



Equ.S.T.
CHIROPRACTIC

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: 06/05/2023

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

This Notice of Privacy describes how Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (PHI) to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations (TPO) and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your PHI. “Protected Health Information” is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health condition and related health care services. **We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all your health information that we maintain.**

Should our information practices change, a revised *Notice of Privacy Practices* will be available upon request. If there is a material change, a revised Notice of Privacy Practices will be distributed to the extent required by law. We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in our most current *Notice of Privacy Practices*. In the following pages, we explain our privacy practices and your rights to your health information in more detail.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Treatment: We may use and disclose your personal information to provide you with treatment or services. For example, we may use your health information to prescribe a course of treatment or make a referral. We will record your current healthcare information in a record so, in the future, we can see your medical history to help in diagnosing and treatment, or to determine how well you are responding to treatment. We may provide your health information to other health providers, such as referring or specialist physicians, to assist in your treatment. Should you ever be hospitalized, we may provide the hospital or its staff with the health information it requires to provide you with effective treatment.

Payment: We may disclose your billing records and some details of your medical condition or expected course of treatment to your health insurance company, if requested. We may use or disclose your information so that your billing information may be sent to you, your health insurer, or a family member. The information on or accompanying the billing records may include information that identifies you and your diagnosis, as well as services rendered, any procedures performed, and supplies used. Also, we may provide health information to another health care provider, such as an ambulance company that transported you to our office, to assist in their billing and collection efforts.

Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose your health information to assist in the operation of our practice. For example, members of our staff or independent contractors may use information in your health

record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it as part of a continuous effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and services we provide. We may use and disclose your health information to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice. We may also provide such information to other health care entities for their health care operations. For example, we may provide information to your health insurer for its quality review purposes. Health information may be overheard within the clinic and/or lobby, but Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC does our best to minimize this exposure.

Decedents. Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC may release medical information about you to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC may also release medical information about you to funeral directors. Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC may also release information to any individual known to Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC as a family member, close personal friend of the family, or any other person identified, who was involved in your care or the payment for your care prior to your death, unless you indicate otherwise. Your medical information may be used or disclosed to others without your authorization after fifty (50) years from the date of your death.

Education: Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC may use "de-identified" patient records for healthcare provider educational purposes. When we "de-identify" health information, we remove information that identifies you as the source of the information. The HIPAA Privacy Rule allows use of PHI without a patient's written authorization for health care operations which includes "conduct of training programs in which students, trainees, or practitioners in areas of health care learn under supervision to practice or improve their skills as health care providers."

Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosure will be made **only** with your consent, authorization or opportunity to object unless required by law. You may revoke the authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

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/consumers/index.html.

Public Health and Safety Issues: We can share health information about you for certain situations such as: Prevent or control disease, injury or disability, To report deaths, Helping with product recalls, Reporting adverse reactions to medications, Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence of children, elders, and dependent adults, To notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or who may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition, or Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

Research: We can use or share your information for health research.

Respond to organ or 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.

Change of Ownership: In the event that Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record will become the property of the new owner, although you will maintain the right to request that copies of your health information be transferred to another physician or medical group.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION RIGHTS

The following are statements of your rights with respect to your protected health information.

Right to Obtain a Paper Copy of This Notice: You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy.

Right to Inspect and Copy: You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records, but does not include psychotherapy notes. To inspect and copy medical information, you must submit a written request to our privacy officer. We will supply you with a form for such a request. If you request a copy of your **medical information, we may** charge a reasonable fee for the costs of labor, postage, and supplies associated with your request. We may not charge you a fee if you require your medical information for a claim for benefits under the Social Security Act or any other state or federal needs-based benefit program. If your medical information is maintained in an electronic health record, you also have the right to request that an electronic copy of your record be sent to you or to another individual or entity. We may charge you a reasonable cost based fee limited to the labor costs associated with transmitting the electronic health record. We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request.

Right to Amend: If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as we retain the information. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our privacy officer. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- is not part of the medical information kept by or for Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC;
- is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- is accurate and complete.

If we deny your request for amendment in writing within 60 days, you may submit a statement of disagreement. We may reasonably limit the length of this statement. Your letter of disagreement will be included in your medical record, but we may also include a rebuttal statement.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures: You have the right to request an accounting of disclosures of your health information made by us. In your accounting, we are not required to list certain disclosures, including:

- disclosures made for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes or disclosures made incidental to treatment, payment, and health care operations, however, if the disclosures were made through an electronic health record, you have the right to request an accounting for such disclosures that were made during the previous 3 years;
- disclosures made pursuant to your authorization;
- disclosures made to create a limited data set;
- disclosures made directly to you.

