

## Notice of Privacy Practices

**Key Points**

This notice describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully. The privacy of your health information is important to us.

**Our Legal Duty:**

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 are also required to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect 04/17/2018, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and thus, this notice, for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

**Uses And Disclosures Of Health Information:**

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. For example:

**Treatment:** We may use or disclose your health information to a physician, or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.

**Payment:** We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide to you.

**Healthcare Operations:** We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include

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quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence of qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

**Your Authorization:** In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us authorization you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

**To Your Family and Friends:** We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend, or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

**Persons Involved In Care:** We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. If you have given someone the authority to make medical decisions for you in the event you are unable to do so, or if someone has been appointed as your legal guardian for medical purposes, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information. We will make reasonable efforts to confirm that any person has the authority to act on your behalf before we reveal any information. In emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information using our professional judgment and disclosing only that health information necessary in the particular circumstance. We will also use our professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences in your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information.

**Marketing:** We will not use your health information or any other information you provide, including addresses or phone numbers, for marketing

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communications without your written authorization, nor will we share that information with third parties. We may share directory-type (as opposed to health) information to subcontractors in support services, such as customer service. No mobile information (i.e. SMS) will be shared with third parties for marketing and/or promotional purposes.

**Required by Law:** We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

**Public Health Reasons:** We may share your health information in certain situations, such as to prevent disease, help with product recalls, report adverse reactions to medications, organ donations, etc.

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

**National Security:** We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials protected health information of an inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

**Medical Examiner:** We may disclose health information to a coroner, medical examiner or funeral director when an individual dies.

**Appointment Reminders:** We may use or disclose health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters).

**Response to Lawsuits/Legal Actions:** We may share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

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**Patient Rights:** **Access:** You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, including information stored in the electronic health record, with limited

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exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so.

You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. If you request copies, we will charge you in accordance with applicable law and policy. If you request an alternative format, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format. If you prefer, we will prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.

**Disclosure Accounting:** You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities, for the last 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

**Restriction:** You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency). 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 agree unless otherwise required by law to share that information.

**Alternative Communication:** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request.

**Amendment:** You have the right to request that we amend your health information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

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**Electronic Notice:** If you receive this Notice on our Web site or by electronic mail (e-mail), you are entitled to receive this Notice in written form. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.

**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:

<b>Treat You</b>	We can use your health information and share with other professionals who are treating you.	<i>Example:</i> A doctor treating you for an injury asks another doctor about your overall health condition.
<b>Run our Organization</b>	We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary.	<i>Example:</i> We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services.
<b>Bill for your services</b>	We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities.	<i>Example:</i> We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for services.

**Questions and Complaints:** If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W.,

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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 support your right to the privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Contact Officer: **Rebecca Roman/ Hospital Administrator**

Telephone: **508-871-2079** Fax: **508-871-2048**

E-mail: **rroman@whittierhealth.com**

Address: **150 Flanders Road, Westboro, MA 01581**

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