

# Occupational Health Group Notice of Privacy Practices

***This Notice describes how information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.***

Occupational Health Group (OHG) shares this Notice with others who participate in an Organized Healthcare Arrangement (OHCA). This includes the University of Alabama in Birmingham students and medical residents, physicians, allied health practitioners, emergency transportation services, Health Group of Alabama, and others in this joint arrangement. This Notice and arrangement establishes a standard for all healthcare professionals in the uses and disclosure of PHI at all OHG facilities.

## Occupational Health Group Has a Legal Duty to Safeguard Your Protected Health Information (PHI)

Protected Health Information (PHI) includes information, such as name, address, etc. that can be used to identify you. It is information about your past, present, or future health condition or payment for healthcare. Occupational Health Group (OHG), offers you this Notice about our privacy practices that explains how, when, and why OHG uses and discloses your PHI. With some exceptions, OHG will not use or disclose any more of your PHI than is necessary to accomplish the intended purpose. OHG is legally required to follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice.

## Understanding Your Health Record and Information

Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other healthcare 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 information or medical record, serves as:

- A basis for planning your care and treatment.
- A means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care.
- A legal document describing the care you received.
- A means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided.
- A tool in educating healthcare professionals.
- A source of data for medical research and/or studies.
- A source of information for public health officials charged with improving and monitoring the health of the nation.

- A source of data for facility planning and marketing.
- A tool to help OHG assess and continually work to improve.

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to:

1. Ensure its accuracy.
2. Better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information.
3. Make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosures to others.

## You Have the Right To:

- Ask that OHG limit how it uses and discloses your PHI, but OHG is not legally required to agree. You may not limit the uses and disclosures that OHG is legally required or allowed to make.
- Choose how OHG sends PHI to you. You may request communication by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- View or receive copies of your PHI at OHG. You must make the request in writing. OHG will respond to you within 30 days after receiving your written request. You will be charged a reasonable fee. OHG may provide you with a summary or explanation of the PHI as long as you agree. In certain situations, OHG may deny your request to access your medical record. You may have the denial reviewed.
- Receive a list of occurrences in which OHG has disclosed your PHI. The list will not include uses or disclosures that you have authorized or those made for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. Also, the list will not include uses and disclosures for emergencies, for national security purposes, or before 04/14/03. The list will include all other disclosures made in the last six (6) years unless you request a shorter time frame. OHG will

provide the first list to you at no charge.

- Correct your PHI if you believe that there is a mistake in your medical record or important information is missing. You must provide the request in writing and OHG will respond within 60 days of receiving your request. OHG may deny your request. Our written denial will state the reason and explain your right to file a written statement of disagreement.
- Obtain a paper copy of this Notice. Contact the OHG Privacy Officer at 256-922-6674 or view the Notice of Privacy Practices at [www.ohgonline.org](http://www.ohgonline.org)

## Occupational Health Group is Required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information.
- Provide you with a Notice about OHG's legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI.
- Comply with the terms of this Notice.
- Notify you if OHG is unable to agree to a request.

*OHG reserves the right to change our privacy practices and to make the new provisions effective for all health information. Should OHG's Notice of Privacy Practices change, OHG will offer you a revised copy at your next visit.*

## How Occupational Health Group May Disclose Your Protected Health Information (PHI)

The following is a summary of ways that OHG may use and disclose health information about you.

- **Treatment.** OHG may disclose your PHI to physicians, nurses, medical students, and other healthcare personnel who provide you with healthcare services or are involved in your care. For

example, if you are being treated for a knee injury, OHG may disclose your PHI to the physical rehabilitation department in order to coordinate your care. OHG will also provide your physician or subsequent healthcare providers with copies of various reports that would assist them in treating you once you are discharged from this facility.

- **Payment.** 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, and supplies used. The information that may be sent could include information relating to psychiatric illness, alcohol or drug abuse, HIV testing, AIDS, or infectious diseases.
- **Healthcare operations.** OHG may use or disclose your PHI for healthcare operations. For example, OHG may use your PHI to evaluate the quality of healthcare services, for process improvement activities, or to evaluate health plan performance. OHG may also provide your PHI to our accountants, attorneys, consultants, health improvement agencies, and others in order to make sure that OHG complies with all laws.
- **Business Associates.** There are some services provided at OHG through business associates that may not be covered entities. For example, OHG may contract with billing services, accounting firms, and healthcare consultants to assist in certain functions. OHG will generally have a formal agreement requiring that patient information be maintained in a manner consistent with OHG policies and procedures.
- **Notification.** OHG may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care.
- **Marketing.** OHG 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.
- **Food & Drug Administration (FDA).** OHG may disclose to the FDA health information related to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, products and product defects, or post marketing

surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacements.

- **Workers' Compensation.** OHG 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, OHG may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability. For example, OHG is required to report abuse/neglect of the elderly and children to all relevant entities.
- **Correctional institution.** Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, OHG may disclose to the institution or agents any health information necessary for your health and/or the health and safety of other individuals.
- **Military.** OHG may disclose Protected Health Information about active or veteran armed forces personnel to commanding officers, as allowed by law.
- **Law enforcement.** OHG may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena and/or court order.
- **Health Plan.** OHG may disclose PHI to the sponsors of your plan for underwriting, premium rating, and other activities related to healthcare claims.

### Reporting Complaints and Privacy Violations

- Federal law makes provisions for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorneys, provided that a workforce member or business associate believes in good faith that OHG has engaged in unlawful conduct or has otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers or the public.
- Other uses and disclosures will be made only with the individual's written authorization. The individual may revoke the authorization.

If you have questions or would like additional information, you may contact the Occupational Health Group Privacy Officer at 256-922-6674.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the OHG Privacy Officer or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

Effective Date 04/14/03  
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*NOTE: The Patient Agreement and Acknowledgement document does not limit release of information to all third party payers, such as the Social Security Administration, Medicaid, Worker's Compensation Carriers, and governmental agencies that may be responsible in whole or in part, for payment in exchange for services rendered by OHG or by physicians.*