

Kalamazoo Dermatology & Skin Cancer Center

6100 Newport Road, Suite 100, Portage, MI 49002

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This information is made available to all patients

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU MAY HAVE ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THIS NOTICE APPLIES TO ALL OF THE RECORDS OF YOUR CARE GENERATED BY THE PRACTICE, WHETHER MADE BY THE PRACTICE OR AN ASSOCIATED FACILITY.

This notice describes our practice's policies, which extends to health care professionals authorized to enter information into your chart (including physicians, PAs, RNs, etc.); all areas of the practice (front desk, administration, billing and collection, etc); all employees, staff and other personnel that work for or with our practice; and our business associates which includes facilities to which we refer patients, and so on.

The Practice provides this Notice to comply with the Privacy Regulations issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION:

We understand that your medical information is personal to you, and we are committed to protecting the information about you. As our patient, we create paper and electronic medical records about your health, our care for you, and the services and/or items we provide to you as our patient. We need this record to provide for your care and to comply with certain legal requirements.

We are required by law to make sure that the protected health information about you is kept private; provide you with Notice of our Privacy Practices and your legal rights with respect to protected health information about you; and to follow the conditions of the Notice that is currently in effect.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU.

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose protected health information that we have and share with others. Each category of uses or disclosures provides a general explanation and provides some examples of uses. Not every use or disclosure in a category is either listed or actually in place. The explanation is provided for your general information only.

- **Medical Treatment.** We use previously given medical information about you to provide you with current or prospective medical treatment or services. Therefore we may, and most likely will, disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, medical students, or hospital personnel who are involved in taking care of you or to whom you have been referred. Unless clearly instructed to the contrary, we may release medical information about you to a family member or friend who is involved in your medical care. We may also give information to someone who helps to pay or pays for your care.
- **Payment.** We may use and disclose medical information about you for services and procedures so they may be billed and collected from you, an insurance company, or any other third party. This could include clarification of treatment already received or prior authorization requirements.
- **Operational Uses.** We may use and disclose medical information about you so that we can run our Practice more efficiently and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. These uses may include reviewing our treatment and services to evaluate the performance of our staff, deciding what additional services to offer and where, deciding what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective.

- Appointment and Patient Recall Reminders. We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for medical care with the Practice or that you are due to receive periodic care from the Practice. This contact may be by phone, in writing, e-mail, or otherwise and may involve the leaving an e-mail, a message on an answering machines, or otherwise which could (potentially) be picked up by others.
- Required By Law. We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.
- Public Health Risks. Law or public policy may require us to disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:
 - to prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
 - 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;
- Lawsuits and Disputes. If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute. We shall attempt in these cases to tell you about the request so that you may obtain an order protecting the information requested if you so desire. We may also use such information to defend ourselves or any member of our practice in any actual or threatened action.
- Inmates. If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be 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.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice at any time. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we may receive from you in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice in the Practice. The notice will contain on the first page, in the top right-hand corner, the date of last revision and effective date. In addition, each time you visit the Practice for treatment or health care services you may request a copy of the current notice in effect.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Practice or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with the Practice, contact our office manager, who will direct you on how to file an office complaint. All complaints must be submitted in writing, and all complaints shall be investigated, without repercussion to you. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**

OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION.

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission, unless those uses can be reasonably inferred from the intended uses above. If you have provided us with your permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.

PATIENT RIGHTS

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES YOUR RIGHTS AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF THIS PRACTICE REGARDING THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION.

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Upon proof of an appropriate legal relationship, records of others related to you or under your care (guardian or custodial) may also be disclosed.

To inspect and copy your medical record, you must submit your request in writing to our HIPAA Compliance Officer. Ask the front desk person for the name of the HIPAA Compliance Officer

- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that the medical information we have about you in your record is incorrect or incomplete, then you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the Practice maintains your medical record. To request an amendment, your request must be submitted in writing, along with your intended amendment and a reason that supports your request to amend. The amendment must be dated and signed by you and notarized.

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:

- 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 medical information kept by or for the Practice;
 - Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
 - Is inaccurate and incomplete.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you, to others for purposes *other* than treatment, payment or healthcare operations. To request this list, you must submit your request in writing. Your request must state a time period not longer than six (6) years back.
 - **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care (a family member or friend). For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about treatment you received. *We are not required to agree to your request and we may not be able to comply with your request.* If we do agree, we will comply with your request except that we shall not comply, even with a written request, if the information is needed to provide emergency treatment to you.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing. In your request, you indicate:

- What information you want to limit;
 - Whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and
 - To whom you want the limits to apply, (e.g., disclosures to your children, parents, spouse, etc.)
- **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, that we not leave voice mail or e-mail, or the like. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will attempt to accommodate all *reasonable* requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish us to contact you.
 - **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.