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Dear Patient:

Physicians have always protected the confidentiality of health information. Today, state and federal laws also attempt to ensure the confidentiality of this sensitive information.

The federal government recently published regulations designed to protect the privacy of health information. The "privacy rule" protects health information that is maintained by physicians, hospitals, other health care providers and health plans.

This new regulation protects virtually all patients regardless of where they live or where they receive their health care. Every time you see a physician, are admitted to the hospital, fill a prescription, or send a claim to a health plan, your physician, the hospital information including paper records, oral communications, and electronic formats (such as e-mail) are protected by the privacy rule.

The privacy rule also provides you certain rights, such as the right to have access to your medical records. However, there are exceptions: these rights are not absolute. We also take precautions in our office to safeguard your health information such as training our employees and employing computer security measures. Please feel free to ask your physician or our privacy officer about exercising your rights or how your health information is protected in our office.

The HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Notice of Private Practices explains how we maintain the privacy of your health, medical record, and payment history. This notice is available for you to review on our web site and contains information about how your confidential health information is handled by our office. It also describes how you can exercise your rights with regard to your protected health information.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

HIPAA 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 of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose our protected health information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information. "Protected health information" is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information

Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by your physician, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in our care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you, to pay your health care bills, to support the operation of the physician's practice, and any other use required by law.

Treatment

We will use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party. For example, we would disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you. For example, your protected health information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you.

Payment

Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant protected health information be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission.

Healthcare Operations

We may use or disclose, as needed, your protected health information in order to support the business activities of your physician's practice. The activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of medical students, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we may disclose your protected health information to medical school students that see patients at our office. In addition, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your physician is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment.

We may use or disclose our protected health information in the following situations without your authorization. These situations include: as Required By Law, Public

Health issues as required by law, Communicable Disease; Health Oversight; Abuse or Neglect; Food and Drug Administration requirements; Legal Proceedings; Law Enforcement; Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation; Research; Criminal Activity; Military Activity and National Security; Workers' Compensation; Inmates; Required Uses and Disclosures; Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500.

Other permitted and required uses and disclosures will be made only with your consent, authorization or opportunity to object unless required by law.

You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

Your Rights

Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your protected health information.

You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information. Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records: psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information.

You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information. This means you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. Your physician is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If a physician believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. You then have the right to use another Healthcare Professional.

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us, upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice alternatively; i.e., electronically.

You have the right to have your physician amend your protected health information.

If we deny your request for amendment,

You have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and will inform you by mail of any changes. You then have the right to object or withdraw as provided in this notice.

Complaints

You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our privacy contact of your complaint. We will not retaliate against you for filling a complaint.

This notice was published and becomes effective on/or before April 14, 2003. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of, and provide individuals with, this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information. If you have any objections to this form, please ask to speak with our HIPAA Compliance Officer in person or by phone at our Main Phone Number. Signature below is only acknowledgement that you have received this Notice of our Privacy Practices:

Print Name:

Signature: Date:

Safeguarding HIPAA:

I have reviewed the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices and understand its implications regarding my medical record. Compliance notwithstanding, I would like to authorize the following person(s) I have named below access to my medical information, which will remain in effect until revoked by myself, in writing:

First & Last	Name	Date of Birth
Relationship		

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