

SOUTHERN SURGICAL, PC

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: September 23, 2017

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Our Responsibilities

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information, provide you a description of our privacy practices, and to notify you following a breach of unsecured protected health information. We will abide by the terms of this notice.

Uses and Disclosures

The following categories describe examples of the way we use and disclose health information:

For Treatment: We may use health information about you to provide you treatment or services. We may disclose health information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, or other facility personnel who are involved in taking care of you at the facility. We may also provide your physician or a subsequent healthcare provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you once you're discharged from this facility.

For Payment: We may use and disclose health information about your treatment and services to bill and collect payment from you, your insurance company or a third party payer. For example, we may need to give your insurance company information about your surgery so they will pay us or reimburse you for the treatment. We may also tell your health plan about treatment you are going to receive to determine whether your plan will cover it.

For Health Care Operations: Members of the medical staff and/or quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. The results will then be used to continually improve the quality of care for all patients we serve. For example, we may combine health information about many patients to evaluate the need for new services or treatment. We may disclose information to doctors, nurses, and other students for educational purposes. And we may combine health information we have with that of other facilities to see where we can make improvements. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of health information to protect your privacy..

Business Associates: There are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. Examples include physician services in the emergency department and radiology, certain laboratory tests, and a copy service we use when making copies of your health record. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associates so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, however, business associates are required by federal law to appropriately safeguard your information.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care and/or Notification Purposes: We may release health information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care or who helps pay for your care or to

notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating), a family member, your personal representative, or another person responsible for your care of your location and general condition. In addition, we may disclose health information about you to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort in order to assist with the provision of this notice.

Future Communications: We may communicate to you via newsletters, mail outs or other means regarding treatment options, health related information, disease-management programs, wellness programs, research projects, or other community based initiatives or activities our facility is participating in.

Organized Health Care Arrangement: This facility and its medical staff members have organized and are presenting you this document as a joint notice. Information will be shared as necessary to carry out treatment, payment and health care operations. Physicians and caregivers may have access to protected health information in their offices to assist in reviewing past treatment as it may affect treatment at the time.

Health Information Exchange/Regional Health Information Organization: Federal and state laws may permit us to participate in organizations with other healthcare providers, insurers, and/or other health care industry participants and their subcontractors in order for these individuals and entities to share your health information with one another to accomplish goals that may include but not be limited to: improving the accuracy and increasing the availability of your health records; decreasing the time needed to access your information; aggregating and comparing your information for quality improvement purposes; and such other purposes as may be permitted by law.

As required by law. We may disclose information when required to do so by law.

As permitted by law, we may also use and disclose health information for the following types of entities, including but not limited to:

- Food and Drug Administration
- Public Health or Legal Authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
- Correctional Institutions
- Workers Compensation Agents
- Organ and Tissue Donation Organizations
- Military Command Authorities
- Health Oversight Agencies
- Funeral Directors and Coroners
- National Security and Intelligence Agencies
- Protective Services for the President and Others
- A person or persons able to prevent or lessen a serious threat to health or safety

Law Enforcement: We may disclose health information to a law enforcement official for purposes such as providing limited information to locate a missing person or report a crime.

For Judicial or Administrative Proceedings: We may disclose protected health information as permitted by law in connection with judicial or administrative proceedings, such as in response to a court order, search warrant or subpoena.

Authorization Required: We must obtain your written authorization in order to use or disclose psychotherapy notes, use or disclose your protected health information for marketing purposes, or to sell your protected health information.

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of the healthcare practitioner or facility that compiled it, you have the **Right to:**

- **Inspect and Copy:** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the health information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to health information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another licensed health care professional chosen by the facility will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.
- **Amend:** If you feel that health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for the facility. Any request for an amendment must be sent in writing to the Facility Privacy Official. We may deny your request for an amendment and if this occurs, you will be notified of the reason for the denial.
- **An Accounting of Disclosures:** You have the right to request an accounting of disclosures. This is a list of certain disclosures we make of your health information for purposes other than treatment, payment or health care operations where an authorization was not required.
- **Request Restrictions:** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the health information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the health information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery you had. Any request for a restriction must be sent in writing to the Facility Privacy Official.
- We are required to agree to your request *only* if 1) except as otherwise required by law, the disclosure is to your health plan and the purpose is related to payment or health care operations (and not treatment purposes), **and** 2) your information pertains solely to health care services for which you have paid in full. **For other requests, we are not required to agree.** If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment.
- **Request Confidential Communications:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you may ask that we contact you at work instead of your home. The facility will grant reasonable requests for confidential communications at alternative locations and/or via alternative means only if the request is submitted in writing and the written request includes a mailing address where the individual will receive bills for services rendered by the facility and related correspondence regarding payment for services. Please realize, we reserve the right to contact you by other means and at other locations if you fail to respond to any communication from us that requires a response. We will notify you in accordance with your original request prior to attempting to contact you by other means or at another location.
- **A Paper Copy of This Notice:** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice.
- If the facility has a website you may print or view a copy of the notice by clicking on the Notice of Privacy Practices link.

To exercise any of your rights, please obtain the required forms from the Privacy Official and submit your request in writing.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice and the revised or changed notice will be effective for information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. The current notice will be posted in the facility and on our website and include the effective date. In addition, each time you register at or are admitted to the facility for treatment or health care services as an inpatient or outpatient, we will offer you a copy of the current notice in effect.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the facility by following the process outlined in the facility's Patient Rights documentation. You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

- FACILITY PRIVACY OFFICIAL: Please dial the telephone number below and ask for the facility privacy official.
- Telephone Number: (478) 275-2454