



“Notice of Privacy Practices”

Initial Effective Date: August 16, 2013

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR PERSONAL MEDICAL INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

In accordance with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”), Vital Care is required to inform you of its practices in relation to the protected health information that it maintains about you. HIPAA requires minimum standards that a covered entity, such as Vital Care, must maintain in relation to your protected health information. This Notice of Privacy Practices is being given to you to help you understand how Vital Care meets those standards. It is also meant to inform you of ways that Vital Care may use the personal information it collects about you and how it may disclose it.

Understanding Your Protected Health Information

When you receive care from a health care provider, a record of that treatment is made. This record will typically contain information on your diagnosis, treatment, and future plan of treatment and is often collectively referred to as your “medical record”. This medical record includes protected health information, and is the foundation for deciding on your plan of care and treatment and allows for a successful communication between all the healthcare professionals and contributes to your care. HIPAA protects information found in your medical record from disclosure (being made available to other persons or organizations) without your authorization. The information protected by HIPAA includes:

- Any information related to your past, present, or future physical or mental health;
- The past, present, or future payment for health services you have received;
- The specific care that you have received, are receiving or will receive;
- Any information that identifies you as the individual receiving the care; and
- Any information that someone could reasonably use to identify you as receiving the care.
- This information is referred to as protected health information throughout this Notice.



Treatment, Payment, And Healthcare Operations

As a covered entity, Vital Care is required to inform you of how it may use your protected health information. In providing treatment to you, Vital Care will use your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, and healthcare operations.

Treatment—As it pertains to Vital Care, treatment means providing you medication, supplies, and durable equipment as ordered by your physician. Treatment also includes coordination and consultation with your physician and other healthcare providers. Treatment also includes clinical assessment by nurses and pharmacists on our staff. As Vital Care provides these © Vital Care Home Infusion Services PEM 1-005 [Page 2 of 4] Patient Education Manual: Privacy of Information 1/25/2010 services to you, information obtained during this process will be recorded in your medical record. For example, a nurse may refer to records from a recent hospital stay to better plan your drug administration or catheter care. Vital Care will use this type of information, in coordination with your physician, to determine the best course of treatment for you.

Payment—Payment purposes consist of activities required to obtain reimbursement from your insurance carrier for the services ordered by your physician and provided to you by Vital Care. This includes, but is not limited to, eligibility determination, pre-certification, billing and collection activities, obtaining documentation required by your insurer, and when applicable, disclosure of limited information to consumer reporting agencies. For example, our billing office may need to send the insurance company information about your diagnosis and prescriptions in order for them to process the claims and pay us for the services you receive.

Healthcare Operations—Operations can include, but are not limited to, review of your protected health information by members of Vital Care's professional healthcare staff to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations. This information will then be used to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to you by Vital Care. Healthcare operations also include Vital Care's business management and general administrative activities. For example, staff members at Vital Care may need to review your medical record to assure that we maintain a high standard of quality in our clinical services.



Other Uses And Disclosures

In order to release information contained in your medical record for purposes other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations, Vital Care must obtain a specific signed authorization from you. You may revoke such authorization at any time, except to the extent Vital Care has taken action in reliance on the authorization.

There are a limited number of other uses and disclosures of protected health information that do not require a specific authorization from you. Vital Care may, in the following circumstances, disclose your protected health information.

- Vital Care may disclose to a member of your family, other relative, or a close personal friend, or any other person identified by you, the protected health information directly relevant to that person's involvement with your care or payment related to your health care.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information to others as required by law.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information for certain public health activities and purposes.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information to a legally authorized government authority, such as a social service or protective services agency, if we reasonably believe you are a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information for law enforcement purposes and in response to court orders or subpoenas.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information to agencies authorized by law to conduct health oversight activities, including audits, investigations, licensing and similar activities.
- Vital Care may disclose protected health information to attorneys, accountants, and others acting on behalf of Vital Care, provided they have signed written contracts agreeing to safeguard the confidentiality of the information.
- Vital Care will provide all required notification to you, as a patient, if your protected health information is disclosed.

There are certain types of disclosures for which we must obtain an authorization from you. These include:

- Psychotherapy notes
- Marketing communications



- Health information being sold
- Disclosures made to an individual or organization for purposes other than treatment, payment, or operations.

Your Rights As A Patient Of Vital Care

In accordance with HIPAA you have the following rights in relation to your protected health information.