To request an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our privacy officer. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before October 1, 2016. Your request should indicate in what form you would like the accounting of disclosures (for example, on paper or electronically by email). The first accounting of disclosures you request within any 12 month period will be free. For additional requests within the same period, we may charge you for the reasonable costs of providing the accounting of disclosures. We will notify you of the costs involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time, before any costs are incurred. Under limited circumstances mandated by federal and state law, we may temporarily deny your request for an accounting of disclosures.

Right to Request Restrictions: You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we communicate about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care. Except as noted above, we are not required to agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the restricted information is needed to provide you with emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to our privacy officer. In your request, you must tell us what information you want to limit, whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both and to whom you want the limits to apply.

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

Right to Request Confidential Communications: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by e-mail. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to our privacy officer. We will accommodate all reasonable requests.

Right to Receive Notice of a Breach: We are required to notify you by first class mail or by email (if you have indicated a preference to receive information by e-mail), of any breaches of Unsecured Protected Health Information as soon as possible, but in any event, no later than 60 days following the discovery of the breach. “Unsecured Protected Health Information” is information that is not secured through the use of a technology or methodology identified by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to render the Protected Health Information unusable, unreadable, and undecipherable to unauthorized users.

Risk Adjustment Activities under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) – The Practice may disclose your PHI to an insurance company, health plan or their designated Business Associates, in response to the insurance company’s or health plan’s request for medical records to assess and report risk scores to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Business Associates. Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC sometimes contracts with third-party business associates for services. Examples include answering services, transcriptionists, billing services, consultants, and legal counsel. We may disclose your health information to our business associates so that they can perform the job we have asked them to do. To protect your health information, however, we require our business associates to appropriately safeguard your information.

Appointment Reminders. We may use and disclose Information in your medical record to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment at Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC. We usually will call you at home the day before your appointment and leave a message for you on your answering machine or with an individual who responds to our telephone call. However, you may request that we provide such reminders only in a certain way or only at a certain place. We will endeavor to accommodate all reasonable requests.

Treatment Options. We may use and disclose your health information in order to inform you of alternative treatments. 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.

Release to Family/Friends. Our health professionals, using their professional judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, your health information to the extent it is relevant to that person’s involvement in your care or payment related to your care. We may disclose the health information of minor children to their parents or guardians unless such disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law. In the event of a disaster, we may disclose information to a relief organization so that they may coordinate these notification efforts. If you are able and available to agree or object, we will give you the opportunity to object prior to making these disclosures, although we may disclose this information in a disaster even over your objection if we believe it is necessary to respond to the emergency circumstances. If you

are unable or unavailable to agree or object, our health professionals will use their best judgment in communication with your family and others.

We will provide you with an opportunity to object to such a disclosure whenever we practicably can do so.

Health-Related Benefits and Services. We may use and disclose health information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you. In face- to-face communications, such as appointments with your physician, we may tell you about other products and services that may be of interest you.

Newsletters and Other Communications. We may use your personal information in order to communicate to you via newsletters, mailings, or other means regarding treatment options, health related information, disease management programs, wellness programs, or other community based initiatives or activities in which our practice is participating.

Marketing. In most circumstances, we are required by law to receive your written authorization before we use or disclose your health information for marketing purposes. However, we may provide you with promotional gifts of nominal value. Under NO circumstances will we sell our patient lists or your health information to a third party without your written authorization.

Workers Compensation. We may disclose your health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Law Enforcement. We may release your health information:

- in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons, or similar process if authorized under state or federal law;
- to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or similar person;
- about the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement;
- about a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct;
- about criminal conduct at Equ.S.T. Chiropractic, PLLC;
- to coroners or medical examiners;
- in emergency circumstances to report a crime, the location of the crime or victims, or the identity, description, or location of the person who committed the crime;
- to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other
- national security authorized by law; and
- to authorized federal officials so they may conduct special investigations or provide protection to the President, other authorized persons, or foreign heads of state.

De-identified Information. We may use your health information to create "de-identified" information or we may disclose your information to a business associate so that the business associate can create de-identified information on our behalf. When we "de-identify" health information, we remove information that identifies you as the source of the information.

Health information is considered "de-identified" only if there is no reasonable basis to believe that the health information could be used to identify you.

Personal Representative. If you have a personal representative, such as a legal guardian, we will treat that person as if that person is you with respect to disclosures of your health information. If you become deceased, we may disclose health information to an executor or administrator of your estate to the extent that person is acting as your personal representative.

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.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.** To file a complaint with us, contact our privacy officer at the address listed above. All complaints must be submitted in writing and should be submitted within 180 days of when you knew or should have known that the alleged violation occurred.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of, and provide individuals with, this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protect health information. We are also to abide by the terms of the notice currently in effect. If you have any questions in reference to this form, please ask to speak with our HIPAA Compliance Officer in person or by phone at our main phone number.

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.