

# Your Privacy Matters

## Privacy and Health Information

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You have privacy rights under a federal law that protect your health information. This law sets rules and limits on who can access your health information.

### Who must follow this law?

- ◆ most doctors, nurses, pharmacies, hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare providers and their vendors
- ◆ health insurance companies, HMOs and most employer group health plans
- ◆ certain government programs that pay for healthcare, such as Medicare and Medicaid

### What information is protected?

- ◆ information put in your medical records
- ◆ conversations your doctor has with nurses and others regarding your care
- ◆ information about you in your health insurer's computer system
- ◆ billing information
- ◆ most other health information about you held by those who must follow this law

### What rights do you have over your health information?

*Providers and health insurers must comply with your right to:*

- ◆ ask to see and get a copy of your health records
- ◆ have corrections added to your health information
- ◆ receive a notice that tells you how your health information may be used and shared
- ◆ decide if you want to give your permission to share your information

### What are the rules and limits on who can see and receive your health information?

*To make sure that your health information is protected in a way that doesn't interfere with your healthcare, your information can be used and shared:*

- ◆ for your treatment and care coordination
- ◆ to pay doctors and hospitals for your healthcare
- ◆ with your family, friends or others you identify who are involved with your healthcare unless you object
- ◆ to make sure doctors give good care and nursing homes are clean and safe
- ◆ to protect the public's health, such as by reporting when the flu is in your area
- ◆ to make required reports to the police, such as reporting gunshot wounds

*Without your written permission, your provider cannot:*

- ◆ give your health information to your employer
- ◆ use or share your health information for marketing or advertising purposes
- ◆ share private notes about mental health counseling



### Right to Complain

If you believe your rights are being denied, you can file a complaint with your provider, health insurer or the U.S. government at [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy).

*Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office for Civil Rights*