



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date of this Notice: 4/14/2003

As Required by the Privacy Regulations Created as a Result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU (AS A PATIENT/CLIENT/CONSUMER OF THE COLUMBUS SPEECH & HEARING CENTER) MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION.

PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY

Our Center is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your individually identifiable health information (IIHI). In conducting our business, we will create records regarding you and the treatment and services we provide to you. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your IIHI. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your IIHI
- Your privacy rights in your IIHI
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your IIHI

The terms of this notice apply to all records containing your IIHI that are created or retained by our Center. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practices. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all of your records that our Center has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we may create or maintain in the future. Our Center will post a copy of our current Notice in our Center in a visible location at all times, and you may request a copy of our most current Notice at any time.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT:

**CSHC Privacy Official
510 E. North Broadway
Columbus, OH 43214
614.263.5151**

THE COLUMBUS SPEECH & HEARING CENTER MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION (IIHI) IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS

The following categories describe the different ways in which we may use and disclose your IIHI.

1. Treatment. Our Center may use your IIHI to treat you. For example, we may ask you to have diagnostic tests (otolaryngology exams, swallowing evaluations, testing for learning disabilities), and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We might use your IIHI in order to order hearing aids. Many of the people who work for our Center – including, but not limited to, audiologists and speech-language pathologists – may use or disclose your IIHI in order to treat you or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your IIHI to others who may assist in your care, such as your spouse, children or parents. Finally, we may also disclose your IIHI to other health care providers for purposes related to your treatment; for example we may disclose your IIHI to the physician or other professional who referred you to the Center for treatment.

2. Payment. Our Center may use and disclose your IIHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. For example, we may contact your health insurer to certify that you are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for, your treatment. We also may use and disclose your IIHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Also, we may use your IIHI to bill you directly for services and items. We may disclose your IIHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their billing and collection efforts.

3. Health Care Operations. Our Center may use and disclose your IIHI to operate our business. As examples of the ways in which we may use and disclose your information for our operations, our Center may use your IIHI to evaluate the quality of care you received from us, or to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our Center. We may disclose your IIHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their health care operations.

4. Appointment Reminders. Our Center may contact you and remind you of an appointment or to schedule an annual evaluation. When contacting you about an appointment, we may leave a message on your answering machine or voice mail; we may also mail a reminder postcard.

5. Other reasons our Center may contact you include: To inform you of new or potential treatment options or alternatives, or health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you; to send you satisfaction surveys, newsletters, annual reports, or other information about our Center; to inform you of seminars, special events, or giving opportunities. We may contact you by e-mail if we have been provided with that information. We may use certain IIHI to contact you in the future to raise money for the Columbus Speech & Hearing Center.

6. Release of Information to Family/Friends. Our Center may release your IIHI to a friend or family member that is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a babysitter take their child to an appointment at our Center. In this example, the babysitter may have access to this child's medical information. We may

confirm that you had or kept a scheduled appointment, if a family member or babysitter attempted to reach you at our Center.

7. Disclosures Required By Law. Our Center will use and disclose your IIHI when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law.

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR IIHI IN CERTAIN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The following categories describe unique scenarios in which we may use or disclose your identifiable health information.

1. Public Health Risks. Our Center may disclose your IIHI to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:

- maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths
- reporting child abuse or neglect
- preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
- notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease
- notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition
- reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices
- notifying individuals if a product or device they may be using has been recalled
- notifying appropriate government agency(ies) and authority(ies) regarding the potential abuse or neglect of an adult patient (including domestic violence); however, we will only disclose this information if the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to disclose this information
- notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.

2. Health Oversight Activities. Our Center may disclose your IIHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.

3. Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings. Our Center may use and disclose your IIHI in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your IIHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to obtain an order protecting the information the party has requested.

4. Law Enforcement. We may release IIHI if asked to do so by law enforcement officials:

- Regarding a crime victim in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
- Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct
- Regarding criminal conduct at our Center
- In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process
- To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive or missing person
- In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of the perpetrator)

5. Organ and Tissue Donation. Our Center may release your IIHI to organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.

6. Research. Our Center may use and disclose your IIHI for research purposes in certain limited circumstances. We will obtain your written authorization to use your IIHI for research purposes except when an Institutional Review Board or Privacy Board has determined that the waiver of your authorization satisfies the following: (i) the use or disclosure involves no more than a minimal risk to your privacy based on the following: (A) an adequate plan to protect the identifiers from improper use and disclosure; (B) an adequate plan to destroy the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the research (unless there is a health or research justification for retaining the identifiers or such retention is otherwise required by law); and (C) adequate written assurances that the PHI will not be re-used or disclosed to any other person or entity (except as required by law) for authorized oversight of the research study, or for other research for which the use or disclosure would otherwise be permitted; (ii) the research could not practicably be conducted without the waiver; and (iii) the research could not practicably be conducted without access to and use of the PHI.

7. Serious Threats to Health or Safety. Our Center may use and disclose your IIHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.

8. Military. Our Center may disclose your IIHI if you are a member of U.S or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.

9. Inmates. Our Center may disclose your IIHI to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate or under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you, (b) for the safety and security of the institution, and/or (c) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.

10. Workers' Compensation. Our Center may release your IIHI for workers' compensation and similar programs.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR IIHI

You have the following rights regarding the IIHI that we maintain about you:

1. Right to Provide an Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures. Our Center will obtain your written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your IIHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your IIHI for the reasons described in the authorization. Please note we are required to retain records of your care.

2. Inspection and Copies. You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the IIHI that may be used to make decisions about you, including testing and treatment records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing to

the **Privacy Official** in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your IIHI. Our Center may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request.
Inspection and Copies (continued)

Our Center may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain limited circumstances; however, you may request a review of our denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct reviews.

3. Amendment. You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our Center. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the **Privacy Official**. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our Center will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the IIHI kept by or for the Center; (c) not part of the IIHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our Center, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.

4. Accounting of Disclosures. All of our clients/patients/consumers have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." An "accounting of disclosures" is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our Center has made of your IIHI for non-treatment, non-payment or non-operations purposes. Use of your IIHI as part of the routine patient care in our Center is not required documentation. Examples of this would be the clinician sharing information with the scheduling secretary or the billing department using your information to file your insurance claim. In order to obtain an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the **Privacy Official**. All requests for an "accounting of disclosures" must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period is free of charge, but our Center may charge you for additional lists within the same 12-month period. Our Center will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

5. Special Terms for Communication. You have the right to request that our Center communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request to the **Privacy Official** specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our Center will accommodate **reasonable** requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.

6. Requesting Restrictions. You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI for treatment, payment or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your IIHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members or friends. **We are not required to agree to your request;** however, if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI, you must make your request in writing to the **Privacy Official**. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:

- (a) the information you wish restricted;
- (b) whether you are requesting to limit our practice's use, disclosure or both; and

(c) to whom you want the limits to apply.

7. Right to File a Complaint. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our Center or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our Center, contact the **Privacy Official**. All complaints must be submitted in writing. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

8. Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice. You are entitled to receive a paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact the **Privacy Official** (see below) or you may request a copy from any staff member.

Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice of our health information privacy policies, please contact the **Privacy Official, 510 E.N. Broadway, Columbus, OH 43214 or phone 614-261-5151.**