



Network
WELLNESS CENTER

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www.networkwellness.com

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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.

Network Wellness Center is required, by law, to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of your protected health information and to provide our patients with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information.

How Your Health Care Information Will Be Used

Medical information, including health history, is collected from you upon your initial visit and on subsequent visits, and is then stored on your medical chart and in your patient file.

Your medical chart is referred to in this practice as a “travel card” and contains the most relevant information the doctor needs during your visits. While you are an active patient, your travel card is stored in an open filing system that is accessible to our staff. This open filing system is off-limits to non-employees.

Any additional medical information or related documents are stored in your patient file. Active and non-active patient files are kept in secured storage and are off-limits to non-employees.

Medical information will be used in the assessment of your condition and in the need for health care or referral purposes. Some of your medical information will be transferred to a computer program for the purposes of retrieval, storage, scheduling, billing and payment purposes. In addition, medical information can be disclosed to health insurers for the purpose of patient reimbursement of services.

The medical information contained on your travel card and in your patient file will be stored by Network Wellness Center for a period of no less than seven (7) years.

Disclosure of Your Health Care Information

Treatment

We may disclose your health care information to the other doctors and staff within our practice for the purpose of treatment, payment or healthcare operations.

In addition, we may also disclose your health care information to the person or persons responsible for your health care, such as a parent, other family members or a nurse.

On occasion, it may be necessary to seek consultation regarding your condition from other health care providers associated with Network Wellness Center.

Payment

We do not bill any insurance company directly. However, as a courtesy we can provide you with an itemized billing that you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. This billing statement contains medical information, including diagnosis, date of injury or condition, and codes which describe the health care services received.

In the event of an overdue balance, it is our policy to send a billing notice to your primary address on file. This billing notice does not contain medical information, but will contain the dates of your recent visits and a listing of overdue charges.

Emergencies

We may disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, or another person responsible for your care about your medical condition or in the event of an emergency or of your death.

Incidental Disclosure

Network Wellness Center maintains an open adjusting room and an open reception area. The doctors or staff may need to discuss an aspect of your health care or health care information with you while you are in these areas, such as when scheduling appointments, collecting payment or during your adjustment. While these communications are intended to be private, please know that it may not be possible to prevent another patient from overhearing these conversations. If you need to have a completely private discussion with the doctor regarding your care, you may request to have your adjustment in a private room.

In addition, during your adjustment your travel card will be kept on a table next to you for the purpose of the doctor recording notes. While not immediately viewable by other patients, your travel card does contain medical information and will be in a supervised but open area.

As a courtesy to our patients, it is our policy to make a reminder call to your home or work after any missed appointments. If you are not at home or at work, we leave a reminder message on your answering machine or with the person answering the phone. No personal health information will be disclosed during this recording or message other than a request to call our office to reschedule your appointment.

As an additional courtesy, it is also our policy to call your home or work on the working day prior to any scheduled report of findings, SRI or reevaluation appointments. As stated above, if you are not at home or at work, we leave a reminder message on your answering machine or with the person answering the phone. No personal health information will be disclosed during this recording or message other than the date and time of your scheduled report of findings, SRI or reevaluation appointment along with a request to call our office if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment.

Network Wellness Center may from time to time offer various classes or groups. Sign-up sheets for these groups will be available to patients at the front reception desk. These sign-up sheets will not contain any personal health information, but will display the topic of the class or group and the name and phone number of each person who has signed up.

During these classes or groups, patients may be asked to share about their medical or health experiences for the purposes of education or other group purposes while other practice members are present. Participation in this type of activity during these classes or groups is not mandatory.

We may, as a courtesy, place reminder calls prior to these scheduled classes and groups to the people who have signed up. If you are not at home or at work, we will leave the reminder message on your answering machine or with the person answering the phone. Again, no personal health information will be disclosed during this recording or message other than the date and time of the upcoming class or group along with a request to call our office if you need to cancel or reschedule.

These courtesy calls are made during normal business hours at the open reception area, and as such these calls may be overheard by patients in the reception area at that time.

Network Wellness Center maintains a bulletin board with posted business cards, event notices and services provided by our patients. This board does not contain any personal health information but is viewable by anyone that comes into the practice. All material posted on the bulletin board is reviewed and approved by staff prior to being posted.

When a new patient begins to receive care from Network Wellness Center, it is our practice, as a token of gratitude, to give a thank-you card to the patient that referred them, if any.

It is also our practice to send birthday cards to our patients to their address on file near the time of their birthday.

Network Wellness Center may use computerized surface EMG, thermography, or posture analysis programs to assist in patient health care. A hard copy printout containing their name and results may be given to the patient. This information is also saved in the computer.

