

## ST. CLAIR SPECIALTY PHYSICIANS, P.C.

### 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.**

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how St. Clair Specialty Physicians, P.C. (referred to in this Notice as "SCSP") may use and disclose your protected health information (referred to in this Notice as "PHI"). This Notice also sets out SCSP's obligations concerning your PHI and describes your rights to access and control your PHI. This Notice has been drafted in accordance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and we are required to abide by the terms of the current version of this Notice.

***Questions and Further Information.*** If you have any questions or want additional information about this Notice or the policies and procedures described in this Notice, please contact SCSP using the Contact Information provided at the end of this Notice.

#### **SCSP's RESPONSIBILITIES**

SCSP is required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your PHI, to provide you with notice of its legal duties and its privacy practices with respect to your PHI, and to notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured Protected Health Information. SCSP will abide by the terms of this Notice as currently in effect.

#### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

SCSP reserves the right to revise its privacy practices and the provisions of this Notice at any time, as permitted or required by applicable law, and make the new provisions effective for all PHI that it maintains. Any revisions to our Notice may be retroactive. If SCSP makes a material change to this Notice, it will provide a revised Notice to you during your next visit to our office and upon request. A copy of our current Notice is posted in our office and on our website.

#### **USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION**

The following is a description of when SCSP is permitted or required to use or disclose your PHI.

##### **What is Protected Health Information?**

"Protected Health Information" or ("PHI") is information that individually identifies you and that we create or get from you or from another health care provider, health plan, your employer, or a health care clearinghouse and that relates to (1) your past, present, or future physical or mental health or conditions, (2) the provision of health care to you, or (3) the past, present, or future payment for your health care.

##### **Uses and Disclosures for Which Your Authorization is not Required.**

- **For Treatment.** We may use or disclose your PHI to give you medical treatment or services and to manage and coordinate your medical care. For example, your PHI may be provided to a physician or other health care provider (e.g., a specialist or laboratory) to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician or other health care provider has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you or provide you with a service. We may use and disclose PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment for medical care, or to contact you to tell you about possible treatment options or alternatives or health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.
- **For Payment.** We may use and disclose your PHI so that we can bill for the treatment and services you receive from us and can collect payment from you, a health plan, or a third party. This use and disclosure may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the health care services we recommend for you, such as making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. For

example, we may need to give your health plan information about your treatment in order for your health plan to agree to pay for that treatment.

- **For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose PHI for our health care operations. For example, we may use your PHI to internally review the quality of the treatment and services you receive and to evaluate the performance of our team members in caring for you. We also may disclose information to physicians, nurses, medical technicians, medical students, and other authorized personnel for educational and learning purposes.
- **Research.** We may use and disclose your PHI for research purposes, but we will only do that if the research has been specially approved by an authorized institutional review board or a privacy board that has reviewed the research proposal and has set up protocols to ensure the privacy of your PHI. Even without that special approval, we may permit researchers to look at PHI to help them prepare for research, for example, to allow them to identify patients who may be included in their research project, as long as they do not remove, or take a copy of, any PHI. We may use and disclose a limited data set that does not contain specific readily identifiable information about you for research. However, we will only disclose the limited data set if we enter into a data use agreement with the recipient who must agree to (1) use the data set only for the purposes for which it was provided, (2) ensure the confidentiality and security of the data, and (3) not identify the information or use it to contact any individual.
- **As Required by Law.** We will disclose PHI about you when required to do so by international, federal, state, or local law.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose PHI when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health or safety or to the health or safety of others. But we will only disclose the information to someone who may be able to help prevent the threat unless it is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.
- **Business Associates.** We may disclose PHI to our business associates who perform functions on our behalf or provide us with services if the PHI is necessary for those functions or services. For example, we may use another company to do our billing, or to provide transcription or consulting services for us. All of our business associates are obligated, under contract with us, to protect the privacy and ensure the security of your PHI.
- **Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ or tissue donor, we may use or disclose your PHI to organizations that handle organ procurement or transplantation – such as an organ donation bank – as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.
- **Military and Veterans.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may disclose PHI as required by military command authorities. We also may disclose PHI to the appropriate foreign military authority if you are a member of a foreign military.
- **Workers' Compensation.** We may use or disclose PHI for workers' compensation or similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- **Public Health Activities.** We may disclose PHI for public health activities. This includes disclosures to: (1) a person subject to the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") for purposes of reporting adverse events (or similar reports with respect to food or dietary supplements), product defects or problems (including problems with the use or labeling of a product), or biological product deviations, if the disclosure is made to the person required or directed to report such information to the FDA; to track products if the disclosure is made to a person required or directed by the FDA to track the product; to enable product recalls, repairs, or replacement (including locating and notifying individuals who have received products of product recalls, withdrawals, or other problems); or to conduct post-marketing surveillance to comply with requirements or at the direction of the FDA.; (2) a public health authority authorized to collect such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling

