



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.

Montgomery County Hospital District (MCHD) is required by law to maintain the privacy of certain confidential health care information, known as Protected Health Information or PHI, and to provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. MCHD is required to notify an affected individual following a breach of unsecured PHI. MCHD is required to abide by the terms of the version of this notice currently in effect.

Uses and Disclosures of PHI: MCHD may use PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations, in most cases without your written permission. Examples of our use of your PHI:

For treatment: This includes such things as verbal and written information about your medical condition and treatment from obtained from you as well as from others provided to you by us and other medical personnel (including doctors and nurses who give orders to allow us to provide treatment to you). It also includes information we give to other health care personnel to whom we transfer your care and treatment, and includes transfer of PHI via radio or telephone to the hospital or dispatch center as well as providing the hospital with a copy of the written record we create in the course of providing you with treatment and transport.

For payment: This includes any activities we must undertake in order to get reimbursed for the services we provide to you, including such things as organizing your PHI and submitting bills to insurance companies (either directly or through a third party billing company), management of billed claims for services rendered, medical necessity determinations and reviews, utilization review, and collection of outstanding accounts.

For health care operations: This includes quality assurance activities, licensing, and training programs to ensure that our personnel meet our standards of care and follow established policies and procedures, as well as certain other management functions.

Reminders for Scheduled Transports and Information on Other Services: We may also contact you to provide you with a reminder of any scheduled appointments for non-emergency ambulance, medical transportation, vaccinations/clinic appointments, or to provide information about other services we provide.

Use and Disclosure of PHI without Your Authorization: MCHD is permitted to use PHI *without* your written authorization, or opportunity to object in certain situations, including:

- For treatment, payment for services provided to you or in other health care operations or for the treatment activities of another health care provider;
- Healthcare and legal compliance activities;
- To a family member, other relative, or close personal friend or other individual involved in your care if we obtain your verbal agreement to do so or if we give you an opportunity to object to such a disclosure and you do not raise an objection. In certain other circumstances where we are unable to obtain your agreement and believe the disclosure is in your best interest.
- To a public health authority in certain situations by law (such as reporting abuse or neglect or domestic violence);
- For health oversight activities including audits or government investigations, inspections, disciplinary proceedings, and other administrative or judicial actions undertaken by the government (or their contractors) by law to oversee the health care system;
- For judicial and administrative proceedings as required by a court or administrative order, or in some cases in response to a subpoena or other legal process;
- For law enforcement activities in limited situations, such as when there is a warrant for the request, or when the information is needed to locate a suspect or stop a crime;
- For military, national defense and security and other special government functions;
- To avert a serious threat to the health and safety of a person or the public at large;
- For workers' compensation purposes, and in compliance with workers' compensation laws;
- To coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors for identifying a deceased person, determining cause of death, or carrying on their duties as authorized by law;
- We may release health information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ donation and transplantation;
- For research projects, but this will be subject to strict oversight and approvals.
- We may use or disclose health information about you in a way that does not personally identify you or reveal who you are.

Your authorization is required for: (1) Any use or disclosure of Psychotherapy notes, except as needed to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations; or use by the originator of the psychotherapy notes for treatment; and (2) Marketing activities, except our face to face communications with you; and (3) Sale of PHI.

Any other use or disclosure of PHI not described in this notice will only be made with your written authorization. You may revoke your authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that we have already used or disclosed medical information in reliance on that authorization.

Patient Rights: As a patient, you have a number of rights with respect to the protection of your PHI, including:

The right to access, copy or inspect your PHI: This means you may come to our offices and inspect and copy the PHI that we maintain. We will normally provide you with access to this information within 30 days of your request. We may also charge you a reasonable fee to copy any medical information that you have the right to access. In limited circumstances, we may deny you access to your medical information, and you may appeal certain types of denials. We have available forms to request access to your PHI and we will provide a written response if we deny you access and let you know your appeal rights. If you wish to inspect and copy your medical information, you should contact the privacy officer under the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

The Right to Confidential Communications: You have the right receive confidential communications of your PHI.

The right to amend your PHI: You have the right to ask us to amend written medical information that we may have about you. We will generally amend your information within 60 days of your request and will notify you when we have amended the information. We are permitted by law to deny your request to amend your medical information only in certain circumstances, like when we believe the information you have asked us to amend is correct in our records. If you wish to request that we amend the medical information that we have about you, you should contact the privacy officer under the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

The right to request an accounting of our use and disclosure of your PHI: You may request an accounting from us of certain disclosures of your medical information that we have made in the last six years prior to the date of your request. We are not required to give you an accounting of information we have used or disclosed for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations, or when we share your health information with our business associates, like our billing company or a medical facility from/to which we have transported you. We are also not required to give you an accounting of our uses of PHI for which you have already given us written authorization. Your accounting will be provided without charge; however, MCHD may charge a reasonable fee for additional accounting requests made by the same individual during a 12 month period. If you wish to request an accounting, you should contact the privacy officer under the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

The right to request that we restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI: You have the right to request that we restrict how we use and disclose your PHI that we have about you. Except in limited circumstances, MCHD is not required to agree to any restrictions you request, but any restrictions agreed to by MCHD are binding on MCHD. MCHD will restrict disclosure of PHI, when requested by an individual, if the disclosure is for the purpose of carrying out health care operations and the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or service for which the individual, or other person, has paid MCHD in full.

Internet, Electronic Mail, and the Right to Obtain Copy of Paper Notice on Request: If we maintain a web site, we will prominently post a copy of this Notice on our web site and make the Notice available electronically through the web site. If you allow us, we will forward you this Notice by electronic mail instead of on paper and you may always request a paper copy of the Notice.

Revisions to the Notice: MCHD reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time, and the changes will be effective immediately and will apply to all protected health information that we maintain. Any material changes to the Notice will be promptly posted in our facilities and posted to our web site, if we maintain one. You can get a copy of the latest version of this Notice by contacting the Privacy Officer identified below or at our website.

Your Legal Rights and Complaints: You also have the right to complain to us, or to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint with us or to the government. Should you have any questions, comments or complaints you may direct all inquiries to the privacy officer under the contact information listed at the end of this Notice.

If you have any questions or if you wish to file a complaint or exercise any rights listed in this Notice, please contact:

**Privacy Officer for MCHD
1400 South Loop 336 West
Conroe, Texas 77304
936-523-5016**

Revision Date and Effective Date of this Notice: March 28, 2016