

Notice of Privacy Practices

"PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION"

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.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION

Suncoast Hospice, and all of its affiliates, including Suncoast Hospice Foundation, Suncoast Institute and the AIDS Services Association of Pinellas, Inc. hereinafter known as SCH, may use your health information for purposes of providing you treatment, obtaining payment for your care and conducting health care operations. SCH has established policies to protect health information as defined by the Privacy Rule of the Administrative Simplification provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. SCH also has established policies to guard against unnecessary disclosures of your health information.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION FOR TREATMENT, PAYMENT AND HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS

To Provide Treatment.

SCH may use your health information to coordinate care within SCH and with others involved in your care, such as your attending physician, members of the SCH interdisciplinary team and other health care professionals who have agreed to assist SCH in coordinating care. For example, physicians involved in your care will need information about your symptoms in order to prescribe appropriate medications. SCH also may disclose your health care information to individuals outside of SCH who are involved in your care including family members, clergy who you have designated, pharmacists, suppliers of medical equipment or other health care professionals.

To Obtain Payment.

SCH may include your health information in invoices to collect payment from third parties for the care you receive from SCH. For example, SCH may be required by your health insurer to provide information regarding your health care status so that the insurer will reimburse you or SCH. SCH also may need to obtain prior approval from your insurer and may need to explain to the insurer your need for SCH care and the services that will be provided to you.



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To Conduct Health Care Operations.

SCH may use and disclose health information for its own operations in order to facilitate the function of SCH and as necessary to provide quality care to all of SCH's patients. Health care operations includes such activities as:

- Quality assessment and improvement activities.
- Activities designed to improve health or reduce health care costs.
- Protocol development, case management and care coordination.
- Contacting health care providers and patients with information about treatment alternatives and other related functions that do not include treatment.
- Professional review and performance evaluation.
- Training programs including those in which students, trainees or practitioners in health care learn under supervision.
- Training of non-health care professionals.
- Accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.
- Review and auditing, including compliance reviews, medical reviews, legal services and compliance programs.
- Business planning and development including cost management and planning related analyses and formulary development.
- Business management and general administrative activities of SCH.
- Fundraising for the benefit of SCH.

For example SCH may use your health information to evaluate its staff performance, combine your health information with other SCH patients in evaluating how to more effectively serve all SCH patients, disclose your health information to SCH staff and contracted personnel for training purposes, use your health information to contact you as a reminder regarding a visit to you, or contact you as part of general fundraising and community information mailings (unless you tell us you do not want to be contacted).

If you are in a SCH inpatient or residential facility, SCH may disclose certain information about you in a SCH directory, including your name, your general health status, your religious affiliation and your location while you are in the facility. SCH may disclose this information to people who ask for you by name and may also disclose your religious affiliation to members of the clergy. Please inform us if you do not want your information to be included in the directory.

For Fundraising Activities.

SCH may use information about you including your name, address, phone number and the dates you received care in order to contact you or your family to raise money for SCH. SCH may also release this information to a related SCH foundation. If you do not want SCH to contact you or your family, notify SCH using the information at the bottom of this page and indicate that you do not wish to be contacted.



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For Appointment Reminders.

SCH may use and disclose your health information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for a visit.

For Treatment Alternatives.

SCH may use and disclose your health information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

When Legally Required.

SCH will disclose your health information when it is required to do so by any Federal, State or local law.

When There Are Risks to Public Health.

SCH may disclose your health information for public activities and purposes in order to:

- Prevent or control disease, injury or disability, report disease, injury, vital events such as birth or death and the conduct of public health surveillance, investigations and interventions.
- Report adverse events, product defects, to track products or enable product recalls, repairs and replacements and to conduct post-marketing surveillance and compliance with requirements of the Food and Drug Administration.
- Notify a person who has been exposed to a communicable disease or who may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease.
- Notify an employer about an individual who is a member of the workforce as legally required.

To Report Abuse, Neglect Or Domestic Violence.

SCH is allowed to notify government authorities if SCH believes a patient is the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. SCH will make this disclosure only when specifically required or authorized by law or when the patient agrees to the disclosure.

To Conduct Health Oversight Activities.

SCH may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for activities including audits, civil administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary action. SCH, however, may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and your health information is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits.



In Connection With Judicial And Administrative Proceedings.

SCH may disclose your health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal as expressly authorized by such order or in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process, but only when SCH makes reasonable efforts to either notify you about the request or to obtain an order protecting your health information.

For Law Enforcement Purposes.

As permitted or required by State law, SCH may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain law enforcement purposes as follows:

- As required by law for reporting of certain types of wounds or other physical injuries pursuant to the court order, warrant, subpoena or 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.
- To a law enforcement official if SCH has a suspicion that your death was the result of criminal conduct including criminal conduct at SCH.
- In an emergency in order to report a crime.

To Family & Friends.

