

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.

OUR PLEDGE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION
We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting it.

☞ If you have any questions about this notice, please contact our Patient Representative at 989-583-6862.

WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE

This notice describes our practices and that of:

- ◆ Any health care professional authorized to enter information into your Synergy Medical chart.
- ◆ All departments and units of Synergy Medical.
- ◆ Any member of a student group we allow to help you while you are in the Synergy Medical clinics.
- ◆ All employees, staff and other Synergy Medical personnel.

We create a record of the care and services you receive at Synergy Medical. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by Synergy Medical.

This notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

We are 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 WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose medical information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

➤ **For Treatment.** We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, or other Synergy Medical personnel or students who are involved in taking care of you at Synergy Medical. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken arm may need to know if you have diabetes because diabetes may slow the healing process. In addition, a nurse may contact a hospital to arrange follow-up x-rays. Different departments of Synergy Medical also may share medical information about you in order to coordinate the different things you need, such as prescriptions and referrals. We also may disclose medical information about you to people outside Synergy Medical who may be involved in your medical care after you leave Synergy Medical, such as family members, home care workers, clergy or others we use to provide services that are part of your care. We will assume that a biological parent is a child's personal representative and will disclose medical information about a child to a parent unless provided written evidence to the contrary (court order, custody agreement, etc.)

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

➤ **For Health Care Operations.** We may use and disclose medical information about you for Synergy Medical operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run Synergy Medical 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 patients to decide what additional services we should offer, and whether certain new treatments are effective. We may also disclose information to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, and other personnel for review and

learning purposes. We may use the medical information from others to compare how we are doing and see where we can make improvements in our services.

- **Appointment Reminders.** We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment at Synergy Medical. We may leave you a message on your answering machine or voicemail.
- **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, including clinical trials that may benefit you.
- **Health-Related Benefits and Services.** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
- **Fundraising Activities.** We may use medical information about you to contact you in an effort to raise money for Synergy Medical and its operations. We also may disclose medical information to a foundation related to Synergy Medical so that the foundation may contact you in raising money for Synergy Medical. We only would release contact information, such as your name, address and phone number and the dates you received treatment or services at Synergy Medical. If you do not want Synergy Medical to contact you for fundraising efforts, you must notify us in writing. Ask for our “no contact” form at the Front Desk or call Medical Data Services at 583-6862.
- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** We may release medical information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. We may also tell your family or friends your condition and that you are in being treated at Synergy Medical. If you have a friend or relative with you in an exam room, we will assume you consent to their hearing all conversations in that room.
- **Research.** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose medical information about you for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all patients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. All research projects, however, are subject to a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of medical information, trying to balance the research needs with patients' need for privacy of their medical information. Before we use or disclose medical information for research, the project will be approved through this research approval process. We may, however, disclose medical information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project: for example, to help them look for patients with similar clinics, so long as the medical information they review does not leave Synergy Medical. We will almost always ask for your specific permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at Synergy Medical.
- **As Required By Law.** We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.
- **To Avert 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.

****SPECIAL SITUATIONS****

- **Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, we may release medical 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.
- **Medical Education.** Synergy Medical's mission is training physicians. Medical students, residents, and student observers may be involved in your care and may see your health information as part of their experiences at Synergy Medical. We require all such persons to follow and sign confidentiality agreements.
- **Military and Veterans.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities. We may also release medical information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.
- **Workers' Compensation.** We may release medical information about you for workers' compensation, disability insurers or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.
- **Public Health Risks.** We may disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:
 - to prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
 - to report births and deaths;
 - to report child abuse or neglect;
 - to report reactions to medications or problems with products;
 - to notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
 - to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition;
 - to notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.

We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.

- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities 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 medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute.
- **Law Enforcement.** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:
 - In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process;
 - About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement;
 - About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct;
 - About criminal conduct at Synergy Medical; and
 - In emergency circumstances to report a crime; the location of the crime or victims; or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors.** We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients of Synergy Medical to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.
- **Inmates.** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes.

To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to Synergy Medical Medical Data Services. If you request a copy of the information, we will charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request.

We 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. Another licensed health care professional chosen by Synergy Medical will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that medical information we have 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 or for Synergy Medical.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to Medical Data Services. 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, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of the medical information kept by or for Synergy Medical;
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- Is 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 we made of medical information about you for purposes other than treatment, payment and health care operations.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to Synergy Medical Medical Data Services. Your request must state a time period that may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 16, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We

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 Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose 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 we not use or disclose information about a surgery that you had.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to Synergy Medical Medical Data Services. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply, for example, disclosures to your spouse.

We are not required to agree to your request if these restrictions may interfere with our ability to care for you or receive payment. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment.

- **Right to Request Confidential Comm-unications.** 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 work.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to Synergy Medical Medical Data Services. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

- **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice. You may obtain a copy of this privacy notice at our website www.synergymedical.org. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact Synergy Medical Medical Data Services or pick up one at the Front Desk.

OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or by the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission.

If you provide us permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.

COMPLAINTS

If you have a health information privacy concern, you may file a complaint with Synergy Medical or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with Synergy Medical, contact our Patient Representative, Sue Vollbrecht, at 583-6862. All complaints must be submitted in writing. *You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.*

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice 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 the current notice in Synergy Medical lobby. The notice will show the effective date on the top right corner of the first page. Each time you register at Synergy Medical for treatment or health care services, we will offer you a copy of the current notice in effect. The current version of this Notice of Privacy Practices may also be found at our website: www.synergymedical.org.