



## NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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.

The Health Insurance and Portability & Accountability Act of 1998 (HIPAA) is a federal program that requires that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally, are kept properly confidential. This Act gives you, the patient, significant new rights to understand and control how your health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse personal health information.

As required by HIPAA, we have prepared this explanation of how we are required to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may use and disclose your health information.

We may use and disclose your medical records only for each of the following purposes:  
Treatment, payment and health care operations.

- **Treatment** means providing, coordinating, or managing health care and related services by one or more health care providers. An example of this would include a physical examination.
- **Payment** means such activities as obtaining reimbursement for services, confirming coverage, billing or collection activities, and utilization review. An example of this would be sending a bill for your visit to your insurance company for payment.
- **Health care operations** include the business aspects of running our practice, such as conducting quality assessment and improvement activities, auditing functions, cost-management analysis, and customer service. An example would be an internal quality assessment review.
- **Appointment Reminder** – We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care. We may leave messages on your answering machine confirming appointments and inquiring if you went for recommended testing in an attempt to obtain test results in advance of your appointment. We also may send out postcards and letters reminding patients to schedule recommended appointments.
- **Leaving Messages** – We will leave messages on answering machines and with family members relaying normal test results.
- **As Required By Law** – We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law. 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 in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process.



We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all references to individually identifiable information.

Any other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorization in writing and we are required to honor and abide by that written request, except to the extent that we have already taken actions relying on your authorization.

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information, which you can exercise by presenting a written request to the Privacy Officer.

- The right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information in writing including those related to disclosures to family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you. We are, however, not required to agree to a requested restriction. If we do agree to a restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it.
- The right to reasonable requests to receive confidential communications of protected health information from us by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- The right to obtain a copy of your protected health information. You must submit your request in writing to Bucks County Gastroenterology. There may be a fee charged as permitted by law for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request.
- The right to amend you protected health information.
- The right to receive an accounting of disclosures of protected health information.
- The right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us upon request.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information.

This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003 and we are required to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices and to make the new notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. We will post and you may request a written copy of a revised Notice of Privacy Practices from this office.

You have recourse if you feel that your privacy protections have been violated. You have the right to file a written complaint with our office, or with the Department of Health & Human Service, Office of Civil Rights, about violations of the provisions of this notice or the policies and procedures of our office. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Please contact us for more information: For more information about HIPAA  
or to file a complaint:

The U.S. Department of Health & Human  
Services  
Office of Civil Rights  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201  
(202)619-0257  
Toll Free: 1-877-696-6775

