

## HIPAA PRIVACY NOTICE

**THIS NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.**

**PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

This Notice of Privacy Practices (the "Notice") describes the legal obligations of **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC** and your legal rights regarding your protected health information held by **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC** under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). Among other things, this Notice describes how your protected health information may be used or disclosed to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations, or for any other purposes that are permitted or required by law.

We are required to provide this Notice of Privacy Practices to you pursuant to HIPAA. The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects only certain medical information known as "protected health information." Generally, protected health information is individually identifiable health information, including demographic information, collected from you or created or received by a health care provider, a health care clearinghouse, a health plan, or your employer on behalf of a group health plan, that relates to: (1) your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition; (2) the provision of health care to you; or (3) the past, present or future payment for the provision of health care to you.

If you have any questions about this Notice or about our privacy practices, please contact:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

**Our Responsibilities:** We are required by law to:

- maintain the privacy of your protected health information;
- provide you with certain rights with respect to your protected health information;
- provide you with a copy of this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information; and
- follow the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice and to make new provisions regarding your protected health information that we maintain, as allowed or required by law. If we make any material change to this Notice, we will post the revised form on our website, [www.CoastalEarNoseandThroat.com](http://www.CoastalEarNoseandThroat.com)

## How We May Use and Disclose Your Protected Health Information:

Under the law, we may use or disclose your protected health information under certain circumstances without your permission. The following categories describe the different ways that we may use and disclose your protected health information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and present some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

**For Medical Treatment.** We may use or disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services, including coordination and management of your health care with another provider. For example, we may disclose your protected health information, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you or other physicians who may be treating you. Your protected health information may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you. In addition, we may disclose your protected health information from time-to-time to another physician or health provider (*e.g.* a specialist or laboratory) who, at the request of your physician, becomes involved in your care by providing assistance with your health care, diagnosis, or treatment to your physician.

**For Payment.** We may use or disclose your protected health information to determine your eligibility for health care benefits, to facilitate payment for the treatment and services you receive from health care providers, to determine benefit responsibility and coverage under your agreement with your health care provider. For example, we may tell your health care provider about your medical history to determine whether a particular treatment is experimental, investigational, or medically necessary, or to determine whether your insurance provider will cover the treatment. We may also share your protected health information with a utilization review or precertification service provider. Likewise, we may share your protected health information with another entity to assist with the adjudication or subrogation of health claims or to another health plan to coordinate benefit payments.

**For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose your protected health information for other health care operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to health care operations. For example: we may use medical information in connection with conducting quality assessment and improvement activities; underwriting, premium rating, and other activities relating to benefits provided by health care provider; submitting claims for stop-loss (or excess-loss) coverage; conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, audit services, and fraud & abuse detection programs; business planning and development such as cost management; and business management and general administrative activities.

However, we may not disclose your genetic information (for example, a predisposition to a genetic diseases or disorder) for the purposes of adjustment or modification of your benefits, rights, or premiums as they pertain to your health care provider.

**To Business Associates.** We may contract with individuals or entities known as Business Associates to perform various functions on our behalf or to provide certain types of services. In order to perform these functions or to provide these services, Business Associates will receive, create, maintain, use and/or disclose your protected health information, but only after they agree in writing to implement appropriate safeguards regarding your protected health information. For example, we may disclose your protected health information to a Business Associate to administer claims or to provide support services, such as utilization management, pharmacy benefit management or subrogation, but only after the Business Associate enters into a Business Associate contract with us.

**As Required by Law.** We will disclose your protected health information when required to do so by federal, state or local law. For example, we may disclose your protected health information when required by national security laws or public health disclosure laws.

**To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or *Safety*.** We may use and disclose your protected 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. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat. For example, we may disclose your protected health information in a proceeding regarding the licensure of a physician.

To **Plan Sponsors**. For the purpose of administering your health care provider's coverage plan, we may disclose to certain employees protected health information. However, those employees will only use or disclose that information as necessary to perform plan administration functions or as otherwise required by HIPAA, unless you have authorized further disclosures. Your protected health information cannot be used for employment purposes without your specific authorization.

## Special Situations:

In addition to the above, the following categories describe other possible ways that we may use and disclose your protected health information. For each category of uses or disclosures, we will explain what we mean and present some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

**Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, we may release your protected 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 or tissue donation and transplantation.

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

**Workers' Compensation.** We may release your protected health information for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work related injuries or illness.

**Public Health Risks.** We may disclose your protected health information for public health actions. These actions generally include the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury, or disability;
- To report births and deaths;
- To report child abuse or neglect;
- To report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- To notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
- 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;
- To notify the appropriate government authority if we believe that an adult patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree, or when required or authorized by law.

**Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

**Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your protected health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose your protected 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 disclose your protected health 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 victim's agreement;  
About a death that we believe may be the result of criminal conduct; and  
About criminal conduct.

**Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors.** We may release protected health 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.

**National Security and Intelligence Activities.** We may release your protected health information to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

**Inmates.** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or are in the custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose your protected health information to the correctional institution or law enforcement official if necessary: (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

**Research.** We may disclose your protected health information to researchers when: (1) the individual identifiers have been removed; or (2) when an institutional review board or privacy board has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of the requested information, and approves the research.

