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## **HIPPA**

### **Protecting Your Health Information**

#### **What you need to know about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act**

**Identity theft. Credit card fraud. Computer viruses. Concern for the privacy and security of personal of personal information, has never been greater. Our concern for the safety and security of your personal healthcare information has never been taken more seriously.**

There are now new Federal government Regulations that will help standardize privacy and security requirements across the country.

#### **New Regulations Passed**

The new regulations are part of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPPA for short. HIPPA does three primary things:

1. It helps standardize and simplify the way healthcare organizations exchange electronic health care data.
2. It provides consumers with additional protections for getting and maintaining health insurance coverage: although, it does not guarantee coverage.
3. It creates new security rules to ensure the safety and privacy of individual health information and medical records.

#### **HIPPA Ensures the Privacy and Security of Individual Health Information**

Currently, individual state laws govern use and disclosure of this information, creating many inconsistencies and gaps in the way your health information is protected. HIPPA sets minimum security and privacy standards for healthcare organizations to follow. If a state has more stringent privacy and security laws, then those would be followed instead. In addition, HIPPA sets heavy penalties for violations of these standards and the misuse of personal health information.

#### **Defining Individual Health Information**

Every time you go to see a doctor, are admitted to a hospital, fill a prescription or send a claim to an insurance company, a record is made of your confidential health information. This type of information is referred to

as individually health information and is the type of information regulated by HIPPA. It can be in any format – electronic, paper, or oral.

Healthcare organizations that collect and manage this type of information and are therefore covered by these regulations including physicians, physical therapists, mental health professionals, dentists, chiropractors, optometrist, podiatrists, and others; hospitals; health plans; employers; healthcare clearinghouses such as claims processors; and other healthcare organizations who conduct administrative and financial transactions.

### **Added Control Over Health Information**

Under HIPPA, you have new rights to understand and control how your health information is used.

\* **Right to education**

Healthcare providers and health plans are required to provide you with a clear written explanation of how they intend to use and disclose your information.

\* **Right to access medical records**

You have the right to see and get copies of your medical records, request changes and receive a history of non-routine disclosures of your personal health information.

\* **Right to consent**

Healthcare providers are required to obtain prior consent before sharing personal health information for purposes other than treatment, payment and healthcare operation.

\* **Right to Recourse**

You have the right to file a formal complaint if you believe that violations of the regulations were made.

In general, HIPPA tries to find a balance between protecting your privacy and allowing the appropriate flow of information between healthcare providers that is necessary for you to access care and receive quality healthcare services.

### **Want to learn more?**

For a copy of our practice privacy protections, please ask the receptionist at the front desk.