

Joint 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.

The following organizations use health information about you for treatment, to obtain payment for treatment, for administrative purposes, and to evaluate the quality of care that you receive through healthcare operations. The Organizations who are covered under this Notice include Cardiothoracic Surgery of Savannah.

How We May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

For Treatment. We will use your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your medical treatment and services. For example, we may disclose protected health information to another physician or health care provider who becomes involved in your care. This information is necessary for health care providers to determine what treatment you should receive.

For Payment. We will use protected health information for purposes of obtaining payment for treatment and services that you receive. For example, a bill may be sent to you or a third party, such as an insurance company. The information on the bill may contain information that identifies you, your diagnosis, and treatment or supplies used in the course of treatment.

For Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose health information about you for operational purposes. For example, your health information may be disclosed to evaluate the performance of our staff; assess the quality of care; learn how to improve our facilities and services. This includes sending information to a third-party to conduct research on patient satisfaction and effectiveness of the services performed.

We may use or disclose your information to provide appointment reminders. We may call you by name in the waiting room when the provider is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest.

Appointments. We may use your information to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to the individual.

Required by law. We may use and disclose information about you as required by law. For example, for judicial

and administrative proceedings pursuant to legal authority; to report information related to victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence; and to assist law enforcement officials in their law enforcement duties.

Public Health. Your health information may be used or disclosed to a public health authority who is permitted by law to collect or receive this information. The disclosure may be necessary to prevent or control disease, injury, or disability, or for other health oversight activities.

Required by law. We may use and disclose information about you as required by law. For example, for judicial and administrative proceedings pursuant to legal authority; to report information related to victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence; and to assist law enforcement officials in their law enforcement duties

Funeral Directors/Coroners. Health information may be disclosed to funeral directors or coroners to enable them to carry out their lawful duties.

Health and Safety. Your health information may be disclosed to avert a serious threat to the health or safety of you or any other person pursuant to applicable law.

Government Functions. Your health information may be disclosed for specialized government functions such as protection of public officials or reporting to various branches of the armed services.

Workers Compensation. Your health information may be used or disclosed in order to comply with laws and regulations related to Workers' Compensation.

Other uses. Other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization and you may revoke the authorization except to the extent Cardiothoracic Surgery of Savannah and this physician's office has taken action in reliance on such.

Your Rights to Privacy

You have the right to request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information. However, the organizations listed above are not required to agree to a requested restriction.

You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices upon request to the Privacy Official or a member of the organization.

You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of your health record as allowed by state and federal regulations.

You may request an amendment to your health record as allowed by state and federal regulations.

You may also request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. For example, by sending information to a P.O. Box instead of your home address.

You may revoke your Authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken by providing written notice to the Medical Record Department, Cardiothoracic Surgery of Savannah, at this office site address.

You may receive an accounting of disclosures made of your health information as provided by federal regulations by sending a written request to the Medical Record Department at the address listed above. Your request must state a time period which may be no longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003.

If you have a concern or complaint about your privacy rights:

Contact the Privacy Official at 5353 Reynolds Street, Savannah, Georgia 31405.

You may also contact the Department of Health and Human Services, if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

Our Obligations Under This Joint Notice

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information and to provide you with a Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to the protected health information. We will accommodate reasonable requests you may make to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. For reasons other than those stated above or as allowed by law, we will obtain your written authorization to use or disclose your health information. We will notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction on how your information is used or disclosed. We are also required to comply with the terms of the Notice currently in effect.

We reserve the right to change our information practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. The revised notice will be made available to you by requesting a copy of an updated Notice. You may send a written request to the Privacy Official at 5353 Reynolds Street, Savannah, Georgia 31405.

You may also view this notice on your website, www.sjchs.org.

This Notice of Privacy Rights is effective on April 14, 2003.

By signing this document, I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the St. Joseph's / Candler Health System, Inc. Joint Notice of Privacy Rights.

Patient Signature

Patient Printed Name

Guardian Signature: (if applicable)

Relationship to the Patient

Date: _____

OR:

Reason Acknowledgement was not obtained:

Witness

Witness

Date _____