

Our Pledge Regarding Your Health Information

Hertford County Public Health Authority (HCPHA) understands that information about you and your health is confidential. We are committed to protecting that privacy information. Each time you visit a HCPHA facility, we create a record of the care and services you receive. We need this record to provide quality care and comply with legal requirements. All health records created by Hertford County Public Health Authority are subject to the rules and regulations of this "Notice of Privacy Practices".

This "Notice of Privacy Practices" has been created to help you understand our legal duties to protect your protected health information (PHI) and how we may use and disclose your PHI in relation to your past, present, and future physical health condition or illness and its treatment.

If you require further information about matters covered by this notice, please contact:

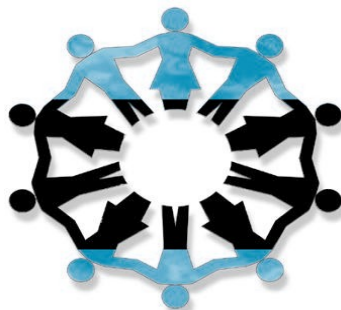
Renée Davenport, Privacy Officer, HCPHA
714 Evans Street
Ahoskie, NC 27910
(252) 332-6650
Fax: (252) 332-6654



**Disease Prevention, Health Protection,
Health Promotion
Everywhere. Everyday. Everybody.**

HERTFORD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES



Curtis Dickson, M.Ed., Health Director

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL
INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND
DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THIS
INFORMATION.**

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

EFFECTIVE DATE - This notice is effective April 14, 2003. We are required to abide by the terms of the notice currently in effect, but we reserve the right to change these terms as necessary for all protected health information that we maintain.

If we change the terms of this notice (while you are receiving service), we will promptly revise and distribute a revised notice to you as soon as practicable by mail or hand delivery.

Revised Date: October 25, 2006

How We May Use and Disclose Health Information About You

Hertford County Public Health Authority uses and discloses **protected health information (PHI)** in a number of ways connected to your treatment, payment for your care, and health care operations. We have not listed every use or disclosure within the categories below, but all permitted uses and disclosures will fall within one of the following categories. In addition, some uses and disclosures will require your specific authorization.

- **Treatment:** Providing, coordinating or managing health care and related services, consultation between health care providers relating to a patient or referral of a patient for health care from one provider to another. For example, we meet on a regular basis to discuss how to coordinate care to patients and schedule visits.
- **Payment:** Billing and collecting for services provided, determining plan eligibility and coverage, utilization review (UR), pre-certification, medical necessity review. For example, occasionally the insurance company requests a copy of the medical record be sent to them for review prior to paying the bill.
- **Health Care Operations:** General agency administrative and business functions, quality assurance/improvement activities; medical review; auditing functions; developing clinical guidelines; determining the competence or qualifications of health care professionals; evaluating agency performance; conducting training programs with students or new employees; licensing, survey, certification, accreditation and credentialing activities; internal auditing and certain fundraising and marketing activities. For example, our agency periodically holds clinical record review meetings where the consulting professional of our record review committee will audit clinical records for meeting professional standards and utilization review.

The following uses and disclosures do not require your consent, and include, but are not limited to, a release of information contained in financial records and/or medical records, including information concerning communicable diseases such as Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), drug/alcohol abuse, and laboratory test results, medical history, treatment progress and/or any other related information to:

1. Your insurance company, self-funded or third-party health plan, Medicare, Medicaid or any other person or entity that may be responsible for paying or

processing for payment any portion of your bill for services;

2. Any person or entity affiliated with or representing us for purposes of administration, billing and quality and risk management;
3. Any hospital, nursing home or other health care facility to which you may be admitted;
4. Any assisted living or personal care facility of which you are a resident;
5. Any physician providing you care;
6. Licensing and accrediting bodies, including the information contained in the OASIS Data Set to the state agency acting as a representative of the Medicare/Medicaid program;
7. Contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about other health activities we provide;
8. Contact you to raise funds for the Agency; and
9. Other health care providers to initiate treatment.

We are permitted to use or disclose information about you without consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

1. In **emergency treatment situations**, if we attempt to obtain consent as soon as practicable after treatment;
2. Where **substantial barriers to communicating with you** exist and we determine that the consent is clearly inferred from the circumstances;
3. Where we are **required by law** to provide treatment and we are unable to obtain consent;
4. Where the use or disclosure of medical information about you is **required by federal, state or local law**;
5. To provide information **to state or federal public health authorities**, as required by law to: prevent or control disease, injury or disability; report births and deaths; report child abuse or neglect; report reactions to medications or problems with products; notify persons of recalls of products they may be using; notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition; and notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence (if you agree or when required or authorized by law);
6. **Health care oversight activities** such as audits, investigations, inspections and licensure by a government health oversight agency as authorized by law to monitor the health care system,

government programs and compliance with civil rights laws;

7. **Certain judicial administrative proceedings** if you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute. We may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order, a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested;
8. **Certain law enforcement purposes** such as helping to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, or to comply with a court order or subpoena and other law enforcement purposes;
9. **To coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors**, in certain circumstances, for example, to identify a deceased person, determine the cause of death or to assist in carrying out their duties;
10. **For cadaver organ, eye or tissue donation purposes** to communicate to organizations involved in procuring, banking or transplanting organs and tissues (if you are an organ donor);
11. **For certain, research purposes** under very select circumstances. We may use your health information for research. Before we disclose any of your health information for such research purposes, the project will be subject to an extensive approval process. We will usually request your written authorization before granting access to your individually identifiable health information;
12. **To avert a serious threat to health and safety:** To prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a particular person or the general public, such as when a person admits to participation in a violent crime or serious harm to a victim or is an escaped convict. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat;
13. **For specialized government functions**, including military and veterans' activities, national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, medical suitability determinations, correctional institution and custodial situations; and
14. **For Workers' Compensation purposes:** Workers' compensation or similar programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

We are permitted to use or disclose information about you without consent or authorization provided you are informed in advance and given the opportunity to agree to or prohibit or restrict the disclosure in the following circumstances:

1. Use of a directory (includes name, location, condition described in general terms) of individuals served by our Agency; and
2. To a family member, relative, friend, or other identified person, the information relevant to such person's involvement in your care or payment for care; to notify family member, relative, friend, or other identified person of the individual's location, general condition or death.

Other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization. That authorization may be revoked, in writing, at any time, except in limited situations.

YOUR RIGHTS - You have the right, subject to certain conditions, to:

- **Request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your protected health information** for treatment, payment or health care operations. However, we are not required to agree to any requested restriction. Restrictions to which we agree will be documented. Agreements for further restrictions may, however, be terminated under applicable circumstances (e.g., emergency treatment).
- **Confidential communication of protected health information.** We will arrange for you to receive protected health information by reasonable alternative means or at alternative locations. Your request must be in writing. We do not require an explanation for the request as a condition of providing communications on a confidential basis and will attempt to honor reasonable requests for confidential communications.
- **Inspect and obtain copies of protected health information** which is maintained in a designated record set, information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal or administrative action or proceeding, or protected health information that is subject to the Clinical Laboratory Improvements Amendments of 1988 [42 USC § 263a and 45 CFR 493 § (a)(2)]. If you request a copy of your health information, we may charge a reasonable fee for copying. If we deny access to protected health information, you will receive a timely, written denial in plain language that explains the basis for the denial, your review rights and an explanation of how to exercise those rights. If we do not maintain the

medical record, we will tell you where to request the protected health information.

- **Request to amend protected health information** for as long as the protected health information is maintained in the designated record set. A request to amend your record must be in writing and must include a reason to support the requested amendment. We will act on your request within sixty (60) days of receipt of the request. We may extend the time for such action by up to 30 days, if we provide you with a written explanation of the reasons for the delay and the date by which we will complete action on the request.

We may deny the request for amendment if the information contained in the record was not created by us, unless the originator of the information is no longer available to act on the requested amendment; is not part of the designated medical record set; would not be available for inspection under applicable laws and regulations; and the record is accurate and complete. If we deny your request for amendment, you will receive a timely, written denial in plain language that explains the basis for the denial, your rights to submit a statement disagreeing with the denial and an explanation of how to submit that statement.
- **Receive an accounting of disclosures of protected health information** made by our Agency for up to six (6) years prior to the date on which the accounting is requested for any reason other than for treatment, payment or health operations and other applicable exceptions. The written accounting includes the date of each disclosure, the name/address (if known) of the entity or person who received the protected health information, a brief description of the information disclosed and a brief statement of the purpose of the disclosure or a copy of your written authorization or a written request for disclosure. We will provide the accountings within 60 days of receipt of a written request. However, we may extend the time period for providing the accounting by 30 days if we provide you with a written statement of the reasons for the delay and the date by which you will receive the information. We will provide the first accounting you request during any 12-month period without charge. Subsequent accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable cost-based fee.
- **To obtain a paper copy of this notice**, even if you had agreed to receive this notice electronically, from us upon request.

COMPLAINTS - If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may complain to the Agency or to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services. There will be no retaliation against you for filing a complaint. The complaint should be filed in writing, and should state the specific incident(s) in terms of subject, date and other relevant matters. A complaint to the Secretary must be filed in writing within 180 days of when the act or omission complained of occurred, and must describe the acts or omissions believed to be in violation of applicable requirements. [45 CFR § 160.306] For further information regarding filing a complaint, contact:

Renée Davenport, Privacy Officer, HCPHA
714 Evans Street
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Winton Location

Administration
Community Health Services
P.O. Box 246
801 North King Street
Winton, NC 27986
(252) 358-7833
Fax: (252) 358-7869

Ahoskie Location(s)

Clinical Services
P.O. Box 694
828 South Academy Street
Ahoskie, NC 27910
(252) 862-4054
Fax: (252) 862-4263
Diabetes/Chronic Disease
714 Evans Street
Ahoskie, NC 27910
(252) 332-6650
Fax: (252) 332-6654
Hertford-Gates Home Health
704 Evans Street
Ahoskie, NC 27910
(252) 332-6747
Fax: (252) 332-5089
Women, Infants, Children's (WIC) Dept.
832 South Academy Street
Ahoskie, NC 27910
(252) 862-4217
Fax: (252) 862-4263