**Fundraising.** We may utilize your contact information (address, email, telephone number, etc. &) to contact you for fundraising purposes. You have the right to opt-out of receiving any such communications.

## Required Disclosures:

The following is a description of disclosures of your protected health information we are required to make.

**Government Audits.** We are required to disclose your protected health information to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services when the Secretary is investigating or determining our compliance with the HIPAA privacy rule.

**Disclosures to You.** When you request, we are required to disclose to you the portion of your protected health information that contains medical records, billing records, and any other records used to make decisions regarding your health care benefits. We are also required, when requested, to provide you with an accounting of most disclosures of your protected health information if the disclosure was for reasons other than for payment, treatment, or health care operations, and if the protected health information was not disclosed pursuant to your individual authorization.

## Other Disclosures:

**Personal Representatives.** We will disclose your protected health information to individuals authorized by you, or to an individual designated as your personal representative, attorney-in-fact, etc., so long as you provide us with a written notice/authorization and any supporting documents (i.e., power of attorney). Note: Under the HIPAA privacy rule, we do not have to disclose information to a personal representative if we have a reasonable belief that: (1) you have been, or may be, subjected to domestic violence, abuse or neglect by such person; or (2) treating such person as your personal representative could endanger you; and (3) in the exercise of professional judgment, it is not in your best interest to treat the person as your personal representative.

**Spouses and Other Family Members.** With only limited exceptions, we will send all mail to the named primary beneficiary under the health care provider agreement. This includes mail relating to a spouse or other family member covered under that agreement, and includes mail with information on the use of the benefits by a spouse and other family members and information on the denial of any benefits to a spouse and other family members. If

a covered person under another's health care provider agreement has requested Restrictions or Confidential Communications (see below under "Your Rights"), and if we have agreed to the request, we will send mail as provided by the request for Restrictions or Confidential Communications.

**Authorizations.** Other uses or disclosures of your protected health information not described above will only be made with your written authorization. You may revoke written authorization at any time, so long as the revocation is in writing. Once we receive your written revocation, it will only be effective for future uses and disclosures. It will not be effective for any information that may have been used or disclosed in reliance upon the written authorization and prior to receiving your written revocation.

In the event that **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC** seeks to utilize your protected health information for marketing purposes or seeks to sell your protected health information, **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC** must first request your written authorization to do so. You may deny this request without any adverse consequence.

**Health Information Exchange (HIE)** – We, along with other health care providers in New Jersey, participate in Jersey Health Connect, a health information exchange (“HIE”) which allows patient information to be shared electronically through a secured network that is accessible to the providers treating you. We may disclose your medical information to Jersey Health Connect HIE, unless you opt-out of participating in the HIE.

**Personal Health Record (PHR)** – Certain portions of your medical record are available electronically to you in a PHR which is accessible at MyMeridianHealth.com. Enrollment is required. We may disclose your medical information to the Jersey Health Connect HIE for purposes of adding your medical information to your Personal Health Record (“PHR”).

## **Your Rights:**

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information:

Right to **Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy certain protected health information that may be used to make decisions about your health care benefits. To inspect and copy your protected health information, you must submit your request in writing to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

If you request a copy of the information, you may be charged a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed by submitting a written request to:

Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs

**Right to Amend.** If you feel that the protected health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC**. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- is not part of the medical information kept by or for [insert name of health care provider];
- was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- is not part of the information that you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- is already accurate and complete.

If we deny your request, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and any future disclosures of the disputed information will include your statement.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an "accounting" of certain disclosures of your protected health information. The accounting will not include: (1) disclosures for purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations; (2) disclosures made to you; (3) disclosures made pursuant to your authorization; (4) disclosures made to friends or family in your presence or because of an emergency; (5) disclosures for national security purposes; and (6) disclosures incidental to otherwise permissible disclosures.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, paper or electronic). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be provided free of charge. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

**Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on your protected health information that we use or disclose for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on your protected health information that we disclose to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery that you had. Except as provided in the next paragraph, we are not required to agree to your request. However, if we do agree to the request, we will honor the restriction until you revoke it or we notify you.

We will comply with any restriction request if: (1) except as otherwise required by law, the disclosure is to your health care provider for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations (and is not for purposes of carrying out treatment); and (2) the protected health information pertains solely to a health care item or service that has been paid out-of-pocket in full.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

In your request, you must tell us: (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both; and (3) to whom you want the limitations to apply - for example, disclosures to your spouse.

**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. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

We will not ask you the reason for your request. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. We will accommodate all reasonable requests if you clearly provide information that the disclosure of all or part of your protected information could endanger you.

Right to be notified of a **Breach**. You have the right to be notified in the event that we (or a Business Associate) discover a breach of unsecured protected health information.

**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. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, you may make that request to:

Administrator, 3700 Route 33 Suite 101 Neptune, NJ 07753

**Complaints:**

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with **Coastal Ear, Nose and Throat, LLC** or with the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services as well as with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs. All complaints must be submitted in writing. You will not be penalized, or in any other way retaliated against, for filing a complaint.

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