

# 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.

## University of Virginia's Plan's Commitment to Privacy

The University of Virginia Health Plan (the "Plan") is committed to protecting the privacy of your protected health information. Protected health information, which is referred to as "health information" in this Notice, is information that identifies you and relates to your physical or mental health, or to the provision or payment of health services for you. The Plan creates, receives, and maintains your health information when it provides health, dental, prescription drug, and medical flexible spending account benefits to you and your eligible dependents. The Plan also pledges to provide you with certain rights related to your health information.

By this Notice of Privacy Practices ("Notice"), the Plan informs you that it has the following legal obligations under the federal health privacy provisions contained in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") and the related regulations ("federal health privacy law"):

- to maintain the privacy of your health information;
- to provide you with this Notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information; and
- to abide by the terms of this Notice currently in effect.

This Notice also informs you how the Plan uses and discloses your health information and explains the rights that you have with regard to your health information maintained by the Plan. For purposes of this Notice, "you" or "yours" refers to insured participants and eligible dependents.

This Notice was initially effective as of April 14, 2003. This notice is revised effective January 1, 2011.

## Information Subject to this Notice

The Plan creates, receives, and maintains certain health information about you to help provide health benefits to you, as well as to fulfill legal and regulatory requirements. The Plan obtains this health information, which identifies you, from applications and other forms that you complete, through conversations you may have with the Plan's administrative staff and health care professionals, and from reports and data provided to the Plan by health care service providers, insurance companies, and other third parties. The health information the Plan has about you includes, among other things, your name, address, phone number, birthdate, social security number, and medical and health claims information. This is the information that is subject to the privacy practices described in this Notice.

This Notice does not apply to health information created, received, or maintained by the University of Virginia on behalf of the non-health employee benefits that it sponsors, such as disability benefits and life insurance benefits. This Notice also does not apply to health information that the University of Virginia requests, receives, and maintains about you for employment purposes, such as employment testing, or determining your eligibility for medical leave benefits or disability accommodations.

## Summary of the Plan's Privacy Practices

**The Plan's Uses and Disclosures of Your Health Information:** Generally, you must provide a written authorization to the Plan for it to use or disclose your health information. However, the Plan may use and disclose your health information without your authorization for the administration of the Plan and for processing claims. The Plan also may use and disclose your health information without your authorization for other purposes as permitted by the federal health privacy law, such as health and safety, law enforcement or emergency purposes. The details of the Plan's uses and disclosures of your health information are described below.

**Your Rights Related to Your Health Information:** The federal health privacy law provides you with certain rights related to your health information. Specifically, you have the right to:

- Inspect and/or copy your health information;
- Request that your health information be amended;
- Request an accounting of certain disclosures of your health information;
- Request certain restrictions related to the use and disclosure of your health information;
- Request to receive your health information through confidential communications;
- File a complaint with the Plan or the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated; and
- Receive a paper copy of this Notice.

These rights and how you may exercise them are detailed below.

**Changes in the Plan's Privacy Practices:** The Plan reserves its right to change its privacy practices and revise this Notice as described below.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions or concerns about the Plan's privacy practices or about this Notice, if you wish to obtain additional information about the Plan's privacy practices, or if you wish to submit a complaint, please contact:

UVa Health Plan Ombudsman  
914 Emmet Street  
P.O. Box 400127  
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4127  
(434) 924-4346

### ***Detailed Notice of the Plan's Privacy Policies – the Plan's Uses and Disclosures***

Except as described in this section, as provided for by the federal health privacy law, or as you have otherwise authorized, the Plan only uses and discloses your health information for the administration of the Plan and the processing of health claims. The uses and disclosures that do not require your written authorization are described below.

## **Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

- For Treatment. The Plan may disclose your health information to a health care provider, such as a hospital or physician, to assist the provider in treating you. The Plan does not anticipate making disclosures "for treatment" purposes. However, if necessary, the Plan may make such disclosures without your authorization.
- For Payment. The Plan may use and disclose your health information without your authorization so that your claims for health care services can be paid according to the Plan's terms. For example, the Plan may use and disclose your health information to determine whether certain health care services that you seek are covered by the Plan or to process your health care claims. The Plan also may disclose your health information to coordinate payment of your health care with others who may be responsible for certain costs.
- For Health Care Operations. The Plan may use and disclose your health information without your authorization so that it can operate efficiently and in the best interests of its participants. For example, the Plan may disclose your health information for underwriting purposes, for business planning purposes, or to attorneys who are providing legal services to the Plan.

