

## Notice of Privacy Practices Georgia Department of Human Resources

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. This notice is effective April 14, 2003. It is provided to you pursuant to provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and related federal regulations. If you have questions about this Notice please contact the Legal Services Office at the address below.**

The Department of Human Resources is an agency of the State of Georgia responsible for numerous programs, which deal with medical and other confidential information. Both federal and state laws establish strict requirements for most programs regarding the disclosure of confidential information, and the Department must comply with those laws. For situations where more stringent disclosure requirements do not apply, this Notice of Privacy Practices describes how the Department may use and disclose your protected health information for treatment, payment, health care operations and for certain other purposes. **This notice relates only to health information.** It describes your rights to access and control your protected health information, and provides information about your right to make a complaint if you believe the Department has improperly used or disclosed your "protected health information." Protected health information is information that may personally identify you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services. The Department is required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices, and may change the terms of this notice, at any time. A new notice will be effective for all protected health information that the Department maintains at the time of issuance. Upon request, the Department will provide you with a revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting copies at its facilities, publication on the Department's website, in response to a telephone or facsimile request to the Privacy Coordinator, or in person at any facility where you receive services from the Department.

### **1. Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information**

Your protected health information may be used and disclosed by the Department, its administrative and clinical staff and others involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you, and to assist in obtaining payment of your health care bills.

**Treatment:** Your protected health information may be used to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services, including coordination of your health care with a third party that has your permission to have access to your protected health information, such as, for example, a health care professional who may be treating you, or to another health care provider such as a specialist or laboratory.

**Payment:** Your protected health information may be used to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, this may include activities that a health insurance plan requires before it approves or pays for health care services such as; making a determination of eligibility or coverage, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities.

**Health Care Operations:** The Department may use or disclose your protected health information to support the business activities of the Department, including, for example, but not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training, licensing, and other business activities. The Department may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk at any facility where services are provided. You may be asked to provide your name and other necessary information, and you may be called by name in the waiting room when a staff member is ready to see you, and your protected health information may be used to contact you about appointments or for other operational reasons. Your protected health information may be shared with third party "business associates" who perform various activities that assist us in the provision of your services.

Other uses and disclosures of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, which you may revoke in writing at any time, except as permitted or required by law as described below.

### **Other Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures with Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

The Department may use and disclose your protected health information in the following instances. You have the opportunity to agree or object to the use or disclosure of all or part of your protected health information. Unless you object, the Department may disclose protected health information for a facility directory or to a family member, relative, or any other person you identify, information related to that person's involvement in your health care and may use or disclose protected health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or other person responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death. The Department may use or disclose your protected health information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts and to coordinate uses and disclosures to family or other individuals involved in your health care. Objections may be made orally or in writing.

### **Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures without Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

The Department may use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization when required to do so by law; for public health purposes; to a person who may be at risk of contracting a communicable disease; to a health oversight agency; to an authority authorized to receive reports of abuse or neglect; in certain legal proceedings; and for certain law enforcement purposes. Protected health information may also be disclosed without your authorization to a coroner, medical examiner or funeral director; for certain approved research purposes; to prevent or lessen a threat to health or safety; and to law enforcement authorities for identification or apprehension of an individual.

**Required Uses and Disclosures:** Under the law, the Department must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine the Department's compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule at 45 CFR Sections 164.500 et. seq.

