

HIPAA PRIVACY NOTICE

(Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

Physicians Urgent Care is required to obtain a signature from all patients or responsible parties stating that they have had an opportunity to read this notice. If you should have any questions or desire further explanation of anything in this document, please ask for the Office Manager. Thank you for your participation.

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, Public Law 104-191, included the "Administrative Simplification" provisions that required the Department of Health and Human Services, (DHHS) to adopt national standards for electronic health care transactions. At the same time, Congress recognized that advances in electronic technology could erode the privacy of health information. Consequently, Congress incorporated into HIPAA provisions that mandated the adoption of Federal privacy protections for individually identifiable health information.

In response to the HIPAA mandate, DHHS published a final regulation in the form of the Privacy Rule in December, 2000, which will become effective April 14, 2003. This rule set national standards for the protection of health information (PHI), as applied to the three types of covered entities: health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers who conduct certain health care transactions electronically. By the compliance date of April 14, 2003, covered entities must implement standards to protect and guard against the misuse of individually identifiable health information. Failure to timely implement these standards may, under certain circumstances, trigger the imposition of civil or criminal penalties.

In keeping with the HIPAA mandate, Physicians Urgent Care has created its Notice of Health Information Practices. The Notice is designed to explain to our patients what their rights are concerning the use and disclosure of their protected health information, to what extent Physicians Urgent Care will use and disclose their protected health information, and examples outlining the necessity of using and disclosing protected health information for treatment; payment, and health care operations.

Notice of Health Information Practices

This notice describes how information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Understanding your Health Record/Information

Each time you visit a hospital, physician, or other health care provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document describing the care you received
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- A tool in educating health professionals
- A source of data for medical research
- A source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation
- A source of data for facility planning and marketing
- A tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve

- Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to:
 1. Ensure its accuracy
 2. Better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information
 3. Make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of the health care practitioner or facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522
- obtain a paper copy of the notice of information practices upon request
- inspect and obtain a copy of your health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.524
- amend your health record as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations
- revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken

Our Responsibilities

This organization is required to:

- maintain the privacy of your health information
- provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you
- abide by the terms of this notice
- notify you if we were unable to agree to a requested restriction
- accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, this Notice will be revised and we will provide you with a copy of our revised Notice upon your request.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

For More information or to report a problem

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the Office Manager at (662) 287-7138.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Office Manager or the Secretary of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations We will use your health information for treatment

For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your health care team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. Your Provider will document in your record his or her expectations of the members of your health care team. Members of your health care team will then record the actions they took and their observations. In that way, the provider will know how you are responding to treatment.

We will also provide your provider or a subsequent health care provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you.

We will use your health information for payment

For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

We will use your health information for regular health operations

For example: Members of the medical staff may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care and service we provide.

Business associates: There are some services provided in our organization through contacts with business associates. Examples include lawyers, accountants, record copying services, collection agencies and audit reporting agencies. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services rendered. All business associates are or will be contractually bound to appropriately safeguard your information in accordance with applicable federal rules and regulations.

Communication with Family: Health professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

Research: We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information

Food and Drug Administration (FDA): We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, product and product defects, or post marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement.

Workers' Compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public Health: As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

Correctional Institutions: Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.

Law enforcement: We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

Federal law makes provision for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority or attorney, provided that a work force member or business associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers or the public.