

Privacy Notice – Protected Health Information – Myrtle Beach Family Medicine

This notice describes how health information about you may be used, disclosed and how you can get access to this information. We are required by law to give you this notice.

Introduction:

At Myrtle Beach Family Medicine {MBFM}, we are committed to treating and using Protected Health Information {PHI} about you responsibly. This Privacy Notice describes the personal information we collect, how and when we use or disclose that information. It also describes your rights as they relate to your PHI. These privacy practices are followed by healthcare providers and staff of MBFM. This notice is effective 4/1/03 and applies to all protected health information as defined by federal regulations.

Understanding your health record/PHI:

Each time you visit MBFM, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment as appropriate. This information is referred to as your medical record or PHI. MBFM is required by law to give you this privacy notice and inform you of ways we may disclose and use your PHI. This notice describes your right and our responsibilities regarding use and disclosure of PHI.

Disclosure of your health record/PHI for Treatment:

MBFM may use PHI about you to provide you with medical treatment and services. Your PHI may be disclosed to other doctors, practitioners, nurses, technicians, office staff or other personnel who are involved in taking care of you and your health needs.

Example: MBFM may be treating you for a specific disease and may need to know if you have other health conditions which could complicate your treatment. The doctor may consult with another doctor about your condition to help determine the most appropriate care for you. Healthcare providers or family member may be involved as part of your medical care. PHI may be disclosed to people who do not work at MBFM in order to coordinate your care, such as scheduling tests, labs, x-rays or other procedures and phoning in prescriptions.

PHI will be used for Regular Health Operations at MBFM:

MBFM may disclose PHI about you in order to operate the office to make sure you receive quality care. **Example:** Your health care information may be used to evaluate staff's performance in caring for you. This information will then be used in an effort to improve the quality and the need for new or additional services to better serve you.

Disclosure for Payment of Services billed by MBFM:

MBFM may disclose your health information to bill for services and treatment so payment may be collected from you, your insurance company or a third party. **Example:** A bill may be sent to you or a third party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures and supplies used.

Disclosure of PHI for special circumstances:

We may disclose or use protected health information about you without your permission for the following special circumstances, subject to all applicable legal requirements and limitations.

Required by law or law enforcement: MBFM may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena. We will disclose PHI about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.

To prevent serious threat to health or safety: MBFM may disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

Communication with family: MBFM health professionals, using their best judgement, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care. In situation where you are incapable of giving consent, we may, using our professional judgement, determine that a disclosure to your family or friend is in your best interest.

Research: MBFM may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

Coroners, funeral directors or medical examiners: MBFM may disclose health information to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to carry out their duties.

Organ procurement organizations: Consistent with applicable law, MBFM may disclose health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of organs for the purpose of tissue donation or transplant.

Appointment reminders: MBFM may contact you to provide appointment reminders.

Worker's Compensation: MBFM may disclose health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public Health: As required by law, MBFM may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

Military, Veterans, National Security: If you are a member of these, MBFM may be required by government authorities to release health information about you.

Health Oversight Agencies: MBFM may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for audits, investigations, inspections or licensing purposes. Disclosure may be required by state or federal agencies to monitor health care, government programs and compliance with laws.

Legal, Lawsuits, Disputes: MBFM may disclose PHI about you in response to a court order, administrative order or subpoena.

Your Health Information Rights:

Although your medical record is the physical property of MBFM, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- **Right to obtain a copy of this privacy notice**
- **Right to inspect and receive a copy your health record as provided. 45 CFR 164.524**
You must submit a written request and a fee may be charged. Requests may be denied in limiting circumstances.
- **Right to amend your health record. 45 CFR 164.528**
To request an amendment, complete and submit a medical record amendment/correction form which is available at MBFM. We may deny your request if you ask information be amended that:
 1. MBFM did not create.
 2. Is not part of your PHI or medical record.
 3. Is already accurate and complete.
- **Right to obtain an accounting of disclosures. 45 CFR 164.528**
This is a list of disclosures MBFM made of medical information about you for purposes other than treatment, payment and healthcare operations. To obtain this list, you must submit your request in writing. It must state a time period, not longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. We may charge you for the costs of providing this list.
- **Right to request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.**
You have the right to request we communicate with you regarding your medical health in certain ways or at certain locations. Example: You may ask that we only contact you at home or by mail, not at work.
- **Right to request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522**
You have the right to request restrictions on disclosures. Example: You may request we not disclose information about your surgical procedure.
- **Right to revoke your authorization to disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.**
To request restrictions, these restrictions will need to be listed on the consent form.
We are not required to agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the PHI is needed to provide you emergency treatment.

Our Responsibilities:

MBFM is required to:

- **Maintain the privacy of your health information. Privacy cannot be ensured for calls to MBFM on a cellular phone.**
- **Provide you with this notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you,**
- **Abide by the terms of this notice,**
- **Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction, and**
- **Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means.**

MBFM reserves the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will supply you with a revised notice.

MBFM will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice. We will also discontinue usage or disclose your health information after we have received a written revocation of the authorization according to the procedures included in this authorization.

For More Information or to Report a Problem:

If you have any questions or would like additional information, you may contact the following staff:

Privacy Officer: Dean Smith, MD, Office Manager: Carla Hughes
Myrtle Beach Family Medicine, 831 82nd Parkway, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572 (843) 449-5243

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Practice's Privacy Office or Office Manager. Or you may file a complaint with the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Service.

Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services P.O. Box 8206, Columbia, SC 29202-8206