

# I.U.O.E. Local 15 Welfare Fund Notice of Privacy Practices

## Section 1: Purpose of This Notice and Effective Date

**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.**

Effective date. The effective date of this Notice is 12/23/2024

This Notice is required by law. The I.U.O.E. Local 15 Welfare Fund Plan (the “Plan”) is required by law to take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of your personally identifiable health information and to inform you about:

1. The Plan’s uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI),
2. Your rights to privacy with respect to your PHI,
3. The Plan’s duties with respect to your PHI,
4. Your right to file a complaint with the Plan and with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and
5. The person or office you should contact for further information about the Plan’s privacy practices.

This Notice applies to your health information held by I.U.O.E. Local 15 Welfare Fund Plan and outside companies that help administer the Plan. You will receive a separate Privacy Notice from the insurer or HMO that you have selected for your health coverage. Please share these Notices with your covered family members, as their health information is also protected under federal law.

## Section 2: Your Protected Health Information

### Protected Health Information (PHI) Defined

The term “Protected Health Information” (PHI) includes all individually identifiable health information related to your past, present or future physical or mental health condition or to payment for health care. PHI includes information maintained by the Plan in oral, written, or electronic form.

## When the Plan May Disclose Your PHI

Under the law, the Plan may disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization, or the opportunity to agree or object, in the following cases:

- At your request. If you request it, the Plan is required to give you access to certain PHI in order to allow you to inspect and/or copy it.
- As required by HHS. The Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services may require the disclosure of your PHI to investigate or determine the Plan's compliance with the privacy regulations.
- For treatment, payment or health care operations. The Plan and its business associates will use PHI in order to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations.

**Treatment** is the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services. For example, the Plan may disclose PHI to a physician who is treating you.

**Payment** includes but is not limited to actions to make coverage determinations and payment. For example, the Plan may use health information to pay claims from your health care provider. If we contract with third parties to help us with payment operations, such as a third party claims administrator, we will also disclose information to them and they may conduct these activities on our behalf. These third parties are known as "business associates."

**Health care operations** includes but is not limited to quality assessment and improvement, underwriting, premium rating and other insurance activities relating to creating or renewing insurance contracts. It also includes disease management, case management, conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions including fraud and abuse compliance programs, business planning and development, business management and general administrative activities. For example, the Plan or its third party administrators may use information about your claims to refer you to a disease management program, a well-pregnancy program, project future benefit costs or audit the accuracy of its health care payments.

The Plan will not use your genetic information for underwriting purposes.

## Disclosure of Reproductive Health PHI

The Plan will not use or disclose your information to conduct a criminal, civil, or administrative investigation into, or to impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability on any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating reproductive health care, or to identify any person for the purpose of conducting such investigation or imposing such liability. Reproductive healthcare is healthcare that affects the health of an individual in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.

For example, a state law might require a health plan to disclose PHI to law enforcement for an investigation. If the requested PHI involved reproductive health care that was lawful under the circumstances in which it was provided, the health plan could not disclose the PHI to law enforcement.

**Attestation requirement:** The Plan may not use or disclose PHI potentially related to reproductive health care for the activities listed above, without obtaining a valid attestation from the person requesting the use or disclosure.

For example, if an investigator requests information from a health plan about claims for coverage of certain reproductive health care provided by a particular health care provider, the investigator must supply an attestation. The health plan must presume that the reproductive health care was lawful unless the health plan has actual knowledge that the reproductive health care was not lawful or the investigator supplied information that demonstrates a substantial factual basis to believe that the reproductive health care was not lawful under these circumstances.

Information that is disclosed by the health plan in accordance with the regulations is subject to redisclosure by the recipient and no longer protected by HIPAA.

## **Disclosure to the Plan Sponsor**

The Plan will also disclose PHI to certain individuals who work for the Plan Sponsor for purposes related to treatment, payment, and health care operations, and has amended the Plan Documents to permit this use and disclosure as required by federal law. For example, we may disclose information to certain individuals to allow them to decide appeals of eligibility determinations, negotiate renewals of insurance contracts or audit the accuracy of health care payments.

In addition, the Plan may use or disclose “summary health information” for the purpose of obtaining premium bids or modifying, amending or terminating the group health Plan. Summary information summarizes the claims history, claims expenses or type of claims experienced by individuals for whom the Plan has provided health benefits.