disease, injury or disability; (3) a public health authority authorized to receive reports of births and deaths; (4) a public health authority authorized to receive reports of child abuse or neglect; (5) a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition if we are authorized by law to notify such individual; (6) a school, about an individual who is a student or prospective student of the school if the information is limited to proof of immunization, the school is required to have such proof prior to admitting the individual and we document your agreement to the disclosure.

- **Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence.** We may disclose PHI to the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence and the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to make that disclosure.

**Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, licensure, and similar activities that are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

- **Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose PHI in response to a court or administrative order. We also may disclose PHI in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other legal process from someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to get an order protecting the information requested. We may also use or disclose your PHI to defend ourselves in the event of a lawsuit.
- **Law Enforcement.** We may disclose PHI, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes to a law enforcement official.
- **Military Activity and National Security.** If you are involved with military, national security or intelligence activities or if you are in law enforcement custody, we may disclose your PHI to authorized officials so they may carry out their legal duties under the law.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors.** We may disclose PHI to a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director so that they can carry out their duties with respect to a decedent.
- **Inmates.** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the lawful custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose PHI to the correctional institution or law enforcement official if the disclosure is necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other inmates; (3) the health and safety of the officers or employees of or others at the correctional institution; (4) the health and safety of such individuals and officers or other persons responsible for transporting of inmates; (5) law enforcement on the premises of the correctional institution; or (6) the administration and maintenance of the safety, security and good order of the correctional institution.

Our use and disclosure of your PHI must comply not only with the HIPAA Privacy Rule but also with other applicable State of Michigan laws. The State of Michigan places certain additional restrictions on the use and disclosure of PHI relating to mental health, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS conditions, and certain genetic information. In these instances, your specific authorization to disclose may be required.

#### **Uses and Disclosures That Require Us to Give You an Opportunity to Object and Opt Out**

- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your PHI that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may disclose a decedent's PHI to family members and others who were involved in the care or

payment for care of the decedent prior to death, unless doing so is inconsistent with any prior expressed preference of the individual that is known to us.

- **Disaster Relief.** We may disclose your PHI to disaster relief organizations that seek your PHI to coordinate your care, or notify family and friends of your location or condition in a disaster relief situation. We will provide you with an opportunity to agree or object to such a disclosure whenever we practicably can do so.
- **Fundraising Activities.** We may use or disclose certain PHI, as necessary, in order to contact you to raise funds for our own benefit. You have the right to opt out of receiving fundraising communications.

### **Your Written Authorization is Required for Other Uses and Disclosures**

The following uses and disclosures of your PHI will be made only with your written authorization:

1. Uses and disclosures of PHI for marketing purposes (unless the communication is in the form of a face to face communication or is a promotional gift of nominal value); and
2. Disclosures that constitute a sale of your PHI.

Other uses and disclosures of PHI not covered by this Notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written authorization. If you do give us an authorization, you may revoke it at any time by submitting a written revocation to our Privacy Officer and we will no longer disclose PHI under the authorization. But disclosure that we made in reliance on your authorization before you revoked it will not be affected by the revocation.

