

## **Patient Privacy Notice**

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used, disclosed, and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of your medical information and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

**If you have any questions about this notice, please contact our privacy officer at (269) 428-2800.**

### **Our pledge to protect your privacy:**

South Shore Women's Health Care (SSWHC) is committed to protecting the privacy of your medical information. Your care and treatment is recorded in a medical record. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. We share your medical record with the providers involved in your care. We share your information only to the extent necessary to collect payment for the services we provide, to conduct our business operations, and to comply with the laws that govern health care. We will not use or disclose your information for any other purpose without your permission. This Notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by this office whether made by your doctor or one of the office's employees.

This office is required by law to:

Make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept private. Give you this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and Follow the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect.

### ***How this Office May Use and Disclose Your Medical Information***

The following describes the different ways that your medical information may be used or disclosed by this office. For clarification we have included some examples. Not every possible use or disclosure is specifically mentioned. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose your medical information will fit within one of these general categories.

**For Treatment:** We will use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment and services. We may disclose medical information about you to other physicians, specialist's technicians and other office personnel who are involved in providing your medical treatment.

**For Payment:** We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at this office may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party administrator. For example, we may need to give your medical record information about the treatment you receive here so your insurance plan will pay us or reimburse you for the treatment. We may also tell the insurance plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain a prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment.

**For Medical Care Operation:** We may use and disclose medical information about you for office operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run our office and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. For example, we may use medical information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine medical information about many of our patients to decide what additional services the office should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective. We may also disclose information to other physicians, specialists, technicians, and other office and/or medical personnel for review and learning purposes. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of medical information so others may use it to study medical research without learning the identity of the specific patients.

**Appointment Reminders:** We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care at this office.

**Treatment Alternatives:** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

**Medical Related Benefits and Services:** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about medical related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

**Research:** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose medical information about you for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing certain medical materials or pharmaceuticals against other materials/pharmaceuticals used for the same purpose.

**As Required by Law:** We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law. For example, disclosure may be required by Workers' Compensation statutes and various public health statutes in connection with required reporting of certain diseases, child or adult abuse, neglect, domestic violence, adverse drug reactions, etc.

**To Avoid a Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** We 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 or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

**Medical Oversight Activities:** We may disclose Medical information to a government or oversight agency for activities authorized by law. For example, disclosures of your medical information may be made in connection with audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure renewals, etc.

**Lawsuits and Disputes:** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may use your medical information to defend the office or to respond to a court order.

**Law Enforcement:** We may release medical information about you if required by law when asked to do so by a law enforcement official.

**Coroners and Medical Examiners:** We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person or to determine the cause of death.

**Your Rights Regarding Your Medical Information:** You have the following rights regarding the medical information this office maintains about you:

**Right to Inspect and Copy:** You have the right to inspect and copy your medical information. You have the right to copy your medical information; you must first submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer of this office. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your requests. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. For information regarding such a review, please contact the Privacy Officer of this organization.

**Right to Amend:** If you feel that medical information about you 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 this office.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the Privacy Officer of this office. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that: Was not created by us, is not part of the medical information kept by this office or is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy or accurate and complete.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures:** You have the right to request an 'accounting of disclosures'. This is a list of the disclosures this office made of your medical information. To request this accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer of this office. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before February 26, 2003.

**Right to Request Restrictions:** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the use or disclosure we make of your medical information. We are not required to agree to your request for a restriction. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to the Privacy Officer of this office.

**Right to Request Confidential Communication:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you only in a certain manner. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail. To request confidential communication, you must make your request in writing to the receptionist at this office. We will accommodate all reasonable requests.

**Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice:** You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice.

### ***Revisions to this Notice***

**We reserve the right to revise this Notice:** Any revised Notice will be effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of any revised Notice in this office. Any revised Notice will contain on the first page, in the top right-hand corner, the effective date. In addition, each time you visit the office we will offer you a copy of the current Notice in effect.

### ***Complaints:***

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with this office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with this office, contact the Privacy Office at this office: Angie Mann RN BSN, Practice Manager, South Shore Women's Health Care, 2690 S. Cleveland Avenue, St. Joseph, MI 49085. All requests must be in writing.

### ***Other Uses of Medical Information***

Other uses and disclosures of your medical information not covered by this Notice of Privacy Practices will be made only with your written authorization. If you provide us such an authorization in writing to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that authorization in writing at any time. If you revoke your authorization we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization.