

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (OR A MINOR CHILD UNDER YOUR CARE) MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

**A. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY**

Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your individually identifiable health information, also known as your “Protected health information” or “PHI”. In conducting our business, we will create records about you and the treatment and services we provide to you. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your PHI. Under federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time. We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your PHI
- Your privacy rights in regard to your PHI
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your PHI

**The terms of this notice apply to all records containing your PHI that are created or retained by our practice. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practices. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all of your records that our practice has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we may create or maintain in the future. Our practice will post a copy of our current Notice in our office in a visible location and on our web site at all times, and you may request a copy of our most current Notice at any time.**

**B. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE LINCOLN PEDIATRIC GROUP PRIVACY OFFICER OR HIS OR HER DESIGNATE.**

**C. WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

The following categories describe the different ways in which we may use and disclose your PHI.

**1. Treatment.** Our practice may use your PHI to treat you. For example, we may ask you to have laboratory tests (such as blood or urine tests), and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We may use your PHI in order to write a prescription for you, or we may disclose your PHI to a pharmacy when we order a prescription for you. We may call your home or other designated location and leave a message on voice mail or in person in reference to any items that assist the practice in your treatment, such as any call pertaining to your clinical care, including test results. Many of the people who work for our practice – including, but not limited to, our doctors, nurses, and office staff – may use or disclose your PHI in order to treat you or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your PHI to others who may assist in your care, such as your parents or other individuals involved in your care.

**2. Payment.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. For example, we may contact your health insurer to certify that you are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for, your treatment. We may call your home or other designated location and leave a message on voice mail or in person in reference to any items which assist the practice in obtaining payment, such as insurance information or information about your balance. We also may use and disclose your PHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Additionally, we may use your PHI to bill you directly for services and other items.

**3. Health Care Operations.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to operate our business. As examples of the ways in which we may use and disclose your information for our operations, our practice may use your PHI to evaluate the quality of care you received from us, or to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice. We may also share your PHI with our business associates who perform certain services for our office, such as transcriptionists or a billing service.

**4. Appointment Reminders.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment. We may call your home or other designated location and send a text message, leave a message on voice mail or in person, or send an email for this purpose.

**5. Treatment Options.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.

**6. Health-Related Benefits and Services.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you. We may also use your PHI to send you newsletters about our practice, our services, or other information.

**7. Release of Information to Family/Friends.** Our practice may release your PHI to a friend or family member who is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a babysitter take their child to our office for treatment. In this example, the babysitter may have access to this child's medical information to the extent necessary.

**8. Disclosures Required By Law.** Our practice will use and disclose your PHI when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law.

#### **D. USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR PHI IN CERTAIN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The following categories describe special scenarios in which we may use or disclose your identifiable health information:

**1. Public Health Risks.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to public health authorities who are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:

- maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths
- reporting child abuse or neglect
- preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
- notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease
- notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition
- reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices
- notifying individuals if a product or device they may be using has been recalled
- notifying appropriate government agency(ies) and authority(ies) regarding potential abuse or neglect
- notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.

**2. Health Oversight Activities.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.

**3. Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your PHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute.

**4. Law Enforcement.** We may release PHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- Regarding a crime victim in certain situations
- Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct
- Regarding criminal conduct at our offices
- In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process
- To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive or missing person

- In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of the perpetrator)

**5. Deceased Patients.** Our practice may release PHI to a medical examiner or coroner to identify a deceased individual or to identify the cause of death. If necessary, we also may release information in order for funeral directors to perform their jobs.

**6. Organ and Tissue Donation.** Our practice may release your PHI to organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.

**7. Research.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI for research purposes in certain limited circumstances. We will obtain your written authorization to use your PHI for research purposes except when an Institutional Review board or Privacy Board has determined that the waiver of your authorization satisfies the following: (i) the use or disclosure involves no more than a minimal risk to your privacy based on the following: (A) an adequate plan to protect the identifiers from improper use and disclosure; (B) an adequate plan to destroy the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the research (unless there is a health or research justification for retaining the identifiers or such retention is otherwise required by law); and (C) adequate written assurances that the PHI will not be re-used or disclosed to any other person or entity (except as required by law) for authorized oversight of the research study, or for other research for which the use or disclosure would otherwise be permitted; (ii) the research could not practicably be conducted without the waiver; and (iii) the research could not practicably be conducted without access to and use of the PHI.

**8. Serious Threats to Health or Safety.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.

**9. Military.** Our practice may disclose your PHI if you are a member of U.S. or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.

**10. National Security.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to federal officials for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We also may disclose your PHI to federal officials in order to protect the President, other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.

**11. Inmates.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate or under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you, (b) for the safety and security of the institution, and/or (c) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.

**12. Workers' Compensation.** Our practice may release your PHI for workers' compensation and similar programs.

## **E. YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI**

You have the following rights regarding the PHI that we maintain about you:

**1. Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request to the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate reasonable requests. However, we may condition our accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled, or specification of an alternate address or other method of contact should that become necessary. You do not need to give a reason for your request.

**2. Requesting Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your PHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. **We are not required to agree to your request** unless the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of payment for healthcare services. In this case we must agree to your request, however, you must have paid us in full "out of pocket" in order for us to grant the restriction. We are not required to agree to your request if it relates to your treatment, however if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI, you must make your request in writing to the LPG Privacy

Officer or his or her designate. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:

- (a) the information you wish restricted;
- (b) whether you are requesting to limit our practice's use, disclosure or both; and
- (c) to whom you want the limits/restrictions to apply.

**3. Inspection and Copies.** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the PHI that may be used to make decisions about you including patient medical records and billing records (this does not include alert notes or billing notes). If we maintain the records electronically, you may receive an electronic copy rather than a paper copy. You must submit your request in writing to the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your PHI. 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 PHI that is subject to law that prohibits access to PHI. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in these and other limited circumstances. Depending on the circumstances, a decision to deny access may be reviewable. If the decision is reviewable, another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct the review. Our practice may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request.

**4. Amendment.** You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate. **You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment.** Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request and the reason supporting your request in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the PHI kept by or for the practice; (c) not part of the PHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the 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. We will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal. Please contact the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate if you have questions about amending your medical record.

**5. Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." An "accounting of disclosures" is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our practice has made of your PHI for reasons other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. Use of your PHI as part of the routine patient care in our practice is not required to be documented. For example, the doctor sharing information with the nurse; or the billing department using your information to file your insurance claim. In order to obtain an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate. All requests for an "accounting of disclosures" must state a time period, which may not be longer than three (3) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period is free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists within the same 12-month period. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

**6. Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You are entitled to receive a paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. You may also obtain a copy at our web site, [www.lincolnpedsgroup.com](http://www.lincolnpedsgroup.com). You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time.

**7. Right to File a Complaint.** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our practice, contact the LPG Privacy Officer or his or her designate. All complaints must be submitted in writing within 180 days of when you knew or should have known about the suspected violation. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**

**8. Right to Provide an Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures.** Our practice will obtain your authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your PHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your PHI for the reasons described in the authorization.