

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.

Urgent Care of Oconee, LLC (“UCO”) present this Notice of Privacy Practices (“Notice”) to our patients describing how your identifiable medical information (called protected health information or PHI) may be used or disclosed, and to notify you of your rights regarding this information.

**Patient Protected Health Information**

Under Federal law, your patient health information is protected and confidential. Protected health information (PHI) includes information about your symptoms, test results, diagnosis, treatment and related medical information. Your health information also includes payment, billing and insurance information.

**How We Use Your Protected Health Information**

UCO uses health information about you for treatment, analyzing procedures and lab results. We also use PHI to obtain payment and for health care operations, including administrative purposes and evaluation of the quality of care that you receive. Under some circumstances where the law applies, we may be required to use or disclose the information without your permission.

**Examples of Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

**Treatment:** UCO will use and disclose your PHI to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, nurses, physicians and other members of your treatment team will record information in your medical record and use it to determine the most appropriate course of care. UCO may also disclose this information by fax, in person, or via telecommunication. We may communicate to other health care providers who are participating in your treatment, to pharmacists who are filling and refilling your prescriptions, and to family members who are helping with your care.

**Payment:** UCO will use and disclose your PHI for payment purposes. For example, UCO may need to obtain authorization from your insurance company before providing certain types of treatment. UCO will submit bills and maintain records of payments from your health plan.

**Health Care Operations:** UCO will use and disclose your health information to conduct our standard internal operations. Examples include proper administration of records, evaluation of the quality of treatment, and assessing the care and outcomes of your case and others like it.

**Release of Information to Family or Friends**

UCO knows that family or friends are an integral part of a patient's care. If you wish to authorize a family member or friend to receive or request information regarding your care or test results, please provide their name and contact information on the ‘Notice of Privacy Practices Acknowledgement’ form. UCO will not release your information to any friend or family without your written consent. If you wish to change or update the authorized individuals, you will need to make these updates in writing.

**Special Uses**

UCO may use your information to contact you with appointment reminders by phone, mail, email, or text message. UCO may also contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. This communication may be sent to you via phone, mail, or email. If you have granted written permission, protected health information may also be sent to you via email. If you wish to authorize the use of email as a method for UCO to communicate with you regarding your PHI, sign the proper section on the ‘Notice of Privacy Practices Acknowledgement’ form.

**Health Information Exchange**

Your information may be shared with other healthcare providers requested by you via Docutap, electronic medical records system.

**• Types of Data Exchanged**

May include your medical history, allergies, radiology, labs, doctors’ notes and/or immunizations. Sensitive information that requires specific written authorization to disclose will not be shared; this includes mental health and psychotherapy records. In the event that you want this type of sensitive information shared, an express written consent will be required for each release. However, sensitive health information, including, but not limited to: substance abuse records, Covid, HIV/AIDS information may be shared with government database to track cases.

**• Permitted Disclosures**

The HIE ensures protection of patients’ personal information by limiting use of patient health data to ensure meaningful use, as described in the “How We Use Protected Health Information” section of this document. In addition, state agencies may only request, receive, use and disclose patient health data solely as authorized by applicable law, or as legally authorized by the individual.

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**• Opting Out**

You have the choice to opt-out of having your electronic records released, by completing the opt-out form, which will be provided upon request. If you choose to opt-out, your electronic health records cannot be shared with other healthcare providers. However, authorized healthcare providers will be able to receive your health information on an as-needed basis to assist with continued care via phone, fax and/or regular mail.

**Potential Risks and Benefits of HIE Participation**

**• Benefits**

Quick, secure and accurate sharing of patient information among authorized healthcare providers for improved and efficient patient care; reduction of duplicate medical tests; expedited information retrieval, increasing patients’ face-to-face time with providers; and enhancing accuracy and efficiency in patient care.

**• Risks**

There are limited risks associated with your participation in the HIE. The risks are managed through HIE policies and federal HIPAA regulations, by which all participants must abide. You have a right to receive a list of occurrences that your health information was accessed, as well as for what purpose, as described in the “Accounting of Disclosures” section of this document. In the event there is a breach of security which involves your health information, you will be notified per HIPAA regulations.