## **Use of Psychotherapy Notes**

The Plan does not routinely obtain psychotherapy notes. If it is necessary to use or disclose them, it must obtain your written authorization. However, the Plan may use and disclose such notes when needed by the Plan to defend itself against litigation filed by you. Psychotherapy notes are separately filed notes about your conversations with your mental health professional during a counseling session. They do not include summary information about your mental health treatment.

## **Substance use disorder treatment records**

Substance use disorder treatment records received from federally assisted programs, or testimony relaying the content of such records, shall not be used or disclosed in civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against the individual unless based on written consent, or a court order after notice and an opportunity to be heard is provided to the individual or the holder of the record, as provided under law. A court order authorizing use or disclosure must be accompanied by a subpoena or other legal requirement compelling disclosure before the requested record is used or disclosed.

## Use or Disclosure of Your PHI to Family Members

Disclosure of your PHI to family members, other relatives, your close personal friends, and any other person you choose is allowed under federal law if:

- The information is directly relevant to the family or friend's involvement with your care or payment for that care, and
- You have either agreed to the disclosure or have been given an opportunity to object and have not objected.

## Use or Disclosure of Your PHI For Which Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object is Not Required

The Plan is allowed under federal law to use and disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization under the following circumstances:

1. When required by applicable law.
2. Public health purposes. To an authorized public health authority if required by law or for public health and safety purposes. PHI may also be used or disclosed if you have been exposed to a communicable disease or are at risk of spreading a disease or condition, if authorized by law. Public health does not include activities to conduct a criminal, civil, or administrative investigation or impose liability on any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating health care, or to identify any person for these activities.
3. Domestic violence or abuse situations. When authorized by law to report information about abuse, neglect or domestic violence to public authorities if a reasonable belief exists that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. In such case, the Plan will promptly inform you that such a disclosure has been or will be made unless that notice would cause a risk of serious harm.
4. Health oversight activities. To a health oversight agency for oversight activities authorized by law. These activities include civil, administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary actions (for example, to investigate complaints against health care providers) and other activities necessary for appropriate oversight of benefit programs (for example, to the Department of Labor).
5. Legal proceedings. When required for judicial or administrative proceedings. For example, your PHI may be disclosed in response to a subpoena or discovery request that is accompanied by a court order.
6. Law enforcement health purposes. When required for law enforcement purposes (for example, to report certain types of wounds).
7. Law enforcement emergency purposes. For certain law enforcement purposes, including identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, and disclosing information about an individual who is or is suspected to be a victim of a crime.
8. Determining cause of death and organ donation. When required to be given to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person, determine a cause of death or other authorized duties. We may also disclose PHI for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes.

9. Funeral purposes. When required to be given to funeral directors to carry out their duties with respect to the decedent.
10. Research. For research, subject to certain conditions.
11. Health or safety threats. When, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, the Plan in good faith believes the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public and the disclosure is to a person reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.
12. Workers' compensation programs. When authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.
13. Specialized Government Functions. When required, to military authorities under certain circumstances, or to authorized federal officials for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence and other national security activities.

Except as otherwise indicated in this notice, uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization, which you have the right to revoke.

## **Other Uses or Disclosures**

The Plan may contact you to provide you information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

## **Section 3: Your Individual Privacy Rights**

All requests under this section with respect to information about the Plan should be addressed to:

### **Privacy Official**

If a form is required, it will be available from the Privacy Official.

## **You May Request Restrictions on PHI Uses and Disclosures**

You may request the Plan to:

1. Restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations, or
2. Restrict uses and disclosures to family members, relatives, friends or other persons identified by you who are involved in your care.

The Plan, however, is not required to agree to your request if the Plan Administrator or Privacy Official determines it to be unreasonable.

## **You May Request Confidential Communications**

The Plan will accommodate an individual's reasonable request to receive communications of PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations where the request includes a statement that disclosure could endanger the individual.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your PHI.

## **You May Inspect and Copy PHI**

You have a right to inspect and obtain a copy of your PHI contained in a "designated record set," for as long as the Plan maintains the PHI.

