMC Mountainside
- HackensackUMC Palisades
- Raritan Bay Medical Center in Perth Amboy
- Southern Ocean Medical Center
- Bayshore Community Hospital
- Raritan Bay Medical Center in Old Bridge
- HackensackUMC at Pascack Valley