

## Privacy Notice

*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.*

This privacy notice describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information to carry out treatment, payment or healthcare operations and for other purposes permitted or required by law. We must follow the privacy practices described in this notice while it is in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice effective for all future protected health information we maintain. We will post the most current notice and make it available to anyone. You may request a copy of our current notice at any time. This privacy notice also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information, which is health information created or received by your healthcare provider.

We may contract with business associates through the course of our operations such as those companies that process your health care claim, review insurance information, provide coding and billing services. We require the business associate to sign an agreement to safeguard the security and privacy of your health information.

## Uses & Disclosures of Protected Health Information

*We will use and disclose health information to provide treatment, obtain payment and conduct healthcare operations.*

1. **Treatment:** To provide and coordinate your healthcare. For example, we may disclose protected health information to physicians or other healthcare professionals who may be treating you or consulting with us. Examples include your physicians, anesthesia provider or pharmacist. We may disclose information to a pharmacy to fill a prescription or to a laboratory to contact a lab test or provide specimen results.
2. **Payment:** To obtain payment for the services. This may include contact with your insurance company to get the bill paid and to determine benefits of your health plan. We may also disclose information to another provider involved in your care so the provider can get paid. For example, we may give information to anesthesia providers so they can contact your insurer about payment for their service.
3. **Operations:** To perform our own healthcare activities such as quality assessment and improvement, licensing or credentialing and general business administration.
4. **Other Uses & Disclosure:** To remind you of appointments or to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, or to notify family or others involved in your care concerning your location or condition. You may object to these disclosures. If you do not or cannot object, we will use our professional judgment to make reasonable assumptions about to whom we can make disclosures.
5. **Other Uses & Disclosures Permitted:** To comply with laws and regulations.
  - A. **When legally required** by any federal, state or local law.
  - B. **When there are risks to public health**, such as:
    - To prevent, control or report disease, injury or disability as required or permitted by law.
    - To report vital events, such as birth or death as required by law.
    - To conduct public health surveillance, investigations and interventions as required by law.
    - To collect or report adverse events and product defects, track Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulated products, enable product recalls, repairs or replacements and review.
    - To notify a person who has been exposed to a communicable disease or who may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease as authorized by law.
    - To report to employer information about an individual who is a member of the workforce as legally permitted or required.
  - C. **To report suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence as required by law.**
  - D. **To conduct health oversight activities** such as audits; civil, administrative or criminal investigations, proceedings or actions; inspections; licensing or disciplinary actions; or other activities necessary for appropriate oversight as required or authorized by law.
  - E. **In connection with judicial and administrative proceedings** such as in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding to a subpoena we receive.
  - F. **For law enforcement purposes.** Examples are:
    - As required by law for reporting of certain types of wounds or other physical injuries.
    - Upon court order, court-ordered warrant, subpoena, summons or similar process.
    - For the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
    - Under certain limited circumstances, when you are the victim of a crime.

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- To law enforcement if there is concern that your health condition was the result of criminal conduct.
  - In an emergency to report a crime.
- G. **For organ donation or to coroners or funeral directors** such as for organ, eye or tissue donations; identification purposes; performing other duties authorized by law.
- H. **For research purposes** when the use of disclosure for research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and research protocols to address the privacy of your protected health information.
- I. **In the event of a serious threat to health or safety** and consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct if we believe in good faith that such use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or safety or to the health and safety of the public.
- J. **For specified government functions** relating to military and veterans activities, national security and intelligence activities, protective services, medical suitability determinations, correctional institutions and law enforcement situations.
- K. **For Worker's Compensation** to comply with worker's compensation laws or similar programs.

## Patient Rights

*Uses and disclosures permitted without authorization but with opportunity to object*

We may disclose your protected health information to your family member or a close personal friend if it is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your surgery or payment related to your surgery. We can also disclose your information in connection with trying to locate or notify family members or others involved with your care concerning your location and condition. You may object to these disclosures. If you do not object to these disclosures or we can infer from the circumstances that you do not object or we determine in the exercise of our professional judgment that it is in your best interest for us to make disclosure of information that is directly relevant to that person's involvement with your care, we may disclose your protected health information.

Other than as stated above, we will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. You may revoke your authorization in writing at any time except to the extent that we have taken action based upon the authorization. At the end of the Privacy Notice is information about how to contact the Privacy Officer to request information, copies, express concerns, complain or authorize additional uses and disclosure of your health information.

## You have the right to:

1. See and copy your medical records and other records used to make treatment and payment decisions about you. There are some limitations, based upon federal law. You must submit a written request. We may charge you a fee for copying, mailing or incurring other costs in complying with your request. We may deny your request to see or copy your protected health information if, in our professional judgment, we determine that the access requested is likely to endanger life or safety of you or another person. Depending on your circumstances, you have the right to request a review of this decision.
2. Request a restriction on uses and disclosures of your protected health information. You may ask us not to use or disclose certain parts of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also request that we not disclose your health information to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. If you request that the surgery center not disclose your protected health information to your health plan for purposes of payment or healthcare operations (but not treatment) and if you are paying the full amount from your own money for your treatment, the surgery center must honor your requested restriction. Otherwise, the facility is not required to agree to a restriction and we will notify you if we deny your request. If the facility does not agree to the requested restriction, we will abide by this agreement unless use or disclosure of the information becomes essential to provide emergency treatment. You may request a restriction by contacting the privacy officer.

3. The right to request to receive confidential communications by alternative means or at an alternative location. You have the right to request that we communicate with you in certain ways. We will not require you to provide an explanation for your request. We will accommodate reasonable requests. We may

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condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact.

4. The right to request we amend your protected health information. A request for an amendment must be in writing and it must explain why the information should be amended. Under certain circumstances, we may deny your request.
5. The right to receive an accounting of disclosures. You have the right to request an accounting of certain disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment of healthcare operations. We are not required to account for disclosures that you requested, disclosures that you agreed to by signing an authorization form, disclosures to friends or family members involved in your care, or certain other disclosures we are permitted to make without authorization. The request for an accounting must be made in writing and specify a time period. We are not required to provide an accounting for disclosures that occurred prior to April 14, 2003 or for periods of time in excess of six years. The first accounting you request during any 12-month period will be without charge. Additional accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable fee. After January 1, 2014 (or a later date as permitted by HIPAA), the list of disclosures will include disclosures made for treatment, payment or healthcare operations using an electronic health record, if we have one for you.
6. The right to obtain a paper copy of this notice at any time.
7. The right to be informed in writing of a breach where your unsecured protected health information has been accessed, acquired, used or disclosed to an unauthorized person or entity.

### **Our Duties**

The surgery center is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with this privacy notice of our duties and privacy practices. We are required to abide by terms of this notice as may be amended from time to time. We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all future protected health information that we maintain. If the surgery center changes its notice, we will provide a copy of the revised notice at your next visit. In the event there has been a breach of your unsecured protected health information, we will notify you.

### **Complaints**

You have the right to express complaints to the surgery center if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. We encourage you to express any concerns you have regarding the privacy of your information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint. You may complain to the surgery center's privacy officer in person, by phone or in writing. You also have the right to express complaints to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Contact Person**

To make requests, learn more, file a complaint or express concerns, please contact:

#### **Marie Marquina, Privacy Officer**

Valley Physicians Surgery Center, 18330 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge, CA 91325  
747.224.4004.

You may make contact in person, by phone or in writing.