### **Your Rights Regarding Your PHI**

You have the following rights, subject to certain limitations, regarding your PHI:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy PHI that may be used to make decisions about your care or payment for your care. We have up to 30 days to make your PHI available to you (in certain situations we may extend such period for an additional 30 days) and we may charge you a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may not charge you a fee if you need the information for a claim for benefits under the Social Security Act or any other state or federal needs-based benefit program. We may deny your request in certain limited circumstances. If we do deny your request, you have the right to have the denial reviewed by a licensed healthcare professional who was not directly involved in the denial of your request, and we will comply with the outcome of the review.
- **Right to a Summary or Explanation.** We can also provide you with a summary of your PHI, rather than the entire record, or we can provide you with an explanation of the PHI which has been provided to you, so long as you agree to this alternative form and pay the associated fees.
- **Right to an Electronic Copy of Electronic Medical Records.** If your PHI is maintained in an electronic format (known as an electronic medical record or an electronic health record), you have the right to request that an electronic copy of your record be given to you or transmitted to another individual or entity. We will make every effort to provide access to your PHI in the form or format you request, if it is readily producible in such form or format. If the PHI is not readily producible in the form or format you request your record will be provided in either our standard electronic format or if you do not want this form or format, a readable hard copy form. We may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for the labor associated with transmitting the electronic medical record.
- **Right to Get Notice of a Breach.** You have the right to be notified following our discovery of a breach of any of your unsecured PHI.

- **Right to Request Amendments.** If you feel that the PHI we have is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for us. A request for amendment must be made in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address provided at the end of this Notice and it must tell us the reason for your request. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment. If we deny your request for an amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to ask for an “accounting of disclosures,” which is a list of the disclosures we made of your PHI in the six years prior to the date on which the accounting is requested. This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations as described in this Notice. It excludes disclosures we may have made to you, for a resident directory, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations. Additionally, limitations are different for electronic health records. The first accounting of disclosures you request within any 12-month period will be free. For additional requests within the same period, we may charge you for the reasonable costs of providing the accounting. We will tell what the costs are, and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request before the costs are incurred.
- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the PHI we use or disclose for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the PHI we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. To request a restriction on who may have access to your PHI, you must submit a written request to the Privacy Officer. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. We are not required to agree to your request, unless you are asking us to restrict the use and disclosure of your PHI to a health plan for payment or health care operation purposes and such information you wish to restrict pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you have paid us “out-of-pocket” in full. If we do agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your PHI in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. We may terminate our agreement to a restriction if you agree or request the termination, or we inform you of the termination except in such event the termination is effective only for PHI created or received after we notify you.
- **Out-of-Pocket-Payments.** If you paid out-of-pocket (or in other words, you have requested that we not bill your health plan) in full for a specific item or service, you have the right to ask that your PHI with respect to that item or service not be disclosed to a health plan for purposes of payment or health care operations, and we will honor that request.
- **Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you only in certain ways to preserve your privacy. For example, you may request that we contact you by mail at a specific address or call you only at your work number. You must make any such request in writing and you must specify how or where we are to contact you. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. We will not ask you the reason for your request.
- **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically. You may request a copy of this Notice at any time.

**Disclosures to You.** SCSP is required to disclose to you or your personal representative most of your PHI when you request access to this information. SCSP will disclose your PHI to an individual who has been designated by you as your personal representative and who has qualified for such designation in accordance with relevant law. Prior to such a disclosure, however, SCSP must be given written documentation that supports and establishes the basis for the personal representation. SCSP may elect not to treat the person as your personal representative if it has a reasonable belief that you have been, or may be, subjected to domestic violence, abuse, or neglect by such person; that treating such person as your personal representative could endanger you; or if SCSP determines, in the exercise of its professional judgment, that it is not in your best interest to treat the person as your personal representative.

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**How to Exercise Your Rights**

To exercise your rights described in this Notice, send your request, in writing, to our Privacy Officer at the address listed at the beginning of this Notice. We may ask you to fill out a form that we will supply. To exercise your right to inspect and copy your PHI, you may also contact your physician directly. To get a paper copy of this Notice, contact our Privacy Officer by phone or mail.

**COMPLAINTS**

You may file a complaint with St. Clair Specialty Physicians or with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

To file a complaint with us, contact our Privacy Officer at the address listed at the end of this Notice. All complaints must be made in writing and should be submitted within 180 days of when you knew or should have known of the suspected violation. There will be no retaliation against you for filing a complaint.

To file a complaint with the Secretary, mail it to: Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201. Call (202) 619-0257 (or toll free (877) 696-6775) or go to the website of the Office for Civil Rights, [www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/), for more information. There will be no retaliation against you for filing a complaint.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Notice of Privacy Practices is effective as of September 23, 2013.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

To exercise any of the rights described in this Notice, for more information, or to file a complaint, please contact:

The Privacy Official  
St. Clair Specialty Physicians, P.C.  
22201 Moross Road, Suite 150  
Detroit, MI 48236  
(313) 886-8787