



## NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION**  
**PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY**

**OUR PRIVACY PLEDGE:** The NWHSU-Clinic System is committed to full compliance with federal and state laws and regulations ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of our patients' and clients' personal health information; the clinicians and staff will make every effort to respect your privacy and keep confidential the health information entrusted to us.

**Our Duties:** We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information, to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and our privacy practices, and to abide by the terms of this notice while it is in effect. However, we reserve the right to change the terms of our privacy notices in accordance with federal or state law; any such change will apply to all of your information in our files.

University Clinic patients and clients will be asked to consent to the use or disclosure of your protected health information by agreeing to allow University clinicians or support staff members to:

- Use your health information within the University Clinic System, or disclose your health information to another health care provider or facility for the purpose of diagnosis, assessment or treatment of your condition.
- Use your health information within the University Clinic System, or disclose your examination, treatment and billing records to another party, such as an insurance carrier, an HMO or your employer for the purpose of receiving payment for services rendered to you.
- Use your health information, examination, treatment and billing records for quality control or other administrative purposes to efficiently and effectively operate the practice.
- Disclose your health information to business associates that perform services for the University's or your benefit and bill for it. All University business associates are contractually required by us to similarly safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of any personal health information disclosed to them.
- Use that information for research purposes, and then only after the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the research proposal, and established procedures to ensure maintenance of privacy and confidentiality.
- Use your personal health information to contact you by telephone, mail or e-mail with appointment reminders, NWHSU-Clinic System newsletters, information about treatment alternatives or other health related information that may be of interest to you. If not at home to receive an appointment reminder, a message may be left on your answering machine. We may also contact you for the purpose of providing University fundraising information.

**Required or Permitted Uses and Disclosures Without Your Consent:** Use or disclosure of your health information without your consent may be required or permitted in some circumstances, including but not limited to: 1) The extent that we are required or permitted to do so by applicable federal or state laws; 2) A public health authority for a wide range of public health activities when authorized to collect or receive your health information under federal or state law; 3) An appropriate government authority if there is reason to believe you are the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence; 4) Federal or state health care system and government benefit program oversight activities; 5) A response to a court order, or in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful purpose; 6) Law enforcement officials when required to report certain types of wounds or physical injuries, or to comply with court orders, a grand jury subpoena or administrative requests; 7) An appropriate law enforcement authority if the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of the person or the public; 8) A correctional institution if we provide health care services to you as an inmate; 9) Emergent care situations; and 10) Providing care to you that is related to a work-place injury to the extent necessary to comply with Minnesota's worker's compensation laws.

# NORTHWESTERN HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

## **The Health Care Information Rights of Our Patients and Clients Include:**

**Your Right to Revoke Consent:** You may revoke your consent to use or disclose your health information at any time; however, your revocation must be in writing; there are two circumstances under which we will not be able to honor your revocation request: 1) Your health information was released prior to receipt of your request to revoke your consent; and 2) Were you required to give your authorization as a condition for obtaining insurance, the insurance company may have a right to your health information if they decide to contest any of your claims.

**Your Right to Limit Uses or Disclosures:** You have a right to limit the use or disclosure of your personal health information. To do so you must inform us, in writing, of any health care providers, hospitals, employers, insurers or other individuals or organizations that you do not want us to disclose your health information to. We are not required to agree to your restrictions; however, if we agree with your restrictions, the restriction is binding on us.

**Your Right to Receive Confidential Communication Regarding Your Health Information:** We normally provide information about your health to you in person at the time you receive services from us. We may also mail you information regarding your health or about the status of your account. We will do our best to accommodate any reasonable, written request if you would like to receive information about your health or the services we provide at a place other than your home or if you would like the information in a different form.

**Your Right to Inspect and Copy Your Health Information:** You have the right to inspect and/or copy your health information for seven years from the date that the record was created or as long as the information remains in our files; such requests must be in writing. We may refuse your request, and charge you for retrieval and copying costs, only in accordance with Minnesota law.

**Your Right to Amend Your Health Information:** You have the right to request that we amend your health information for seven years from the date that the record was created or as long as the information remains in our files. Amendment requests must be in writing and give us reason to support the change you are asking us to make; however, the University is not obligated to comply with your request if it is judged to be unreasonable.

**Your Right to Receive an Accounting of the Disclosures We Have Made of Your Records:** You have the right to submit a written request for an accounting of the disclosures we have made of your health information for the last six years before the date of your request. By law, such accounting requests will include all disclosures made except for those that: 1) Are required for your treatment, to obtain payment for your services or to operate our practice; 2) Were made to you; 3) We are required or permitted to make without your consent or authorization; 4) Were disclosed with your written consent; 5) Were necessary to maintain a facility directory of individuals involved with your care; 6) Were disclosed for national security or intelligence purposes; 7) Were made to correctional or law enforcement officers; or 8) Were made prior to April 14, 2003.

*We will provide the first accounting within any 12-month period without charge. Retrieval and copying fees complying with Minnesota law may be charged for any additional accounting requests during the same 12-month period. When you make your request we will tell you the amount of the fee and you will have the opportunity to withdraw or modify your request.*

**Your Right to Obtain a Paper Copy of This Notice:** You may request a copy of this notice at any time or access this notice on the Northwestern Health Sciences University web site at [www.nwhealth.edu](http://www.nwhealth.edu).

**Your Right to Complain:** You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you feel that we have violated your privacy rights. We respect your right to do so and will not take any action against you if you do file a complaint. For further information about our privacy policies and practices, to express a concern or to file a complaint, please contact the University Compliance/Privacy Officer at:

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