**Other Uses and Disclosures Not Requiring Written Permission**

UCO may use or disclose your protected health information for other reasons, even without your consent. Subject to certain requirements, UCO is permitted to give out health information without your permission for the following purposes:

- **Required by Law**

UCO may be required by the law to disclose your PHI for certain purposes, such as reporting gunshot wounds, suspected abuse or neglect, or similar injuries and events.

- **Research**

UCO may use or disclose information for approved medical research subject to specific criteria.

- **Public Health Activities**

As required by law, UCO may disclose vital statistics, diseases, proof of immunization, information related to recalls of dangerous products, and similar information to public health authorities.

- **Health Oversight**

UCO may be required to disclose information to assist in investigations and audits; eligibility for government programs; inspections; licensure or disciplinary actions; compliance to civil rights laws; and similar activities.

- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings**

UCO may disclose information in response to an appropriate subpoena or court order.

- **Law Enforcement Purposes**

Subject to certain restrictions, UCO may disclose information required by law enforcement officials.

- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety**

UCO may use and disclose information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

- **Military and Special Government Functions**

If you are a member of the armed forces, UCO may release information as required by military command authorities. UCO may also disclose information to correctional institutions or for national security purposes.

- **Workers' Compensation**

UCO may release information about you as authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers' compensation or similar programs providing benefits for work-related injuries or illness. In any other situation, we will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing any identifiable health information about you. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose information, you can later revoke that authorization to stop any future uses and disclosures.

### Individual Rights

You have the following rights with regard to your health information. Submit any concerns in writing to UCO's Compliance Officer (see below).

- **Request Restrictions**

You may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. These requests must be in writing. UCO is not required to agree to most restrictions, but if we do agree, UCO must abide by those restrictions.

- **Restrict Disclosure to a Health Plan**

You may request, in writing, to restrict disclosure of your PHI to a health plan. For example, you may request in writing that you choose not to use your insurance for a specific visit. If the request is made in writing in advance, the healthcare service or item is paid in full at the time of service, and the disclosure is for payment or healthcare operations, UCO must agree to the restriction except for cases where the disclosure is required by law. (i.e., your health plan requires all healthcare services to be disclosed or filed.)

- **Confidential Communications**

You may ask us to communicate with you confidentially including by reasonable alternate means or locations. This request must be made in writing. There may be conditions placed on accommodating the request in certain situations.

- **Inspect and Obtain Copies**

You have the right to see or receive a copy of your health information. There may be a small charge dictated by Georgia Law for these copies. You may obtain a copy of your health information by completing and submitting a medical records release form. By law, you must receive the requested information within 30 days.

- **Amend Information**

If you believe information in your record is incorrect, you have the right to request that UCO correct or amend the existing information. The request must be made in writing and include a reason to support the requested amendment. Your UCO physician has the right to refuse your request. Regardless, a letter concerning your request will be sent within 60 days of said request.

- **Accounting of Disclosures**

You may request a list of instances where we have disclosed health information about you within the last six years for reasons other than treatment, payment, or health care operations. This request must be submitted in writing. The request must be fulfilled within 60 days. If UCO is unable to fulfill the request within 60 days, the law grants a one-time 30 day extension. A written statement regarding the reason for the delay will be provided to you. If you request an accounting more than once in a 12 month period, UCO may impose a reasonable cost-based fee for each subsequent request.

- **Obtain Paper Copy of Notice**

If you have previously received this Notice in electronic form, you have the right to request a paper copy of this Notice.

### **Our Legal Duty**

We are required by law to protect and maintain the privacy of your PHI, to provide this Notice about our legal duties and privacy practices regarding PHI, and to abide by the terms of the Notice currently in effect. We are also required by law to notify you in the event of a breach of your unsecured PHI.

### **Changes in Privacy Practices**

We may change our policies at any time. A current version of our Notice is available on UCO's website. A current summary version of our Notice is available at the frontdesk. You may also request a copy of the current version of our Notice at any time. Any changes to our privacy practices described in this Notice will apply to all PHI created or received prior to this revision. For more information about our privacy practices, submit concerns in writing to UCO's Compliance Officer (see below).

### **Complaints**

If you are concerned that we have violated your privacy rights, if you disagree with a decision we made about your records, or would like to file a complaint, contact the clinic. You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Effective Date: 08/15/2020