

## **Our Responsibilities**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.

We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.

We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.

We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

For more information see:

[www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html).

## **Changes to the Terms of this Notice**

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request, in our office, and on our web site.



## Lincoln County Emergency Medical Services

Attn: Privacy Officer  
720 John Howell Memorial Drive  
Lincolnton, NC 28092  
Phone: 704-736-9385  
Fax: 704-736-1924

*Effective Date of the Notice:*  
May 1, 2015



## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

**IMPORTANT: 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.**

As an essential part of our commitment to you, Lincoln County Emergency Medical Services maintains the privacy of certain confidential health care information about you, known as Protected Health Information or PHI. We are required by law to protect your health care information and to provide you with the attached Notice of Privacy Practices.

This Notice outlines our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. It not only describes our privacy practices and your legal rights, but lets you know, among other things, how Lincoln County Emergency Medical Services is permitted to use and disclose PHI about you, how you can access and copy that information, how you may request amendment of that information, and how you may request restrictions on our use and disclosure of your PHI.

Lincoln County Emergency Medical Services is also required to abide by the terms of the version of this Notice currently in effect. In most situations we may use this information as described in this Notice without your permission, but there are some situations where we may use it only after we obtain your written authorization, if we are required by law to do so.

We respect your privacy, and treat all health care information about our patients with care under strict policies of confidentiality.

PLEASE READ THE ATTACHED DETAILED NOTICE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT IT, PLEASE CONTACT Jodi Huffman, OUR PRIVACY OFFICER, AT (704) 736-9385.

## Your Rights

**When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.** This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you. You have the right to:

- **Get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other health information we have about you.** We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost based fee.
- **Ask us to correct or amend your medical record.** You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is incorrect or incomplete.
- **Request confidential communication.** You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- **Ask us to limit the information we share.** You can ask us **not** to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations. *We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say "no" if it would affect your care.* If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. *We will say "yes" unless a law requires us to share that information.*
- **Get a list of those with whom we've shared your information.** You can ask for a list (accounting) of times we've shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why. We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We'll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.
- **Get a copy of this privacy notice.** You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.
- **Choose someone to act for you.** If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information. We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.
- **File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.** You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting us using the information on the back page. You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/). We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

## Your Choices

**For certain health care information, you can tell us your choices about what we share.** If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

**In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:**

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- Include your information in a hospital directory

*If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.*

**In these cases we never share your information unless you give us written permission:**

- Marketing purposes
- Sale of your information
- Most sharing of psychotherapy notes

## Our Uses and Disclosures

How do we typically use or share your health information? We typically use or share your health information in the following ways:

- **Treat you.** We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you. *(Example: An EMS worker treating you for an injury delivers you to the hospital and gives the doctor who will continue treating you a report of your injuries.)*
- **Run our organization.** We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary. *(Example: We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services.)*
- **Bill for your services.** We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities. *(Example: We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.)*

## **How else can we use or share your health information?**

We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes. For more information see:

[www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consenters/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consenters/index.html).

**Help with public health and safety issues.** We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:

- Preventing disease
- Helping with product recalls
- Reporting adverse reactions to medications
- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
- Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

**Do research.** We can use or share your information for health research.

**Comply with the law.** We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we're complying with federal privacy law.

**Respond to organ and tissue donation requests.** We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

**Work with a medical examiner or funeral director.** We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

**Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests.** We can use or share health information about you:

- For workers' compensation claims
- For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
- With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
- For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

**Respond to lawsuits and legal actions.** We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.