## **Uses and Disclosures to Business Associates**

The Plan may disclose certain of your health information without your authorization to its "business associates," which are third parties that assist the Plan in its operations. For example, the Plan may share your claims information with a business associate that provides claims processing services to the Plan, and the Plan may disclose your health information to its business associates for actuarial projection and audit purposes, and legal services. The Plan enters contracts with its business associates requiring that the privacy your health information be protected.

## **Uses and Disclosures to the Plan Sponsor**

The Plan may disclose your health information, without your authorization, to the Plan Sponsor, which is the University of Virginia, for plan administration purposes, such as performing quality assurance functions, and for monitoring and auditing functions. The Plan Sponsor will certify to the Plan that it will protect the privacy of your health information and that it has amended the plan documents to reflect its obligation to protect the privacy of your health information.

## **Other Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made Without Your Authorization**

The federal health privacy law provides for specific uses or disclosures of your health information that the Plan may make without your authorization, some of which are described below.

- *Required By Law.* The Plan may use and disclose health information about you as required by the law. For example, the Plan may disclose your health information for the following purposes: for judicial and administrative proceedings pursuant to legal process and authority; to report information related to victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence; or to assist law enforcement officials in their law enforcement duties.
- *Health and Safety.* Your health information may be disclosed to avert a serious threat to the health or safety of you or any other person pursuant to applicable law. Your health information also may be disclosed for public health activities, such as preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.
- *Government Functions.* Your health information may be disclosed to the government for specialized government functions, such as intelligence, national security activities, and protection of public officials. Your health information also may be disclosed to health oversight agencies

that monitor the health care system for audits, investigations licensure, and other oversight activities.

- *Active Members of the Military and Veterans.* Your health information may be used or disclosed in order to comply with laws and regulations related to military service or veterans' affairs.
- *Workers' Compensation.* Your health information may be used or disclosed in order to comply with laws and regulations related to Workers' Compensation benefits.
- *Emergency Situations.* Your health information may be used or disclosed to a family member or close personal friend involved in your care in the event of an emergency, or to a disaster relief entity in the event of a disaster.
- *Involved Family and Friends.* We may disclose health information about you to a relative, a friend, or other person involved in your health care or payment for your health care, such as the subscriber of your health benefits plan, provided the information is directly relevant to that person's involvement with your health care or payment for that care. For example, if a family member or a caregiver calls us with prior knowledge of a claim, we may confirm whether or not the claim has been received and paid. You have the right to stop or limit this kind of disclosure by calling the toll-free Member Services number on your ID card.
- *Personal Representatives.* Your health information may be disclosed to people that you have authorized to act on your behalf, or people who have a relationship with you that gives them the right to act on your behalf. Examples of personal representatives are parents for minors and those who have Power of Attorney for adults.
- *Treatment and Health-Related Benefits Information.* The Plan and its business associates may contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may interest you, including, for example, alternative treatment, services, and medication.
- *Research.* Under certain circumstances, the Plan may use or disclose your health information for research purposes as long as the procedures required by law to protect the privacy of the research data are followed.
- *Organ and Tissue Donation.* If you are an organ donor, the Plan may use or disclose your health information to an organ donor or procurement organization to facilitate an organ or tissue donation transplantation.
- *Deceased Individuals.* The health information of a deceased individual may be disclosed to coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors so that those professionals can perform their duties.

**Uses and Disclosures for Fundraising and Marketing Purposes.** The Plan does not use your health information for fundraising or marketing purposes.

## **Any Other Uses and Disclosures Require Your Express Written Authorization**

Uses and disclosures of your health information other than those described above or otherwise allowed by the federal health privacy law will be made only with your express written authorization. You may revoke your authorization in writing. If you do so, the Plan will not use or disclose your health information authorized by the revoked authorization, except to the extent that the Plan already has relied on your authorization.

Once your health information has been disclosed pursuant to your authorization, the federal health privacy law protections may no longer apply to the disclosed health information, and that information may be re-disclosed by the recipient without your or the Plan's knowledge or authorization.

