

STATE OF NEBRASKA

Department of Veterans' Affairs



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.

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The Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs (NDVA) and those health care facilities and medical assistance programs that are affiliated under the common control of NDVA, are required by federal law to maintain the privacy of Protected Health Information and to provide notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to Protected Health Information.

PRACTICES AND USES:

NDVA may access, use and share medical information without your consent for purposes of:

- **Treatment:** We may use your medical information to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may share your information with a nurse, medical professional or other personnel who are giving you treatment or services. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken leg may need to know if you have diabetes because diabetes may slow the healing process. Different facilities within NDVA may share your medical information in order to coordinate the different things you need or to support and maintain your continuum of care.
- **Payment:** We may use and disclose your medical information so that the treatment and services you receive can be billed. For example, we may use your medical information from a surgery you received at the hospital so the hospital can be reimbursed.
- **Operations:** We may use and disclose medical information about you for health care operations. For example, we may use medical information to review your treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of the staff.

OTHER PERMITTED USES AND DISCLOSURES THAT MAY BE MADE WITHOUT CONSENT/AUTHORIZATION:

- **Required By Law:** We may use or disclose your Protected Health Information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. You will be notified, if required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.
- **Public Health:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information.
- **Communicable Diseases:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information, if authorized by law, to a person who may have been exposed to a communicable

disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease or condition.

- **Health Oversight:** We may disclose Protected Health Information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, or other activities necessary for appropriate oversight of the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs, and civil rights laws.
- **Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of abuse or neglect. The disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.
- **Legal Proceedings:** We may disclose Protected Health Information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), and in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process.
- **Law Enforcement:** We may also disclose Protected Health Information, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes.
- **Food and Drug Administration:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information as required by the Food and Drug Administration.
- **Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation:** We may disclose Protected Health Information to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, cause of death determinations, or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law.
- **Research:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board to ensure the privacy of your Protected Health Information.
- **Criminal Activity:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information if we believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public.

- **Specialized Government Functions:** When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose Protected Health Information of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel for military, national security, and intelligence activities. Protected Health Information may be disclosed for the administration of public benefits purposes.
- **Workers' Compensation:** We may disclose your Protected Health Information as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally established programs.
- **Inmates:** We may use or disclose your Protected Health Information if you are an inmate of a correctional facility in the course of providing care to you.
- **Required Uses and Disclosures:** We must make disclosures when required by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of 45 CFR, Title II, Section 164, et. seq.

USES AND DISCLOSURES REQUIRING AUTHORIZATION:

There are certain uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information that require your authorization. Among them are: most uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes; uses and disclosures of protected health information for marketing purposes; and disclosure of protected health information that constitutes a sale.

Other uses and disclosures not described in this notice will be made only WITH authorization from you. You may revoke this authorization at any time as provided by 45 CFR 164.508(b)(5).

YOUR RIGHTS TO PRIVACY:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy your medical information. Usually, this includes medical and billing records but does not include psychotherapy notes. To inspect and copy your medical information, you must submit a written request at the Site of Service or to the NDVA HIPAA Privacy & Security Office. If you request a copy, we may charge a fee for the cost of copying, mailing, and other supplies associated with your request. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request the denial be reviewed.
- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that medical information about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend (correct) the information. You have the right to request an amendment as long as the information is kept by or for NDVA. To request

an Amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted at the Site of Service, or to the NDVA HIPAA Privacy & Security Office. In addition you must provide a reason which supports your request. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

1. Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
2. Is not part of the medical information kept by or for NDVA;
3. Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or,
4. Is accurate and complete.

- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment, health care operations, and to someone who is involved in your care or the payment of your care, like a family member or friend. We are not required to agree to your request for restrictions unless it is for payment or health care operations and you use your own funds to pay, in full, for a health care item or service. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing at the Site of Service, or to the NDVA HIPAA Privacy & Security Office. In your request you must tell us: (1) what information you want to limit, (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you. You must submit your request in writing at the Site of Service, or to the NDVA HIPAA Privacy & Security Office. Your request must state a time period for the disclosures, which may not be longer than six (6) years. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list to be provided to you.
- **Right to 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. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing at the Site of Service, or to the NDVA HIPAA Privacy & Security Office. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

- **Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice.** You have a 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. You may obtain a copy of this notice at our website <https://veterans.nebraska.gov/> , or by contacting us.
- **Opt out of fundraising communications.** If NDVA should conduct fundraising activities, you have a right to opt out of this communication.
- **Breach notification.** In the event NDVA breaches your unsecured protected health information as defined by HIPAA, you will receive notification of the breach.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with NDVA or with the **Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**. To file a complaint with NDVA, you may contact the **Health Information Manager at your Site of Service**. To file a complaint with HHS, contact: **Secretary, Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-866-OCR-PRIV (627-7748) or by visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/**. NDVA will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

If you have any questions or need help filing a health information privacy complaint, you may email OCR at OCRMail@hhs.gov or call the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights toll-free at: 1-800-368-1019, TDD: 1-800-537-7697.

CHANGES TO THE NOTICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

The State of Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs reserves the right to amend this Notice at any time in the future. Until such amendment is made, NDVA is required by law to abide by the terms of this Notice. NDVA will provide notice of any material change in revision of these policies either electronically or in paper format.

CONTACT INFORMATION

This notice fulfills the “Notice” requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Final Privacy Rule. If you have questions about any part of this Notice of Information Privacy practices or desire to have further information concerning information practices at NDVA please direct them to: HIPAA Privacy and Security Office, 301 Centennial Mall South 4th Floor, PO Box 95083, Lincoln, NE 68509-5083, by phone at 402-471-8562, or by email to ndva@nebraska.gov. If you have question about your benefits call 402-471-2458.

Effective: 2/5/2019

Acknowledgement of receipt of this notice:

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Recipient

Relationship to recipient: _____