From time to time, Network Wellness Center conducts spinal screenings in public venues using computerized surface EMG that displays the reading on a computer screen. This computer screen may be visible to the public. In addition, a hard copy printout which contains their name and their results is given to the patient. This information is saved in the computer as a record of the screening.

Public Health

As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health authorities for purposes related to: preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability, reporting child abuse or neglect, reporting domestic violence, reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications, and reporting disease or infection exposure.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings

We may disclose your health information in the course of any administrative or judicial proceeding.

Law Enforcement

We may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for purposes such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, complying with a court order or subpoena, and other law enforcement purposes.

Deceased Persons

We may disclose your health information to coroners or medical examiners.

Research

With your prior authorization, we may disclose your “de-personalized” health information (i.e. health information that has been stripped of any information that can link it to a specific person, such as your name, address, social security number, etc.) to researchers conducting research that has been approved by an Institutional Review Board.

Public Safety

It may be necessary to disclose your health information to appropriate persons in order to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a particular person or to the general public.

Specialized Government Agencies

We may disclose your health information for military, national security, prisoner and government benefits purposes.

Marketing

We may contact you for marketing purposes or fundraising purposes, as described below:

It is our practice to engage in marketing promotions and events such as Patient Appreciation Days or seasonal promotions. During these times we may send you a letter, post card, invitation or speak with you while you are at the practice. We will provide you with information about the promotion or event, the dates and times, and request your participation or request that you refer people to participate in these events. It is not our policy to disclose any personal health information about your condition for the purpose of Network Wellness Center marketing promotions and events.

It is also our practice to advertise in various print media, such as newspapers. We may use testimonials in our ads from our patients that contain their name, but only after receiving specific authorization from each patient to do so.

It is also our practice to include patient healing stories as part of the Network Wellness web site and/or in a binder located in an open reception area for other patient's review and education. These stories were written with the patient's knowledge that they were to be put in this binder and used for this purpose. If the patient chose to include their name with their account, then it is included with the story.

We have chosen to post many of these stories on our web site to better help you understand what can be expected from Network Care. In the future, we will be using patient accounts that were sent to us via this web site (www.networkwellness.com). No patient story posted to us from this web site will be used without their first checking the box at the bottom of the form, giving their permission to share their story with others.

From time to time we participate in charitable events to raise awareness, food donations, gifts, money, etc. During these times, we may send you a letter, post card, invitation or call your home to invite you to participate in the charitable activity. We will provide you with information about the type of activity, the dates and times, and request your participation in such an event. It is not our policy to disclose any personal health information about your condition for the purpose of Network Wellness Center sponsored fund-raising events.

Network Wellness Center may use computerized surface EMG, thermography, or posture analysis programs to assist in patient health care. A hard copy printout containing their name and results may be given to the patient. This information is also saved in the computer. From time to time, Network Wellness Center conducts Spinal Screenings in public venues utilizing these programs whose results are displayed on a computer screen. This computer screen may be visible to the public.

Change of Ownership

In the event that Network Wellness Center is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record will become the property of the new owner.

Your Health Information Rights

- You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. Please be advised, however, that Network Wellness Center is not required to agree to the restriction that you request.
- You have the right to have your health information received or communicated through an alternative method or sent to an alternative location other than the usual method of communication or delivery, upon your request.
- You have the right to inspect and copy your health information. Per California law, upon proper notification and request, a copy of your health information will be provided to you within 5 working days.
- You have a right to request that Network Wellness Center amend your protected health information. Please be advised, however, that Network Wellness Center is not required to agree to amend your protected health information. If your request to amend your health information has been denied, you will be provided with an explanation of our denial reason(s) and information about how you can disagree with the denial.
- You have a right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information made by Network Wellness Center.
- You have a right to a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time upon request.

Changes to this Notice of Privacy Practices

Network Wellness Center reserves the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time in the future, and will make the new provisions effective for all information that it maintains. Until such amendment is made, Network Wellness Center is required by law to comply with this Notice.

Network Wellness Center is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide

you with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. If you have questions about any part of this notice or if you want more information about your privacy rights, please contact our Privacy and Security Officer: Dr. Sophia Renée Rodrigues by calling this office at 415-927-3909. If Dr. Sophia Renée Rodrigues is not available, you may make an appointment for a personal conference in person or by telephone within 2 working days.

Complaints

Complaints about your Privacy rights, or how Network Wellness Center has handled your health information should be directed to Dr. Sophia Renée Rodrigues by calling this office at 415-927-3909. If he is not available, you may make an appointment for a personal conference in person or by telephone within 2 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this office handles your complaint, you may submit a formal complaint to:

DHHS, Office of Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003.