

# 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.

**If you have any questions about this notice, please call our Compliance Officer at (727) 327-7656 or send a letter to the following address:**

Compliance Officer  
Suncoast Center, Inc.  
PO Box 10970  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-0970

We are required by law to:

- Maintain the privacy of protected health information and follow the terms of our notice that is currently in effect
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices regarding health information about you

## **HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION:**

Except for the purposes described below, we will use and disclose Health Information only with your written permission.

***For Treatment, Payment, and Health Care, Operations.*** These uses and disclosures are necessary to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care and to operate and manage our office.

***Appointment Reminders, Treatment Alternatives and Health Related Benefits and Services.*** We may use and disclose Health Information to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with us.

***Research.*** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose Health Information for research.

***As Required by Law.*** We will disclose Health Information when required to do so by international, federal, state or local law.

***To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.*** We may use and disclose Health Information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

***Business Associates.*** We may disclose Health Information to our business associates that perform functions on our behalf or provide us with services if the information is necessary for such functions or services. All of our business associates are obligated to protect the privacy of your information and are not allowed to use or disclose any information other than as specified in our contract.

***Public Health Risks.*** We may disclose Health Information for public health activities. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.

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

***Data Breach Notification Purposes.*** We may use or disclose your Protected Health Information to provide legally required notices of unauthorized access to or disclosure of your health information.

***Lawsuits and Disputes.*** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose Health Information in response to a court or administrative order. We also may disclose Health Information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

***Law Enforcement.*** We may release Health Information if asked by a law enforcement official if the information is: (1) in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process; (2) limited information to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person; (3) about the victim of a crime even if, under certain very limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement; (4) about a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct; (5) about criminal conduct on our premises; and (6) in an emergency 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 Health Information to a coroner or medical examiner.

***Inmates or Individuals in Custody.*** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release Health Information to the correctional institution or law enforcement official, for the institution to provide you with health care.

***Disaster Relief.*** We may disclose your Protected Health Information to disaster relief organizations that seek your Protected Health Information to coordinate your care, or notify family and friends of your location or condition in a disaster. We will provide you with an opportunity to agree or object to such a disclosure whenever we practically can do so.

## **YOUR WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION IS REQUIRED FOR OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES**

1. Uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information for marketing purposes; and disclosures that constitute a sale of your Protected Health Information
2. Individuals involved in your care or payment for your care. When appropriate, and only with your written authorization, we may share Protected Health Information with a person who is involved in your medical care or payment for your care.
3. Most uses and disclosure of psychotherapy notes will require the individual's authorization.

Other uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information not covered by this Notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written authorization. If you do give us an authorization, you may revoke it at any time by submitting a written revocation to our Privacy Officer and we will no longer disclose Protected Health Information under the authorization. But disclosure that we made in reliance on your authorization before you revoked it will not be affected by the revocation.

### **YOUR RIGHTS:**

***Right to Inspect and Copy.*** You have a right to inspect and copy Health Information that may be used to make decisions about your care or payment for your care. This includes medical and billing records, other than psychotherapy notes. To inspect and copy this Health Information, you must make your request, in writing, to the HIM Manager, Suncoast Center, Inc. We have up to 30 days to make your Protected Health Information available to you and we may charge you a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may deny your request in certain limited circumstances. If we do deny your request, you have the right to appeal the denial.

***Right to an Electronic Copy of Electronic Medical Records.*** You have the right to request that an electronic copy of your record be given to you or transmitted to another individual or entity. If the Protected Health Information is not readily producible in the form or format you request your record will be provided in either our standard electronic format or a readable hard copy form. We may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for the labor associated with transmitting the electronic medical record.

***Right to Get Notice of a Breach.*** You have the right to be notified upon a breach of any of your unsecured Protected Health Information. Breach notification is necessary in all situations except those in which the covered entity or business associate demonstrates a low probability that the PHI has been compromised.

***Right to Amend.*** If you feel that Health Information we have is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. To request an amendment, you must make your request, in writing, to the Compliance Officer, Suncoast Center Inc.

***Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.*** You have the right to request a list of certain disclosures we made of

Health Information for purposes other than treatment, payment and health care operations or for which you provided written authorization. To request an accounting of disclosures, you must make your request, in writing, to the HIM Manager, Suncoast Center, Inc.

***Right to Request Restrictions.*** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the Health Information we use or disclose for treatment, payment, or health care operations. To request a restriction, you must make your request, in writing, to the HIM Manager, Suncoast Center, Inc. We are not required to agree to your request unless you are asking us to restrict the use and disclosure of your Protected Health Information to a health plan for payment or health care operation purposes and such information you wish to restrict pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you have paid us "out-of-pocket" in full.

***Out-of-Pocket-Payments.*** If you paid out-of-pocket (or in other words, you have requested that we not bill your health plan) in full for a specific item or service, you have the right to ask that your Protected Health Information with respect to that item or service not be disclosed to a health plan for purposes of payment or health care operations, and we will honor that request.

***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. You must make your request, in writing, to the Compliance Officer, Suncoast Center Inc. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. We will accommodate reasonable requests.

***Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.*** You have the 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 web site, [www.suncoastcenter.org](http://www.suncoastcenter.org). To obtain a paper copy of this notice please ask the HIM Manager, Suncoast Center, Inc.

### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE:**

We reserve the right to change this notice and make the new notice apply to Health Information we already have as well as any information we receive in the future.

### **COMPLAINTS:**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our office, contact the Compliance Officer, Suncoast Center Inc. PO BOX 10970 St. Petersburg, FL 33733-0970. All complaints must be made in writing. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**