

## **Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information**

The Practice of Critical Care & Pulmonary Consultants, P.C. is required by applicable federal and state laws to maintain the privacy of your health information. Protected health information (PHI) is the information we create and maintain in providing our services to you. Such information may include documentation of your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses and treatment protocols. It also may include billing documents for those services. We are permitted by federal privacy law, the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), to use and disclose your PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations without your written authorization.

### **Examples of Uses of Your Health Information for Treatment Purposes are:**

- Our nurse obtains treatment information about you and records it in a health record.
- During the course of your treatment, the physician determines he will need to consult with a specialist in another area. He will share the information with the specialist and obtain his/her input.
- We may contact you by phone, at your home, if we need to speak to you about a medical condition, or to remind you of medical appointments.
- We will automatically send some or all of your health information to your referring doctor, primary care physician, and other physicians designated as your care providers.

### **Example of a Use of Your Health Information for Payment Purposes:**

- We submit requests for payment to your health insurance company; the health insurance company requests information from us regarding medical care provided to you. We will provide this information to them.

### **Example of a Use of Your Information for Health Care Operations:**

- We may use or disclose your PHI in order to conduct certain business and operational activities such as quality assessment activities, to review employee activities, or to assist in the training of students. We may share information about you with our business associates, who perform these functions on our behalf, as necessary to obtain these services.

### **Other Examples:**

- We may use or disclose your PHI to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. We may also use or disclose your PHI for activities such as sending you a newsletter about our practice and the services we offer. You may contact us to request that these materials not be sent to you.

Other uses and disclosure of your PHI will only be made with your authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law, as described below.

## **Your Health Information Rights**

**The health and billing records we maintain are the physical property of the office. The information in them, however, belongs to you. You have a right to:**

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. We are not required to grant the request, but we will comply with any request that we agree to grant;
- Obtain a paper copy of the current Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information ("the Notice") by making a request at our office;
- Request that you be allowed to inspect and copy your health record and billing record – you may exercise this right by delivering the request to our office;
- Appeal a denial of access to your protected health information, except in certain circumstances;
- Request that your health care record be amended to correct incomplete or incorrect information by delivering a request to our office. We may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that either was not created by us (unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment), is not part of the health information kept by the office, is not part of the information that you would be permitted to inspect and copy, or is accurate and complete. If your request is denied, you will be informed of the reason for the denial and will have an opportunity to submit a statement of disagreement to be placed in your record;
- Request that communication of your health information be made by alternative means or at an alternative location by delivering the request in writing to our office;
- Restrict information going to your health plan about an item or service for which you pay the Practice out-of-pocket and in full for the item or service.

- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as required to be maintained by law. An accounting will not include uses and disclosures of information for treatment, payment, or operations; disclosures or uses made to you or made at your request; uses or disclosures made pursuant to an authorization signed by you; uses or disclosures made in a facility directory or to family members or friends relevant to that person's involvement in your care or in payment for such care; or, uses or disclosures to notify family or others responsible for your care of your location, condition, or your death.
- Revoke authorizations that you made previously to use or disclose information by delivering a written revocation to our office (except to the extent action has already been taken based on a previous authorization).

If you would like to exercise any of the above rights, please contact Bonnie Forrester at (303) 745-0000 during regular business hours, or in writing. The Privacy Officer will inform you of the steps needed to exercise your rights under HIPAA.

### **Our Responsibilities**

#### **The office is required to:**

- Maintain the privacy of your health information as required by law;
- Provide you with a notice ('Notice') as to our duties and privacy practices regarding the information we collect and maintain about you;
- Abide by the terms of this Notice;
- Notify you if we cannot accommodate a requested restriction or request; and,
- Accommodate your reasonable requests regarding methods to communicate health information with you and not disclose PHI to your health plan if you request that we do not, and pay for the item/service out-of-pocket and in full. You must request this Patient Right in writing.

We reserve the right to amend, change, or eliminate provisions in our privacy practices and to enact new provisions regarding the PHI we maintain. If our information practices change, we will amend our Notice. You are entitled to receive a revised copy of the Notice by calling and requesting a copy, visiting our website, or by visiting our office and picking up a copy.

### **CORHIO**

CORHIO is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care quality for all Coloradans through Health Information Exchange (HIE). CORHIO is the state-designated entity for Health Information Exchange.

#### **Health Information Exchange**

Health Information Exchange is a method to electronically share personal health and medical information securely between doctors, hospitals and other healthcare providers when it is needed for patient care. Health information is protected and exchanged under medical privacy and confidentiality standard procedures. Secure electronic Health Information Exchange allows patients and physicians to make sure that patient health information is available when and where it is needed.

Health Information Exchange improves patient safety and the quality of care you receive. Health care providers need all of your health information to provide you with an accurate diagnosis or treatment(s). Each of your providers may have different portions of your medical record. However, with access to each other's records and more complete health information, they can provide you with better care. Sharing your health information can also help reduce your costs by eliminating unnecessary duplication of tests and procedures.