## **Your Health Information Rights**

You have the following rights regarding your health information that the Plan creates, receives and maintains. If you are required to submit a written request related to these rights, as described below, you should address such requests to:

UVa Health Plan Ombudsman  
914 Emmet Street  
P.O. Box 400127  
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4127  
(434) 924-4346

### **Right to Inspect and Copy Health Information**

You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of your health information that is maintained by the Plan. This includes, among other things, health information about your plan eligibility, plan coverages, claim records, and billing records.

To inspect and copy health information maintained by the Plan, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman. The Plan may charge a fee for the cost of copying and/or mailing the health information that you have requested. In limited instances, the Plan may deny your request to inspect and copy your health information. If that occurs, the Plan will inform you in writing. In addition, in certain circumstances, if you are denied access to your health information, you may request a review of the denial.

### **Right to Request That Your Health Information Be Amended**

You have the right to request that the Plan amend your health information if you believe the information is incorrect or incomplete.

To request an amendment, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman. This request must provide the reason(s) that support your request. The Plan may deny your request if you have asked to amend information that:

- Was not created by or for the Plan, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of your health information maintained by or for the Plan;
- Is not part of the health information that you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- Is accurate and complete.

The Plan will notify you in writing as to whether it accepts or denies your request for an amendment to your health information. If the Plan denies your request, it will explain how you can continue to pursue the denied amendment.

### **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures**

You have the right to receive a written accounting of disclosures, which is a list of certain disclosures of your health information by the Plan to others. Generally, the following disclosures are not part of an accounting: disclosures that occur before April 14, 2003; disclosures for treatment, payment, or health care operations; disclosures made to or authorized by you; and certain other disclosures. The accounting covers up to six years prior to the date of your request (but not disclosures made before April 14, 2003).

To request an accounting of disclosures, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman. If you want an accounting that covers a time period of less than six years, please state that in your written request for an accounting. The first accounting that you request within a twelve month period will be free. For additional accountings in a twelve month period, the Plan may charge you for the cost of providing the accounting. But, the Plan will notify you of the cost involved before processing the accounting so that you can decide whether to withdraw or modify your request before any costs are incurred.

### **Right to Request Restrictions**

You have the right to request restrictions on your health care information that the Plan uses or discloses about you to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request restrictions on your health information that the Plan discloses to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as a family member or friend. The Plan is not required to agree to your request for such restrictions, and the Plan may terminate its agreement to the restrictions you requested.

To request restrictions, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman that explains what information you wish to limit, and how and/or to whom you would like the limits to apply. The Plan will notify you in writing as to whether it agrees to your request for restrictions. To restrict access to your online health information by the subscriber of your health policy, contact Aetna Customer Service at 1-800-887-9072.

### **Right to Request Confidential Communications, or Communications by Alternative Means or at an Alternative Location**

You have the right to request that the Plan communicate your health information to you in confidence by alternative means or in an alternative location. For example, you can ask that the Plan only contact you at work or by mail, or that the Plan provide you with access to your health information at a specific, reasonable location.

To request confidential communications by alternative means or at an alternative location, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman. Your written request should state the reason(s) for your request, and the alternative means by or location at which you would like to receive your health information. If appropriate, your request should state that the disclosure of all or part of your health information by non-confidential communications could endanger you. The Plan will accommodate reasonable requests and notify you appropriately.

**Right to File a Complaint**

You have the right to complain to the Plan and/or to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated. To file a complaint with the Plan, submit a written complaint to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman named above.

You will not be retaliated or discriminated against and no services, payment, benefits, or privileges will be withheld from you because you file a complaint with the Plan or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice**

You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice. To make such a request, submit a written request to the UVa Health Plan Ombudsman named above.

***Changes in the Plan's Privacy Policies***

The Plan reserves the right to change its privacy practices and make the new practices effective for all protected health information that it maintains, including your protected health information that it created or received prior to the effective date of the change and protected health information it may receive in the future. If the Plan materially changes any of its privacy practices that are covered by this Notice, it will revise its Notice and provide you with the revised Notice within 60 days of the revision. In addition, copies of the revised Notice will be made available to you upon your written request, and any revised notice will be available at the Plan's website, [www.hr.virginia.edu](http://www.hr.virginia.edu).