SCH may disclose your health information to a member of your family or to someone else who is involved in your medical care or payment for care. SCH may notify family or friends if you are in the hospital and tell them your general condition. In the event of a disaster, we may provide information about you to a disaster relief organization so they can notify your family of your condition and location. SCH will not disclose your information to family or friends if you object. We may also disclose to your legal representatives who have authority to act on your behalf (for example, to parents of minors or to legal guardians).

To Coroners And Medical Examiners.

SCH may disclose your health information to coroners and medical examiners for purposes of determining your cause of death or for other duties, as authorized by law.

To Funeral Directors.

SCH may disclose your health information to funeral directors consistent with applicable law and if necessary, to carry out their duties with respect to your funeral arrangements. If necessary to carry out their duties, SCH may disclose your health information prior to and in reasonable anticipation of your death.



For Organ, Eye Or Tissue Donation.

In the event you have chosen to be a donor, SCH may use or disclose your health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking or transplantation of organs, eyes or tissue for the purpose of facilitating the donation and transplantation.

For Research Purposes.

SCH may, under very select circumstances, use your health information for research. Before SCH discloses any of your health information for such research purposes, the project will be subject to an extensive approval process.

In An Emergency.

In an emergency, SCH may use or disclose limited health information if it believes, in its professional judgment, that the disclosure is in your best interests.

In the Event of A Serious Threat To Health Or Safety.

SCH may, consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct, disclose your health information if SCH, in good faith, believes that such 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.

For Specified Government Functions.

In certain circumstances, the Federal regulations authorize SCH to use or disclose your health information to facilitate specified government functions relating to military and veterans, national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, medical suitability determinations and inmates and law enforcement custody.

For Worker's Compensation.

SCH may release your health information for worker's compensation or similar programs.

AUTHORIZATION TO USE OR DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION

Other than is stated above, SCH will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. If you or your representative authorizes SCH to use or disclose your health information, you may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.

YOUR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

You have the following rights regarding your health information that SCH maintains:



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Right to request restrictions.

You may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. You have the right to request a limit on SCH 's disclosure of your health information to someone who is involved in your care or the payment of your care. However, SCH is not required to agree to your request. If you wish to make a request for restrictions, please contact SCH by using the information at the bottom of this page.

Right to receive confidential communications.

You have the right to request that SCH communicate with you in a certain way. For example, you may ask that SCH only conduct communications pertaining to your health information with you privately with no other family members present. If you wish to receive confidential communications, please contact SCH by using the information at the bottom of this page. SCH will not request that you provide any reasons for your request and will attempt to honor your reasonable requests for confidential communications.

Right to inspect and copy your health information.

You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, including billing records. A request to inspect and copy records containing your health information may be made by contacting SCH using the information at the bottom of this page. If you request a copy of your health information, SCH may charge a reasonable fee for copying and assembling costs associated with your request.

Right to amend health care information.

You or your representative have the right to request that SCH amend your records, if you believe that your health information is incorrect or incomplete. That request may be made as long as the information is maintained by SCH. A request for an amendment of records must be made in writing to SCH by using the information at the bottom of this page. SCH may deny the request if it is not in writing or does not include a reason for the amendment. The request will be denied if your health information records were not created by SCH, if the records you are requesting are not part of SCH's records, if the health information you wish to amend is not part of the health information you or your representative are permitted to inspect and copy, or if, in the opinion of SCH, the records containing your health information are accurate and complete.

Right to an accounting.

You or your representative have the right to request an accounting of disclosures of your health information made by SCH for certain reasons, including reasons related to public purposes authorized by law and certain research. The request for an accounting must be made in writing to SCH by using the information at the bottom of this page. The request should specify the time period for the accounting starting on or after April 14, 2003. Accounting requests may not be made for periods of time in excess of six (6) years. SCH will provide the first accounting you request during any 12-month period without charge. Subsequent accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable cost-based fee.



Right to a paper copy of this notice.

You or your representative have a right to a separate copy of this Notice at any time even if you or your representative have received this Notice previously. To obtain a separate copy, please contact SCH by using the information at the bottom of this page. Patients and/or their personal representatives may also obtain a copy of the current version of SCH's Notice of Privacy Practices at its website, www.thehospice.org

DUTIES OF SCH

SCH is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide to you and your representative this Notice of its duties and privacy practices. SCH is required to abide by the terms of this Notice as may be amended from time to time. SCH reserves the right to change the terms of its Notice and to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information that it maintains. If SCH makes material changes to its Notice, SCH will make a copy of the revised Notice available to you or your appointed representative. You or your personal representative have the right to express complaints to SCH and to the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services if you or your representative believe that your privacy rights have been violated. Any complaints to SCH should be made in writing by using the information at the bottom of this page. SCH encourages you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint.

CONTACT PERSON

SCH has designated the Vice President of Planning as its contact person for all issues regarding patient privacy and your rights under the Federal privacy standards.

FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS REGARDING THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT:

Suncoast Hospice
Vice President of Planning
5771 Roosevelt Blvd.
Clearwater, Florida 33760
(727) 586-4432

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Notice is effective April 14, 2003.

Our employees and volunteers respect your right to privacy and are committed to safeguarding the privacy of your health information.



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