The Plan must provide the requested information within 30 days if the information is maintained on site or within 60 days if the information is maintained offsite. A single 30-day extension is allowed if the Plan is unable to comply with the deadline.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request access to the PHI in your designated record set. A reasonable fee may be charged.

If access is denied, you or your personal representative will be provided with a written denial setting forth the basis for the denial, a description of how you may exercise your review rights and a description of how you may complain to the Plan and HHS.

Designated Record Set: includes enrollment, payment, claims adjudication and other information used to make decisions about payment for care. Information used for quality control or peer review analyses and not used to make decisions about you is not included.

## **You Have the Right to Amend Your PHI**

You have the right to request that the Plan amend your PHI or a record about you in a designated record set for as long as the PHI is maintained in the designated record set subject to certain exceptions.

The Plan has 60 days after receiving your request to act on it. The Plan is allowed a single 30-day extension if the Plan is unable to comply with the 60-day deadline. If the Plan denied your request in whole or part, the Plan must provide you with a written denial that explains the basis for the decision. You or your personal representative may then submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial and have that statement included with any future disclosures of that PHI.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request amendment of the PHI.

## **You Have the Right to Receive an Accounting of the Plan's PHI Disclosures**

At your request, the Plan will also provide you with an accounting of certain disclosures by the Plan of your PHI. We do not have to provide you with an accounting of disclosures related to

treatment, payment, or health care operations, or disclosures made to you or authorized by you in writing. The Plan has 60 days to provide the accounting. The Plan is allowed an additional 30 days if the Plan gives you a written statement of the reasons for the delay and the date by which the accounting will be provided.

If you request more than one accounting within a 12-month period, the Plan will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for each subsequent accounting.

## **Receive a Paper Copy of This Notice**

You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this Notice upon request.

## **Your Personal Representative**

You may exercise your rights through a personal representative. Your personal representative will be required to produce evidence of authority to act on your behalf before the personal representative will be given access to your PHI or be allowed to take any action for you. Proof of such authority will be a completed, signed and approved Appointment of Personal Representative form or other form acceptable under state or federal law.

The Plan retains discretion to deny access to your PHI to a personal representative to provide protection to those vulnerable people who depend on others to exercise their rights under these rules and who may be subject to abuse or neglect. However, the Plan cannot elect to not treat a person as your personal representative primarily because the person has provided or facilitated reproductive health care at the request of the individual.

## **Section 4: The Plan's Duties**

### **Maintaining Your Privacy**

The Plan is required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you and your eligible dependents with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices.

This notice is effective beginning on April 14, 2003 and the Plan is required to comply with the terms of this notice. However, the Plan reserves the right to change its privacy practices and to apply the changes to any PHI received or maintained by the Plan prior to that date. If a privacy practice is changed, a revised version of this notice will be provided to you.

When using or disclosing PHI or when requesting PHI from another covered entity, the Plan will make reasonable efforts not to use, disclose or request more than the minimum amount of PHI necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of the use, disclosure or request, taking into consideration practical and technological limitations.

However, the minimum necessary standard will not apply in the following situations:

- Disclosures to or requests by a health care provider for treatment,
- Uses or disclosures made to you or pursuant to your written authorization,

- Disclosures made to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to its enforcement activities under HIPAA,
- Uses or disclosures required by law, and
- Uses or disclosures required for the Plan's compliance with the HIPAA privacy regulations.

This notice does not apply to information that has been de-identified. De-identified information is information that:

- Does not identify you, and
- With respect to which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify you.

## **Section 5: Your Right to File a Complaint with the Plan or the HHS Secretary**

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Plan in care of the following person:

### **Privacy Official**

You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS"). Please contact the nearest office of the Department of Health and Human Services, listed in your telephone directory, visit the HHS website at [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov), or contact the Privacy Official for more information about how to file a complaint. The Plan will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

## **Section 6: If You Need More Information**

If you have any questions regarding this notice or the subjects addressed in it, you may contact the following Privacy Official:

Fund Administrator,  
I.U.O.E. Local 15 Welfare Fund  
44-40 11th Street,  
Long Island City, New York 11101

## **Section 7: Conclusion**

PHI use and disclosure by the Plan is regulated by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, known as HIPAA. You may find these rules at 45 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 160 and 164. This notice attempts to summarize the regulations. The regulations will supersede this notice if there is any discrepancy between the information in this notice and the regulations.