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Notice of Privacy Practices

What does the HIPAA Privacy Rule do?

Most health plans and health care providers that are covered by the new Rule must comply with the new requirements by April 14, 2003.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule for the first time creates national standards to protect individuals' medical records and other personal health information.

- It gives patients more control over their health information.
- It sets boundaries on the use and release of health records.
- It establishes appropriate safeguards that health care providers and other must achieve to protect the privacy of health information.
- It holds violators accountable, with civil and criminal penalties that can be imposed if they violate patients' privacy rights.
- And it strikes a balance when public responsibility supports disclosure of some forms of data-for example, to protect public health.

For patients-it means being able to make informed choices when seeking care and reimbursement for care based on how personal health information may be used.

- It enables patients to find out how their information may be used, and about certain disclosures of their information that have been made.
- It generally limits release of information to the minimum reasonably needed for the purpose of the disclosure.
- it generally gives patients the right to examine and obtain a copy of their own health records and request corrections.
- It empowers individuals to control certain uses and disclosures of their health information.

Public Safety: We may disclose medical information for public safety purposes in limited circumstances. We may disclose medical information to law enforcement officials in response to a search warrant or a grand jury subpoena. We also may disclose your medical information to law enforcement officials and others to prevent an imminent threat to health or safety.

Health Oversight Activities: We may disclose medical information to a government agency that oversees Anthropos or its personnel, such as the Washington State Department of Health, the federal agencies that oversee Medicare, the Medical Quality Assurance Commission, or the Nursing Quality Assurance Commission.

Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors: We may disclose medical information concerning deceased patients to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors to assist them in carrying out their duties.

Organ and Tissue Donation: If you are an organ donor, we may disclose medical information to organizations that handle organ, eye, or tissue donation or transplantation.

Judicial Proceedings: Anthropos may disclose medical information if the provider is ordered to do so by a court or if Anthropos receives a valid subpoena or a search warrant. You will receive advance Notice about this disclosure in most situations so that you will have a chance to object to sharing your medical information.

Information with Additional Protection: Certain types of medical information have additional protection under state and federal law. For instance, medical information about **HIV** and sexually transmitted diseases, mental health and alcohol and drug abuse treatment receive special protection. Anthropos is required to get your permission before disclosing that information to others in many circumstances.

Other Uses and Disclosures: If Anthropos wishes to use or disclose your medical information for a purpose that is not discussed in this Notice, Anthropos will seek your permission. If you give your permission to Anthropos, you may take back that permission at any time, unless others or we have already taken substantial action in reliance on your permission to use or disclose the information. If you ever would like to revoke your permission, please notify Anthropos in writing.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

Right to Request Your Medical Information: You have the right to look at your own medical information and to get a copy of that information. (The law requires us to keep the original record.) This includes your medical record, your billing record and other records we use to make decisions about your care. To request your medical information, write to Anthropos or stop by to sign an authorization. If you request a copy of your information, we will charge you for our costs to copy the information. We will tell you in advance what this copying will cost. You can look at your record at no cost.

Right to Request Amendment of Medical Information You Believe is Erroneous or Incomplete: If you examine your medical information and believe that some of the information is wrong or incomplete, you may ask us to amend your record. To ask us to amend your medical information, submit your request in writing to Anthropos.

Right to Get a List of Certain Disclosures of Your Medical Information: You have the right to request a list of certain disclosures we make of your medical information. If you would like to receive such a list, write to Anthropos. We will provide the first list to you for free, but we may charge you for any additional lists to request during the same year. We will tell you in advance what this list will cost.

Right to Request Restrictions on How Anthropos Will Use or Disclose Your medical Information for Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations: You have the right to ask us not to make uses or disclosures of your medical information to treat you, to seek payment for care, or to operate the office. We will grant your request that we not disclose your medical information to a physician who previously treated you. We are not required to agree to other requests for restrictions, but if we do agree, we will comply with that agreement. If you want to request a restriction, submit your request in writing to Anthropos and describe your request in detail.

Right to Request Confidential Communications: You have the right to ask us to communicate with you in a way that you feel is more confidential. For example, you can ask us to not call your home, but to communicate only by mail. To do this, write to Anthropos.

Right to a Paper Copy: If you have received this Notice electronically, you have the right to a paper copy at any time. You may obtain a paper copy of the Notice at Anthropos.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

From time to time, we may change our practices concerning how we use or disclose patient medical information, or how we will implement patient rights concerning their information.

We reserve the right to change this Notice and to make the provisions in our new Notice effective for all medical information we maintain. If we change these practices, we will publish a revised Notice of Privacy Practices.

WHO IS COVERED BY THIS NOTICE?

This Notice of Privacy Practices applies to all of Anthropos personnel; including your particular treatment provider(s), all other providers, staff, volunteers,--collectively, our "workforce". Our workforce may share medical information with each other for treatment, payment or health care operations described in this Notice.

DO YOU HAVE CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS?

Please tell us about any problems or concerns you have with your privacy rights or how Anthropos uses or discloses your medical information. If you have a concern, please feel free to contact us. If for some reason Anthropos cannot resolve your concern, you may also file a complaint with the federal government.

We will not penalize you or retaliate against you in any way for addressing a concern regarding your privacy.