Through CORHIO's health information exchange, some of your medical information is transmitted electronically and shared for treatment and healthcare operations within Critical Care & Pulmonary Consultants and other authorized health care provider organizations participating in the CORHIO health information exchange. This exchange enables emergency medical personnel and other providers who are treating you to have immediate access to your medical data that may be critical for your care.

When your health information is shared electronically, it is tracked so that information such as the person accessing it, the types of data accessed, as well as how and when it was used, is stored, making it harder for someone to misuse your medical information than when it is on paper or faxed.

### **Obligations of CORHIO and Participating Health Care Providers**

CORHIO and all organizations participating in the exchange must comply with applicable state and federal laws that protect the privacy and security of medical and personal information.

### **Your Rights to Access Your Medical Information that is Being Exchanged**

Under HIPAA guidelines, you have the right to access and receive a copy of your medical information. Additionally, you have the right to receive accounting of how your medical information has been disclosed as part of Health Information Exchange. Please talk to your health care provider if you wish to receive a copy of your medical information and/or a report on how it has been disclosed in the Health Information Exchange.

### ***“Opting Out” of the CORHIO Health Information Exchange***

Participation in this Health Information Exchange program is voluntary and your decision to participate or not will not impact your health plan benefits. If you do not want other physicians and other participating health care providers outside of Critical Care & Pulmonary Consultants to access your Electronic Health Information for treatment purposes, you may “opt out” of this program by filling out a Health Information Exchange Opt-Out Request Form provided by your health care provider.

### **To Request Information or File a Complaint**

If you have questions, would like additional information, or would like to report a problem regarding the handling of your information, you may contact the Privacy Officer. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint by delivering it in writing to the Practice’s Privacy Officer. You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The address for this office is: OCR - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - 200 Independence Avenue S.W. - Room 509F, HHH Building - Washington, D.C. 20201. Information regarding the steps to file a complaint with the OCR can also be found at: [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints).

- We cannot, and will not, require you to waive the right to file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a condition of receiving treatment from the office.
- We cannot, and will not, retaliate against you for filing a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

### **Other Uses and Disclosures of your PHI**

#### **Communication with Family**

- Using our best judgment, we 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 in payment for such care if you do not object, or in an emergency.

#### **Notification**

- Unless you object, we may use or disclose your protected health information to notify, or assist in notifying, a family member, personal representative, or other person responsible for your care, about your location, and about your general condition, or your death.

#### **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 protected health information.

#### **Disaster Relief**

- We may use and disclose your protected health information to assist in disaster relief efforts.

#### **Organ Procurement Organizations**

- Consistent with applicable law, we may disclose your PHI to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of organs for the purpose of tissue donation/transplant.

#### **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

- We may disclose to the FDA your PHI relating 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**

- If you are seeking compensation through Workers Compensation, we may disclose your PHI to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to Workers Compensation.

#### **Public Health**

- As authorized by law, we may disclose your PHI to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability; to report reactions to medications or problems with products; to notify people of recalls; to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or who is at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition.

#### **Abuse & Neglect**

- We may disclose your PHI to public authorities as allowed by law to report abuse or neglect.

#### **Employers**

- We may release health information about you to your employer if we provide health care services to you at the request of your employer, and the health care services are provided either to conduct an evaluation relating to medical surveillance of the workplace or to evaluate whether you have a work-related illness or injury. In such circumstances, we will give you written notice of such release of information to your employer. Any other disclosures to your employer will be made only if you execute a specific authorization for the release of that information to your employer.

#### **Enforcement**

- We may disclose your PHI for law enforcement purposes as required by law, such as when required by a court order, or in cases involving felony prosecution, or to the extent an individual is in the custody of law enforcement.

#### **Health Oversight**

- Federal law allows us to release your PHI to appropriate health oversight agencies or for health oversight activities.

#### **Judicial/Administrative Proceedings**

- We may disclose your protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding as allowed or required by law, with your authorization, or as directed by a proper court order.

#### **Serious Threat**

- To avert a serious threat to health or safety, we may disclose your protected health information consistent with applicable law to prevent or lessen a serious, imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public.

#### **For Specialized Governmental Functions**

- We may disclose your protected health information for specialized government functions as authorized by law such as to Armed Forces personnel, for national security purposes, or to public assistance program personnel.

#### **Correctional Institutions**

- If you are an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or its agents the protected health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.

#### **Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors**

- We may release health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release health information about patients to funeral directors as necessary for them to carry out their duties.

#### **Other Uses**

- Other uses and disclosures, besides those identified in this Notice, will be made only as otherwise required by law or with your written authorization. You may revoke any authorization at any time, as previously provided in this Notice under "Your Health Information Rights."

#### **Website**

- If we maintain a website that provides information about our entity, you will be able to access our Notice electronically on our website.



*\*\*\*If Patient Representative, legal documentation must be included to show authority to sign or receive information.*