

HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY HEALTH BENEFITS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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 describes how Miami-Dade County's (the "County's") medical and flexible spending account benefits programs, collectively referred to as the "Plans," may use and disclose Protected Health Information ("PHI" or "health information"). Protected Health Information is individually identifiable information about your past, present or future health or condition, health care services provided to you, or the payment for health services, whether that information is written, electronic or oral. This notice also describes your rights under federal law relating to that information. It does not address medical information relating to disability, workers' compensation or life insurance programs, or any other health information not created or received by the Plans.

How The Plans May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

For Treatment. While the Plans generally do not use or disclose your PHI for treatment, the Plans are permitted to do so if necessary. For example, the Plans may disclose PHI if your doctor asks for preauthorization for a medical procedure, the Plan may provide PHI about you to the company that provides preauthorization services to the Plan.

For Payment. The Plans may use and disclose your health information for payment of claims. Such purposes include, but are not limited to, eligibility, claims management, pre-certification or pre-authorization, medical review, utilization review, adjustment of payments, billing, and subrogation. For example, a detailed bill or an "Explanation of Benefits" may be sent to you or to the primary insured or "subscriber" by a third-party payor that may typically include information that identifies you, your diagnosis, and the procedures you received.

For Health Care Operations. The Plans may use and disclose health information about you regarding day-to-day Plan operations. Such purposes include, but are not limited to, business management and administration, business planning and development, cost management, customer service, enrollment, premium rating, care management, case management, audit functions, fraud and abuse detection, performance evaluation, professional training, provider credentialing, formulary development, and quality assurance or other quality initiatives. For example, the Plans may use or disclose information about your claims history for your referral for case management services, project future benefit costs, handle claims appeals or audit the accuracy of the claims processing performed by a third-party payor.

To the Plan Sponsor. The Plans may disclose health information to specifically designated employees of the County, but the County has put protections in place to assure that the information will only be used for plan administration purposes, and never for employment purposes without your express authorization. For example, the County may become involved in resolving claim disputes or customer service issues.

As Required by Law. The Plan may use or disclose health information about you as required by state and federal law. For example, the Plan may disclose information for the following purposes:

- for judicial and administrative proceedings;
- to report information regarding victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence; and
- to assist law enforcement officials in the performance of their law enforcement duties.

To Business Associates. There are some services the Plan provides through contracts with business associates. We may disclose your health information to our business associates so that they can perform the jobs we have asked them to do, for example, claims payment or appeals on behalf of the County by a third-

party payor and claims audits by third-party firms to assure contract compliance. To protect the privacy of your health information, we contractually require business associates to appropriately safeguard that information.

For Health-Related Products and Services. The Plans may contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

For Public Health. Your health information may be used or disclosed for public health activities such as assisting public health authorities or other legal authorities in the prevention or control of disease, injury, or disability, or for other activities relating to public health.

For Health Oversight. We may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee benefit programs, other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

For Governmental Functions. Specialized governmental functions such as the protection of public officials or reporting to various branches of the armed services may require the use or disclosure of your health information.

For Workers Compensation. We may disclose your health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws and regulations relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Prohibition on Use or Disclosure of Genetic Information. The Plan is prohibited from using or disclosing your genetic information for underwriting purposes.

No Other Uses. Other uses and disclosures will be made only with your prior written authorization. You may revoke this authorization in writing except to the extent a Plan has already made a disclosure in reliance on such authorization.

Your Legal Rights

The federal privacy regulations give you the right to make certain requests regarding health information about you:

Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request that the Plan restrict its uses and disclosures of PHI in relation to treatment, payment, and health care operations. Any such request must be made in writing and must state the specific restriction requested and to whom that restriction would apply. The Plan is not required to agree to a restriction that you request. We are not required to agree to a requested restriction or limitation, unless your request is made to restrict disclosure to an insurance carrier for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations (and is not for purposes of carrying out treatment), and the protected health information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you have paid the healthcare provider out of pocket in full. If we do agree to a restriction or limitation, we must abide by it unless you revoke it in writing.

Right to Request Confidential Communications. You have the right to request that communications involving your PHI be provided to you at a certain location or in a certain way. Any such request must be made in writing. The Plans will accommodate any reasonable request if the normal method of communication would place you in danger.

Right To Access Your Protected Health Information. You have the right to inspect and copy

your PHI maintained in a "designated record set" by the Plan. The designated record set consists of records used in making payment, claims adjudication, medical management and other decisions. The Plan may ask that such requests be made in writing and may charge reasonable fees for producing and mailing the copies. The Plan may deny such requests in certain cases.

Right to Request Amendment. You have the right to request that your PHI created by the Plan and maintained in a designated record set be amended, if that information is in error. Any such request must be made in writing and must include the reason for the request. If the Plan denies your request for amendment, you may file a written statement of disagreement. The Plan has the right to issue a rebuttal to your statement, in which case, a copy will be provided to you.

Right to Receive An Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to receive an accounting of all disclosures of your PHI that the Plan has made, if any. This accounting does not include disclosures for payment, health care operations or certain other purposes, or disclosures to you or with your authorization, to friends or family in your presence or due to an emergency, for national security purposes, or incidental to an otherwise permissible use or disclosure. Any such request must be made in writing and must include a time period, not to exceed six (6) years. The Plan is only required to provide an accounting of disclosures made on or after April 14, 2003. If you request an accounting more than once in a 12-month period, the Plan may charge you a reasonable fee. Your request should indicate in what form you want the accounting (for example, paper or electronic).

Right to be Notified of a Breach. You have the right to be notified in the event that the Plan (or a Business Associate) discovers a breach of your unsecured protected health information. Business Associates include the Business Associates themselves and their subcontractors. All requests listed above should be submitted in writing to the County's Chief Privacy Officer (see Contact Information below).

The Plans' Obligations

The federal privacy regulations require us to keep personal information about you private, to give you notice of our legal duties and privacy practices, and to follow the terms of the notice currently in effect.

This Notice is Subject To Change

We may change the terms of this Notice and our privacy policies at any time. If we do, the new terms and policies will be effective for all of the information that we already have about you, as well as any information that we may receive or hold in the future. Revised Notices will be made available to you in writing as required.

Complaints

You have a right to file a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You may file a complaint by writing to the County's Chief Privacy Officer (see Contact Information below). You may also file a complaint with the Department of Health and Human Services. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

For any questions or complaints, please contact:

**Chief Privacy Officer,
Human Resources Department
Stephen P. Clark Center,
111 NW 1st Street, 21st Floor,
Miami, FL 33128**

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