

State of Ohio  
Employee Health Plans  
30 East Broad Street, 27th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY  
PRACTICES**

**Effective April 1, 2014**

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.

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes the privacy practices of the State of Ohio's self-funded medical plans, prescription drug plan, behavioral health plan, population health management plan, dental plans, vision plans, flexible spending account (but not dependent care flexible spending account) which are administered by the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services, Office of Benefits Administration Services (collectively "the Plan"). The Plan is required by the privacy regulations issued under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA") to maintain the privacy of Protected Health Information (PHI), and to provide individuals with notice of the legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information and to abide by the terms of the notice currently in effect.

**Position on Privacy**

The Plan is committed to maintaining the privacy of its enrolled persons. As part of your participation in the health plans, the Plan and its business partners (whom we use to administer and deliver health care services) receive health information through the operation and administration of the plans. PHI refers to any information, transmitted or maintained in any form or medium, which the Plan creates or receives that relates to your physical or mental health, the delivery of health care services to you or payment for health care services that identifies you or could be used to identify you. PHI and other Plan records are maintained in compliance with applicable State and federal laws.

If you have questions about this notice, please contact the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below.

**How the Plan May Use or Disclose Your Protected Health Information**

The Plan may only use or disclose your medical information as described in this notice. Not every authorized use or disclosure in each category is listed, however all permitted uses and disclosures fall into one of these general categories.

**1. Uses and Disclosures of Your PHI For Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

**For Treatment.** The Plan may make requests, uses, and disclosures of your PHI as necessary for treatment purposes. For example, the Plan may make disclosures to your health plan regarding eligibility, or make disclosures to health care professionals involved in your care.

**For Payment.** The Plan may make requests, uses, and disclosures of your PHI as necessary for payment purposes. For example, the Plan may use information regarding your medical procedures and treatment so the third party administrator can process and pay claims. We may also disclose your PHI for the payment purposes of a health care provider or a health plan.

**For Health Care Operations Purposes.** The Plan may use and disclose your PHI as necessary for health care operations. For example, Health Care Operations include, but are not limited to, use and disclosures: by health plan of PHI to the Plan for administration of the health plans; for quality assessment of the plans through the distribution and analysis of satisfaction surveys; in connection with the performance of disease management functions; and for general administrative activities, including customer service, cost management, data management, communications, claims and operational audits, and legal services. In addition, a health plan may send you information based on your own health information to inform you of possible treatment options or alternatives that may be available to you. The Plan may also combine your health information with that of other enrolled persons to evaluate the coverage provided and the quality of care received.

**2. Other Uses and Disclosures of PHI for Which Your Authorization is Not Required**

In limited instances, the law allows the Plan to use and disclose your PHI without your authorization in the following situations:

- A. **As Required By Law.** The Plan will use or disclose your PHI when required by federal, state or local law.
- B. **Family and Individuals Involved in Your Care.** The Plan may release medical information about

you to a family member or friend who is involved in your medical care. The Plan may request that your family members verify their identity and demonstrate they are acting on your behalf.

- C. **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** The Plan may use and disclose medical information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public.
- D. **Public Health Activities.** The Plan may disclose medical information about you for public health activities including activities related to preventing and controlling disease or, when required by law, to notify public authorities concerning cases of abuse or neglect.
- E. **Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence.** The Plan may disclose medical information to a government authority, including a social service or protective agency if the Plan reasonably believes you to be a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.
- F. **Health Oversight Activities.** The Plan may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency if authorized by law in order to monitor the overall health care system, the conduct of government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.
- G. **Lawsuits/Legal Disputes.** The Plan may disclose medical information about you in the course of an administrative or judicial proceeding, such as in response to a subpoena, discovery request, warrant, or a lawful court order.
- H. **Law Enforcement Purposes.** The Plan may release medical information to law enforcement officials for law enforcement purposes including investigation of a crime or to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
- I. **Specialized Government Functions.** The Plan may release medical information to authorized federal officials for the purposes of intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.
- J. **Military.** If you are a member of the armed forces, the Plan may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities.
- K. **Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, the Plan may release information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ

donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

- L. **Workers' Compensation.** The Plan may release medical information about you for workers' compensation or similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- M. **Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors.** The Plan may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner to, for example, identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. The Plan may also release medical information about patients to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.
- N. **Business Associates.** The State contracts with parties who provide necessary services for the operation of its plans. For example, the Plan is assisted in its operations by third party administrators. These persons who assist the Plan are called business associates. At times, the Plan may disclose PHI so they can provide services. The Plan will require that any business associates who receive PHI safeguard the privacy of that information.
- O. **Disclosure to You.** The Plan may disclose your medical information to you.

### 3. Other Uses and Disclosures of PHI Requiring Your Written Authorization

In all situations other than those described previously, the Plan will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing your PHI. If you have provided authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time, unless the Plan has already disclosed the information.

### 4. Changes To Existing Laws

Certain provisions of Ohio law may impose greater restrictions on uses and/or disclosures of PHI, or otherwise be more stringent than federal rules protecting the privacy of PHI. If such provisions of Ohio law apply to a use or disclosure of PHI or under other circumstances described in this notice, the Plan must comply with those provisions.

### Your Legal Rights

Federal privacy regulations provide you the following rights associated with your medical information:

**Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information the Plan uses or discloses about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. (For example, you

could ask that the Plan not disclose or use information about a certain medical treatment you received.) **The Plan is not required to agree to your request.** To request restrictions on the use or disclosure of your PHI, you must make your request in writing to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below. In your request, you must explain (1) what PHI you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit the Plan's use, disclosure, or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply (for example, your spouse).

**Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at a specific phone number or address. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below. The Plan will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. After the Plan receives your request, the information may be forwarded to your health plan. As a result, additional reasonable information may be required from you by your plan to process the request.

**Right to Inspect and Copy Your Information.** You have the right, in most cases, to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below. If you request a copy of the information, the Plan may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other unusual supplies associated with your request. Under Ohio and federal law, the Plan may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed.

**Right to Request an Amendment.** If you feel that medical information about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask the Plan to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below. You must provide reasons that support your request. If the Plan denies your request for any reason under state or federal law, the Plan will permit you to submit a written statement of disagreement to be kept with your PHI. The Plan may reasonably limit the length of such statement of disagreement.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of certain disclosures the Plan has made of medical information about you. This accounting will not include many routine disclosures including, but not limited to, those made to you or pursuant to your authorization, those made for treatment, payment and operations purposes as discussed

above, those made for national security and intelligence purposes, and those made to law enforcement in compliance with law.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below. Your request must state the time period that may not be longer than six (6) years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (paper or electronic). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, the Plan may charge you for the costs of providing the list. The Plan will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

**Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice even if you have received it electronically. You may make your request to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact below.

**Right to Breach Notification.** You have the right to notification if a breach of your unsecured PHI has occurred.

### This Notice Is Subject To Change

The Plan reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and its privacy practices at any time. If such a change is made, the new terms and policies will be effective for all of the information that the Plan has about you as well as any information it may hold about you in the future, and will be posted at [das.ohio.gov](http://das.ohio.gov) and may be provided by mail if required. If you want to ensure you have the latest version of this notice, you may contact the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below.

### Whom to Contact

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact listed below or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

To file a complaint with the Plan, mail your written comments to the address below:

To file a complaint with the Secretary of US Department of Health and Human Services, contact the Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Health and Human Services, 233 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 240, Chicago, IL 60601.

**Complaints must be submitted in writing. You will not be penalized or retaliated against for filing a complaint.**

Questions regarding this Notice may be directed to the Plan's HIPAA Privacy Contact:

DAS -- HIPAA Privacy Contact  
30 East Broad St., 27<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
614.466.6205; email: [gregory.pawlack@das.state.oh.us](mailto:gregory.pawlack@das.state.oh.us)