

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**  
**Effective April 14, 2003**  
**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 Practice describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations and for other 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.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We may change the terms of our notice at any time. The new notice will be effective for all protected health information that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised Notice of Privacy Practices by accessing our website, 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.

*Understanding Your Health Record/ Information*

Each time you visit a healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnosis, 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
- tool in educating health professionals
- source of data for medical research
- source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation
- source of data for facility planning and marketing
- 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 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
- obtain a paper or electronic copy of the notice of information practices upon request
- inspect and obtain a copy of your health record
- amend your health record
- obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information. To obtain an accounting of your disclosures you must submit a request to the privacy contact. All requests must state a time period, which may *not* be longer than six (6) years and may *not* include dates before April 14, 2003.
- 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
- request that we not leave messages on your telephone answering machine regarding appointments, billing or payment issues.

*Our Responsibilities*

Our company is required to:

- maintain the privacy of your health information
- provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices regarding the 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 locations.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with our Privacy Contact or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint. You may contact our Privacy Officer, **Joey Ryan** toll free at 1-866-666-7390, or 1-877-247-5566 or by email at [jryan@criticalhs.com](mailto:jryan@criticalhs.com) for further information about the complaint process.

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**  
**(Continued)**

*Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations*

We will use your health information for treatment.

For example: Information obtained by a practitioner or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that you should work best for you. We may provide your physician or a subsequent healthcare provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you.

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, equipment and supplies provided.

We will use your health information for regular health operations.

For example: Members of our 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 collection agencies, clinical consultants and accrediting bodies. 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 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, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

**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 your care or payment related to your care.

**Research:** We may disclose information 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 health information.

**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.

**Fund raising:** We may contact you as part of a fundraising effort.

**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 correction institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof 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 or more patients, workers or the public.

You may also contact the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201, telephone 1-202-619-0257 or Toll Free 1-877-696-6775 if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

This notice was published and becomes effective on April 14, 2003.