- You may request, in writing, additional restrictions to the use or disclosure of your protected health information; however, Vital Care is not required to agree to the requested restrictions.
- You have the right to request amendments to your medical record.
- You have the right to obtain a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices.
- You have the right of access to inspect and obtain a copy of your medical record, subject to certain limitations. You will be required by our pharmacy to request access to your health information in writing.
- You have the right to obtain an accounting of disclosures of your medical record for purposes other than treatment, payment and healthcare operations.
- You have the right to request communications of your medical record by alternative means (i.e. electronically) or at alternative locations.
- You have the right to revoke authorization to use or disclose your protected health information except to the extent that action has already occurred.
- You have a right to request that we not provide health information to your health plan under certain conditions. For example, if your treatment is paid for by the plan you may request that the plan not receive the treatment information. There are exceptions to this rule, including situations where the disclosure of your health information is required by law.

Responsibilities Of Vital Care

In accordance with HIPAA, Vital Care is required to:

- Maintain the confidentiality of your protected health information. Your state laws may provide more protection than the federal laws and, in that case, Vital Care will abide by the more restrictive statute;
- Provide you with notice of its legal obligations and privacy practices regarding information it may accumulate about you and is obligated to abide by the terms of this notice;



Vital Care of Meridian

vcmeridian.com

- Notify you if it is unable to agree to a requested restriction, and make every effort to accommodate reasonable requests for communication of health information by alternative means; and
- Post its Notice of Privacy Practices on its website at <http://www.vitalcareinc.com>.

Please be advised that in addition to these responsibilities, Vital Care reserves the right to change the terms of its Notice of Privacy Practices and make those changes applicable to all protected health information maintained at that time. If there is a change to its Notice of Privacy Practices, it will provide you with a revised notice at the most recent address you have supplied to Vital Care.

Vital Care will not use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice.

For More Information Or To Report A Problem

If you have questions, would like additional information, or if you suspect misuse of your protected health information and believe that your rights have been violated, you may, without fear of retaliation, contact:

The Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington D.C. 20201
1-800-368-1019

OR

Vital Care Patient Care Team
1501 23rd Avenue
Meridian, MS 39301
601-482-4003



HOW WE PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

Vital Care of Meridian takes every precaution to protect the confidentiality and privacy of your medical information.

You have been given a “Notice of Privacy Practices.” Please take the time to review that document. We are required by law to provide the information to you so that you know what your rights are regarding your protected health information.

There are many other ways we protect your privacy. To protect your information we take these steps and precautions:

- ❖ You will be asked to sign a release of medical information when you are first admitted. This will give us authority to provide your medical records to the following parties:
- ❖ Another medical care provider that is providing services to you at the request of your physician.
- ❖ The insurance company that is providing payment for your therapy, so that they can verify the medical necessity of the care provided and process payment.
- ❖ Auditors or surveyors employed by governmental agencies or nationally recognized accrediting organizations. Their role is to periodically come into our pharmacy and “spot check” us to make sure we are providing the highest quality of service. As part of the “spot check” they may ask to see a patient’s chart.
- ❖ Your medical records will NOT be released to anyone, or any organization, without your written permission. Your permission must be obtained in writing. Your legal guardian or lawyer can request that you records be released, but again, the request must be in writing.



- ❖ All of our Vital Care employees are given training each year on ways to protect and respect the privacy of our patients.
- ❖ Your medical record is never removed from our office at any time. Once you are admitted onto our program, your medical record stays in a secure and locked location in our office.
- ❖ Information about you, your diagnosis, or your therapy is never released to any third party, including group mail lists or marketing programs.

Our staff sometime receives letters of recommendation, notes of gratitude, and other types of “thank you’s” from former patients. These are sometimes displayed in our office because we are proud of them. However, they will never be displayed with your first and last name appearing, unless you tell us, in writing, that it is acceptable to do that.

Any part of your medical record that is kept on a computer system is password protected. Only appropriate staff members, such as our pharmacy manager and nurse manager, would have the password.

Documents that have to be faxed are transmitted over protected, programmed modem lines to prevent accidental incorrect routing. If, for some reason, our modem cannot be pre-programmed, every precaution is taken to verify correct transmission, and clearly legible confidentiality statements are placed on the fax cover sheet.

Phone conversation to and from your house that occur over a cordless telephone are kept to a minimum. So are mobile phone conversations regarding you and your care. No sensitive or private patient information is discussed on an unsecured telephone.

Companies that we may do business with, such as an answering service or delivery service, are given only enough information to provide the necessary service to you. No medical information is provided.

Please feel free to call us if you have any questions about how we protect your privacy. Our goal is always to provide you with the highest quality patient care. We welcome your comments.