

Lafourche Medical Group

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.

During your treatment at Lafourche Medical Group, our employees may gather information about your medical history and your current health. This notice explains how that information may be used and shared with others. It also explains your privacy rights regarding this kind of information. The terms of this notice apply to health information created or received by Lafourche Medical Group and is effective as of today's date.

Lafourche Medical Group is committed to protecting patient privacy. We are required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to provide you with this Notice of Privacy Practices and to make sure that: your identifiable medical information is kept private; you understand our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; the terms of the notice that are currently in effect are followed; and you are notified in the event of a breach of any unsecured protected health information about you.

Your Rights

When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights. This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

Get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record

- You can ask to see or get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.

Ask us to correct your medical record

- You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this.
- We may say "no" to your request, but we'll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will say "yes" to all reasonable requests.

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Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us not to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say “yes” unless a law requires us to share that information.

Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we’ve shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.
- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We’ll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

Get a copy of this privacy notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.

Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting us using the information on page 1.
 - You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.
 - We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.
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Your Choices

For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share. If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- Include your information in a hospital directory

If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.

In these cases, we never share your information unless you give us written permission:

- Marketing purposes
- Sale of your information
- Most sharing of psychotherapy notes

In the case of fundraising:

- We may contact you for fundraising efforts, but you can tell us not to contact you again.

Our Uses and Disclosures

How do we typically use or share your health information?

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways.

Treat you

We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you.

Example: A doctor treating you for an injury asks another doctor about your overall health condition.

Run our organization

We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary.

Example: We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services.

Bill for your services

We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities.

Example: We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.

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How else can we use or share your health information?

We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We must meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes.

Help with public health and safety issues

We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:

- Preventing disease
- Helping with product recalls
- Reporting adverse reactions to medications
- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
- Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

Support research

We can use or share your health data, without identifying information for health research.

Comply with the law

We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we're complying with federal privacy law.

Respond to organ and tissue donation requests

We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

Work with a medical examiner or funeral director

We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests

We can use or share health information about you:

- For workers' compensation claims
- For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
- With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
- For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

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For more information see:

www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html

Notice Regarding the Use of Technology

We may use electronic software, services, and equipment, including but not limited to email, video conferencing technology, cloud storage and servers, internet communication, cellular network, voicemail, facsimile, electronic health records, and related technology ("Technology") to share Protected Health Information (PHI) with you or third parties subject to the rights and restrictions contained herein.

- While we take measures to safeguard the transmitted data, certain unencrypted communications or storage methods may not be entirely secure.
- We use appropriate encryption methods and secure protocols whenever possible to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of your PHI.

Despite these measures, there may be rare circumstances where security protocols could fail. In such cases, we will promptly notify you if your information's privacy or security is compromised.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Healthcare

The use of AI has been implemented for enhancing operations, data management, and treatment planning. To ensure responsible and secure use, workforce members must adhere to the following guidelines while maintaining compliance with HIPAA and other privacy regulations:

- AI Technology and HIPAA Compliance: AI systems are designed and operated to ensure Protected Health Information (PHI) remains confidential and secure.
- Data Protection: Any PHI processed by AI is handled with the same level of protection as other patient records.
- Patient Awareness: Patients are informed when AI technologies process their PHI, and a clear explanation of the purpose, benefits, and limitations of AI in their care is provided.
- Regulatory Oversight: AI systems undergo regular audits to ensure compliance with privacy regulations and identify potential risks to PHI. Any identified risks are promptly addressed to maintain data integrity and security.
- Human Oversight: AI tools do not make autonomous clinical decisions. All AI-assisted recommendations are reviewed and approved by a licensed healthcare provider before implementation.
- Workforce Training: Workforce members follow established guidelines on the proper use of AI tools. Training ensures compliance with state and federal privacy regulations.
- Sensitive Data Protections: PHI related to reproductive health, substance use disorders (SUD), psychotherapy notes, and other sensitive data receives the same level of privacy protection whether processed through AI or traditional in-person care.

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If you have concerns about AI involvement in your care, please discuss them with your provider.

We may use AI tools to assist in clinical decision-making, diagnostics, and administrative tasks. AI does not replace human decision-making, and all AI-driven recommendations are reviewed by qualified healthcare professionals. If you have concerns about AI involvement in your care, please discuss them with your provider.

Part 2 Substance Use Disorder Privacy Addendum

This section applies specifically to patients receiving Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment under programs regulated by 42 CFR Part 2.

We are committed to protecting your privacy and confidentiality if you receive treatment for Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Federal regulations (42 CFR Part 2) provide additional privacy protections for SUD-related records, ensuring your information is handled with care and used appropriately.

How Your Information is Protected:

- Your SUD-related records will not be shared without your written consent, except in specific cases like medical emergencies, court orders, or when required by law.
- Information about your SUD treatment cannot be used for criminal investigations or prosecutions against you.

Your Rights:

- You have the right to ask for a list of entities that received your SUD-related information.
- You can change your mind about who can access your information by revoking consent. Once you notify us, we will stop any further sharing based on that consent.

Sharing Within Healthcare Settings:

- If you provide consent, we may share your information with other healthcare providers in an integrated care network to ensure seamless and effective treatment.
- We will explain how your information will be used and shared so you can make informed decisions.

How We Safeguard Your Information

- All electronic and physical records are protected with encryption, secure access controls, and other safeguards.
- We maintain logs of all disclosures of your information so you can see who has accessed it and why.

In Case of a Data Breach

- If there is any unauthorized access to your SUD-related information, we will notify you promptly and take steps to mitigate the issue.

Staff Training

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- All staff receive specialized training on the unique requirements for protecting SUD-related information, ensuring your privacy is always a priority.
- If you have any questions about how we protect your SUD-related information or your rights, please contact our Privacy Officer at the contact information listed in this Notice.

Our Responsibilities

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

Changes to the Terms of This Notice

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request, in our office, and on our website. We will notify you of any significant changes to this notice and provide you with a copy when required by law.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE

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Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), you have certain rights regarding the use and disclosure of your protected health information. These rights are more fully described in Lafourche Medical Group's Notice of Privacy Practices. Lafourche Medical Group is permitted to revise its Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. We will provide you with a copy of the revised Notice of Privacy Practices upon your request.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have received a copy of Lafourche Medical Group's Notice of Privacy Practices.

Patient/Authorized Representative Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____