

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

LAKEVIEW PEDIATRICS, LLC

1525 W. Belmont Ave.
Suite 103
Chicago, IL. 60657
773-880-1738

PURPOSE:

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.

1. WHAT THIS NOTICE IS ABOUT

The privacy of your medical information is important to us. We understand that your medical information is personal and we are committed to protecting it. We create a record of the care and services you receive at our organization. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice will tell you about the ways we may use and share information about you. We also describe your rights and certain duties we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

We are required to tell you about our legal duties to protect the privacy of your medical information and about our privacy practices - that is the purpose of this notice. You have the right to receive a copy of this notice.

We are required to abide by the terms of this notice. We have the right to change our privacy practices at any time and to apply any new policies to all of the medical information we obtain. If we do, we are required to change this notice and to make a copy of the new notice available to you at your request. We can only make changes in our privacy practices prospectively - that is, unless the change we are making is required by law, we can only apply our new privacy practices on and after the date on which we change this notice.

This notice is effective April 14, 2003

When we refer to "your" information in this notice, we mean the patient's information. When we refer to "your" rights, we mean the patient's rights, which may be exercised by the patient, an authorized representative, parent or legal guardian. We describe certain limitations on the rights of authorized representatives, parents or legal guardians at the end of this statement.

We are required by law to keep information about your medical care private. This includes any information we obtain from other health care providers, as well as information that we create as part of our medical practice. Our legal duty only applies to information about your medical care which includes or is attached to data that identifies you personally (for example, your name, social security number, photo, etc.) or from which identity could be discovered. If all of the identifying data has been removed from your medical information, we can disclose that "de-identified" information to anyone who, in our opinion, has a legitimate need for it.

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We are required to make the change you request unless (1) we didn't create the information (for example, the information is a copy of a medical record from another doctor) and the person who created the information can still be contacted about an amendment; (2) the information with which you disagree is not information we would be permitted to give to you in the first place; or (3) we think the information is complete and accurate as it is.

If we make the change, we are required to send a notice of the corrected information to any other person that you believe needs to know about it (provided you tell us how to contact that person). We are also required to send a notice of the corrected information to any person who we know has the uncorrected information and may be relying on it to your detriment.

If we deny your request, you have the right to give us a written statement of disagreement (why you think the information needs to be changed). This statement cannot be unreasonably long. If we choose, we can prepare our own rebuttal statement (a statement as to why we think you are wrong). We are required to give you a copy of our rebuttal.

We are required to file your request for amendment and, if applicable, your statement of disagreement and our rebuttal statement in your medical information file, and give those documents (or a summary of them) to any person who later receives your medical information from us.

Your right to know who received your medical information from us. You have the right to receive from us a summary showing to whom we have given your medical information without your consent. We are required to tell you who received the information, the date of the disclosure, the purpose of the disclosure and a description of the information that was provided. **Exceptions:** We are not required to keep records of - and therefore do not have to tell you about - disclosures we make without your consent (1) for purposes of your treatment (including disclosures we might make to other persons involved in your care), payment for the services we provide to you, and to operate our medical practice; (2) to national intelligence agencies; (3) to correctional institutions; or (4) to government oversight and law enforcement agencies if they ask us not to tell you about the disclosure for a specific period of time. We also are not required to keep records of disclosures we make to you, your authorized representative or to other persons with your permission or at your direction.

We are not required to account for disclosures made more than six years ago and, in any event, before April 14, 2003.

Your right to complain about our privacy practices. If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint with us and with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. You must make your complaint to us in writing and include a statement that describes exactly how you think your rights have been violated. You may send your complaint to us as described in the next section. ***We will not retaliate against you in any way for filing a complaint.***

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Public Health. We can disclose medical information to federal and state public health officials who are performing official duties such as tracking communicable diseases, injuries, vital events (e.g. births), and investigating public health issues. This also includes disclosures to the federal Food and Drug Administration related to monitoring the safety of food, drugs and medical devices.

Law Enforcement. We can disclose medical information for law enforcement purposes, including identification and location of criminal suspects, missing persons and victims, and the reporting of suspected criminal activity. This also includes disclosures to assist federal protective (e.g. Secret Service), national security and intelligence agencies in performing their authorized duties.

Government Oversight Agencies. We can disclose medical information to governmental agencies that oversee federal or state health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

Courts. We can disclose medical information for judicial or administrative proceedings, including disclosures required by subpoena or court order.

Armed Forces. we can disclose medical information to the military about persons in the military.

Prisons. We can disclose medical information to correctional or other custodial facilities about persons who are in their custody.

Research. We can disclose medical information for research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board or a privacy board that meets the requirements of federal law.

Decedents. We can disclose medical information about deceased individuals to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors.

Workers Compensation. We can disclose medical information necessary to comply with workers compensation law.

Employers. We can disclose medical information to employers, but only if we have been hired by the employer to conduct medical surveillance of the workplace or to evaluate a work-related illness or injury.

Public Safety. We can disclose medical information to governmental authorities or other appropriate persons, even if we are not required to do so, if we reasonably believe that the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the patient, another person or the general public.

Privacy Law Enforcement. We are required to disclose private medical information upon request to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of enforcing the federal privacy law.