

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective August 22, 2005

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.

Each time you visit a physician, hospital, or other healthcare provider, a record of your visit is made. This record contains descriptions of your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care of treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among healthcare professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document describing the care you received
- Means by which it can be verified that services billed were actually provided
- A tool in educating health professionals
- A source of data for medical research
- A source of information for public health officials
- A source of data for planning and marketing
- A tool that we can use to examine and improve the care we give.

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to ensure its accuracy, better understand when others may access your health information, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of The Heart Center, PC, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information, although we may not agree with your request.
- Obtain a paper copy of this notice
- Examine and obtain a copy of your health record by writing to us, or completing a request form in person.
- Obtain a listing of disclosures of your health information.
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means.
- Revoke in writing your authorization to use or disclose health information except in cases when it has already been used or disclosed.

Our Responsibilities

The Heart Center, PC is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information
- Provide you with this notice about our legal duties and privacy practices regarding information we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms of this notice
- Accommodate reasonable requests you have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices regarding your health information. If we make changes, we will post a copy of the current notice that will contain on the first page an effective date.



Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations

For Treatment. We will use medical information to provide you with treatment or services. We may disclose medical information to physicians, nurses, technicians, training doctors, or other health care professionals who are involved in taking care of you.

For Payment. We will use and disclose medical information so that the treatment and services you receive may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party.

For Routine Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose medical information for routine operations of The Heart Center, PC. This is necessary to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care.

Other Uses or Disclosures

Appointment Reminders. We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care.

Treatment Alternatives. We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

As Required By Law. We will disclose medical information when required to do so by federal, state or local law.

To Advert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety. We may use and disclose medical information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

Public Health Risks. We may disclose medical information about for public health activities.

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law.

Lawsuits and Legal Disputes. We may disclose medical information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful order from a court.

Law Enforcement. We may release medical information for law enforcement purposes as required by law.

Other Uses of Medical Information

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice, or the laws that apply to us, will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. We are unable, however, to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.

Complaints

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with The Heart Center, PC, or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with The Heart Center, PC, contact our Privacy Officer at the address listed at the end of this notice.

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

**Privacy Officer
The Heart Center, PC
930 Franklin Street
Huntsville, AL 35801
Phone: 256-519-8213
1-800-537-8529 Extension 213**

