

covered. When we subsequently bill the carrier or other third party payor for the services rendered to you, we can provide the carrier or other third party payor with information regarding your care if necessary to obtain payment.

Health Care Operations means the support functions of our practice related to treatment and payment, such as quality assurance activities, case management, receiving and responding to patient complaints, physician reviews, compliance programs, audits, business planning, development, management and administrative activities. For example, we may use your medical information to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine medical information about many patients to decide what additional services we should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective.

DISCLOSURES RELATED TO COMMUNICATING WITH YOU OR YOUR FAMILY

We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you or relate specifically to your medical care through our office. For example, we may leave appointment reminders on your answering machine or with a family member or other person who may answer the telephone at the number that you have given us in order to contact you.

We may disclose your protected health information to your family or friends or any other individual identified by you when they are involved in your care or the payment for your care. We will only disclose the protected health information directly relevant to their involvement in your care or payment. We may also use or disclose your protected health information to notify, or assist in the notification of, a family member, a personal representative, or another person responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death, if you are available, and we will give you an opportunity to object to these disclosures, and we will not make these disclosures if you object. If you are family or friends is in your best interest, and we will disclose only the protected health information that is directly relevant to their involvement in your care.

We will allow your family and friends to act on your behalf to pick up prescriptions, medical supplies, X-rays, and similar forms of protected health information, when we determine, in our professional judgment, that it is in your best interest to make such disclosures.

OTHER SITUATIONS

Organ and Tissue Donation. If you are an organ donor, we may release medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplanta-

tion or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

Military and Veterans. If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities. We may also release medical information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.

Worker's Compensation. We may release medical information about you for programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness, regardless of the state in which the injury occurred.

Public Health Risks. We may disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:

- to prevent or control disease, injury or disability
- to report births and deaths
- to report victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
- to report reactions to medications
- to notify people of product, recalls, repairs or replacements
- to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose medical information to federal or state agencies that oversee our activities. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws. We may disclose protected health information to persons under the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction to track products or to conduct post-marketing surveillance.

Lawsuits and Disputes. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute.

Law Enforcement. We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person
- About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
- About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct
- About criminal conduct on our premises
- In emergency circumstances to report a crime; the location of the crime or victims or the identity,

description or location of the person who committed the crime

Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors. We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.

Inmates. If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary for the institution to provide you with health care, to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others, or for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

Serious Threats. As permitted by applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, we may use and disclose protected health information if we, in good faith, 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.

Disaster Relief. When permitted by law, we may coordinate our uses and disclosures of protected health information with public or private entities authorized by law or by charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

YOUR RIGHTS

1. You have the right to request restrictions on our uses and disclosures of protected health information for treatment, payment and health care operations. However, we are not required to agree to your request.
2. You have the right to reasonably request to receive communications of protected health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.
3. Subject to payment of a reasonable copying charge as provided by state law, you have the right to inspect or obtain a copy of the protected health information contained in your medical and billing records and in any other practice records used by us to make decisions about you, except for:
 - psychotherapy notes, which are notes recorded by a mental health professional documenting or analyzing the contents of conversation during a private counseling session or a group, joint or family counseling session and that have been separated from the rest of your medical record
 - information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding