

CITY OF GREENVILLE NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES MEDICAL INFORMATION RELATING TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

This Notice is effective on April 14, 2003

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.

We are required by law to protect the privacy of medical information about you and that identifies you. This medical information may be information about health care we provide to you or payment for health care provided to you. It may also be information about your past, present, or future medical condition.

We are also required by law to provide you with this Notice of Privacy Practices explaining our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information. We are legally required to follow the terms of this Notice. In other words, we are only allowed to use and disclose medical information in the manner that we have described in this Notice.

We may change the terms of this Notice in the future. We reserve the right to make changes and to make the new Notice effective for all medical information that we maintain.

If we make changes to the Notice, we will:

- Post the new Notice at the Fire/Rescue Headquarters located at 500 S. Greene Street, Greenville, NC
- Have copies of the new Notice available upon request (You may always contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice to obtain a copy of the current Notice)
- Post the New Notice on our website (www.greenvillenc.gov)

The rest of this Notice will:

- Discuss how we may use and disclose medical information about you.
- Explain your rights with respect to medical information about you.
- Describe how and where you may file a privacy-related complaint.

WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU IN SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

We use and disclose medical information about persons who receive emergency medical services from the City of Greenville every day. This section of this Notice explains in some detail how we may use and disclose medical information about you in order to provide health care, obtain payment for that health care, and operate our business efficiently. This section then briefly mentions several other circumstances in which we may use or disclose medical information about you. For more information about any of these uses or disclosures, or about any of our privacy policies, procedures or practices, contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

1. Treatment

We may use and disclose medical information about you to provide health care treatment to you. In other words, we may use and disclose medical information about you to provide or coordinate your health care and related services. This may include communicating with other health care providers regarding your treatment and coordinating your health care with others.

Example: Jane is in an accident and receives emergency medical services from the City of Greenville. The emergency medical technician may use medical information about Jane when reviewing Jane's condition and providing these services. If Jane's injuries require that she be transported to the hospital for additional care, the emergency medical technician may disclose medical information about Jane to the physicians at the hospital to assist the physicians at the hospital in providing appropriate care to Jane.

1. Payment

We may use and disclose medical information about you to obtain payment for health care services that you received. This means that we may use medical information about you to arrange for payment (such as preparing bills and managing accounts). We also may disclose medical information about you to others (such as insurers, collection agencies, and consumer reporting agencies).

Example: Jane is in an accident and receives emergency medical services from the City of Greenville. She has private insurance. The City of Greenville billing clerk will use medical information about Jane when he prepares a bill for the services provided by the emergency medical technician. Medical information about Jane will be disclosed to her insurance company when the billing clerk sends the bill.

2. Health care operations

We may use and disclose medical information about you in performing a variety of activities that we call “health care operations.” These “health care operations” activities allow us to, for example, improve the quality of care we provide and reduce health care costs. For example, we may use or disclose medical information about you in performing the following activities:

- Reviewing and evaluating the skills, qualifications, and performance of health care providers who have taken care of you.
- Providing training programs for students, trainees, health care providers or non-health care professionals to help them practice or improve their skills.
- Cooperating with outside organizations that evaluate, certify or license health care providers, staff or facilities in a particular field or specialty.
- Reviewing and improving the quality, efficiency and cost of care that we provide to you and others.
- Cooperating with outside organizations that assess the quality of the care others and we provide, including government agencies and private organizations.
- Planning for our organization’s future operations.
- Working with others (such as lawyers, accountants and other providers) who assist us to comply with this notice and other applicable laws.

Example: Jane complained that she did not receive appropriate health care. The City of Greenville reviewed Jane’s record to evaluate the quality of the care provided to Jane. The City of Greenville also discussed Jane’s care with an attorney.

3. Persons involved in your care

We may disclose medical information about you to a relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify if that person is involved in your care and the information is relevant to your care. If the person receiving services is a minor, we may disclose medical information about the minor to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the minor except in limited circumstances. For more information on the privacy of minors’ information, contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

We may also use or disclose medical information about you to a relative, another person involved in your care or possibly a disaster relief organization (such as the Red Cross) if we need to notify someone about your location or condition. You may ask us at any time not to disclose medical information about you to persons involved in your care. We will agree to your request and not disclose the information except in certain limited circumstances (such as emergencies) or if the client is a minor. If the client is a minor, we may or may not be able to agree to your request.

Example: Jane’s husband is present when emergency services are provided to Jane by the City of Greenville. When the emergency medical technician is providing treatment to Jane, Jane’s husband is present. The emergency medical technician discusses the treatment with Jane and Jane’s husband.

4. Required by law

We will use and disclose medical information about you whenever we are required by law to do so. There are many state and federal laws that require us to use and disclose medical information. For example, state law requires us to report gunshot wounds and other injuries to the police and to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. We will comply with those state laws and with all other applicable laws.

5. National priority uses and disclosures

When permitted by law, we may use or disclose medical information about you without your permission for various activities that are recognized as “national priorities.” In other words, the government has determined that under certain circumstances (described below), it is so important to disclose medical information that it is acceptable to disclose medical information without the individual’s permission. We will only disclose medical information about you in the following circumstances when we are permitted to do so by law. Below are brief descriptions of the “national priority” activities recognized by law. For more information on these types of disclosures, contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

- **Threat to health or safety:** We may use or disclose medical information about you if we believe it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to health or safety.
- **Public health activities:** We may use or disclose medical information about you for public health activities. Public health activities require the use of medical information for various activities, including, but not limited to, activities related to investigating diseases, reporting child abuse and neglect, monitoring drugs or devices regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, and monitoring work-related illnesses or injuries. For example, if you have been exposed to a communicable disease (such as a sexually transmitted disease), we may report it to the State and take other actions to prevent the spread of the disease.
- **Abuse, neglect or domestic violence:** We may disclose medical information about you to a government authority (such as the Department of Social Services) if you are an adult and we reasonably believe that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- **Health oversight activities:** We may disclose medical information about you to a health oversight agency – which is basically an agency responsible for overseeing the health care system or certain government programs. For example, a government agency may request information from us while they are investigating possible insurance fraud
- **Court proceedings:** We may disclose medical information about you to a court or an officer of the court (such as an attorney). For example, we would disclose medical information about you to a court if a judge orders us to do so.
- **Law enforcement:** We may disclose medical information about you to a law enforcement official for specific law enforcement purposes. For example, we may disclose limited medical information about you to a police officer if the officer needs the information to help find or identify a missing person.
- **Coroners and others:** We may disclose medical information about you to a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director or to organizations that helps with organ, eye and tissue transplants.
- **Worker’s Compensation:** We may disclose medical information about you in order to comply with workers’ compensation laws.
- **Research organizations:** We may use or disclose medical information about you to research organizations if the organization has satisfied certain conditions about protecting the privacy of medical information.
- **Certain government functions:** We may use or disclose medical information about you for certain government functions, including but not limited to military and veterans’ activities and national security and intelligence activities. We may also use or disclose medical information about you to a correctional institution in some circumstances.

6. Authorization

Other than the uses and disclosures described above (#1-6), we will not use or disclose medical information about you without the “authorization” – or signed permission – of you or your personal representative. In some instances, we may

wish to use or disclose medical information about you and we may contact you to ask you to sign an authorization form. In other instances, you may contact us to ask us to disclose medical information and we will ask you to sign an authorization form.

If you sign a written authorization allowing us to disclose medical information about you, you may later revoke (or cancel) your authorization in writing (except in very limited circumstances related to obtaining insurance coverage). If you would like to revoke your authorization, you may write us a letter revoking your authorization or fill out an Authorization Revocation Form. Authorization Revocation Forms are available from the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice. If you revoke your authorization, we will follow your instructions except to the extent that we have already relied upon your authorization and taken some action.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

You have several rights with respect to medical information about you. This section of this Notice will briefly mention each of these rights. If you would like to know more about your rights, please contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

1. Right to a copy of this Notice

You have a right to have a paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. In addition, a copy of this Notice will always be posted at the Fire/Rescue Headquarters located at 500 S. Greene Street, Greenville, North Carolina. If you would like to have a copy of our Notice, ask the receptionist at the Fire/Rescue Headquarters for a copy or contact the Privacy Officer listed in this notice.

2. Right of access to inspect and copy

You have the right to inspect (which means see or review) and receive a copy of medical information about you that we maintain in certain groups of records. If you would like to inspect or receive a copy of medical information about you, you must provide us with a request in writing. You may write us a letter requesting access or fill out an Access Request Form. Access Request Forms are available from the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

We may deny your request in certain circumstances. If we deny your request, we will explain our reason for doing so in writing. We will also inform you in writing if you have the right to have our decision reviewed by another person.

If you would like a copy of the information, we will charge you a fee to cover the costs of the copy or we may be able to provide you with a summary or explanation of the information. This includes copying from any type of medium that is applicable to the request.

The uniform fee for paper copies shall be \$0.25 per page after the first 7 pages.

Contact the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice for more information on these services and any possible additional fees (Charges subject to change).

3. Right to have medical information amended

You have the right to have us amend (which means correct or supplement) medical information about you that we maintain in certain groups of records. If you believe that we have information that is either inaccurate or incomplete, we may amend the information to indicate the problem and notify others who have copies of the inaccurate or incomplete information. If you would like us to amend information, you must provide us with a request in writing and explain why you would like us to amend the information. You may either write us a letter requesting an amendment or fill out an Amendment Request Form. Amendment Request Forms are available from the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

We may deny your request in certain circumstances. If we deny your request, we will explain our reason for doing so in writing. You will have the opportunity to send us a statement explaining why you disagree with our decision to deny your amendment request and we will share your statement whenever we disclose the information in the future.

4. Right to an accounting of disclosures we have made

You have the right to receive an accounting (which means a detailed listing) of disclosures that we have made for the previous six (6) years. If you would like to receive an accounting, you may send us a letter requesting an accounting, fill out an Accounting Request Form, or contact the Privacy Officer listed in this notice that represents your service area. Accounting Request Forms are available from the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

If you request an accounting more than once every twelve (12) months, we may charge you a fee to cover the costs of preparing the accounting form. The uniform cost shall be \$0.25 per page after the first seven pages.

The accounting will not include several types of disclosures, including disclosures for treatment, payment or health care operations. It will also not include disclosures made prior to April 14, 2003.

5. Right to request restrictions on uses and disclosures

You have the right to request that we limit the use and disclosure of medical information about you for treatment, payment and health care operations. We are not required to agree to your request.

If we do agree to your request, we must follow your restrictions (except if the information is necessary for emergency treatment). You may cancel the restrictions at any time. In addition, we may cancel a restriction at any time as long as we notify you of the cancellation and continue to apply the restriction to information collected before the cancellation.

6. Right to request an alternative method of contact

You have the right to request to be contacted at a different location or by a different method. For example, you may prefer to have all written information mailed to your work address rather than to your home address.

We will agree to any reasonable request for alternative methods of contact. If you would like to request an alternative method of contact, you must provide us with a request in writing. You may write us a letter or fill out an Alternative Contact Request Form. Alternative Contact Request Forms are available from the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice.

YOU MAY FILE A COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR PRIVACY PRACTICES

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated or if you are dissatisfied with our privacy policies or procedures, you may file a complaint either with us or with the federal government. We will not take any action against you or change our treatment of you in any way if you file a complaint.

To file a written complaint with the City of Greenville you may bring your complaint to the Privacy Officer listed in this Notice, or you may mail it to the following address:

***Complaint Office
City of Greenville City Attorney's Office
P.O. Box 7207 Greenville, NC 27835***

You also may send a written complaint to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services at:

***Office for Civil Rights
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201***

If, at any time, you have questions about information in this Notice or about our privacy policies, procedures or practices, you can contact the Privacy Officer listed: City Attorney (252) 329-4426.