

## Your Information. Your Rights. Our Responsibilities.

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.**

### Your Rights

#### You have the right to:

- Get a copy of your health and claims records
- Correct your health and claims records
- Request confidential communication
- Ask us to limit the information we share
- Get a list of those with whom we've shared your information
- Get a copy of this privacy notice
- Choose someone to act for you
- File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated

➤ **See page 2** for more information on these rights and how to exercise them

### Your Choices

#### You have some choices in the way that we use and share information as we:

- Answer coverage questions from your family and friends
- Provide disaster relief
- Market our services and sell your information

➤ **See page 3** for more information on these choices and how to exercise them

### Our Uses and Disclosures

#### We may use and share your information as we:

- Help manage the health care treatment you receive
- Run our organization
- Pay for your health services
- Administer your health plan
- Help with public health and safety issues
- Do research
- Comply with the law
- Respond to organ and tissue donation requests and work with a medical examiner or funeral director
- Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests
- Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

➤ **See pages 3 and 4** for more information on these uses and disclosures

## Your Rights

### When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.

This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

#### Get a copy of your health and claims records

- You can ask to see or get a copy of your health and claims records and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health and claims records, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.

#### Ask us to correct health and claims records

- You can ask us to correct your health and claims records if you think they are incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this.
- We may say “no” to your request, but we’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

#### Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will consider all reasonable requests, and must say “yes” if you tell us you would be in danger if we do not.

#### Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us **not** to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations.
- We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.

#### Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we’ve shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.
- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We’ll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

#### Get a copy of this privacy notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.

#### Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

#### File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting us using the information on page 1.
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/).
- We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

## Your Choices

**For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share.** If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

**In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:**

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in payment for your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation

*If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.*

**In these cases we never share your information unless you give us written permission:**

- Marketing purposes
- Sale of your information

## Our Uses and Disclosures

### How do we typically use or share your health information?

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways.

**Help manage the health care treatment you receive**

- We can use your health information and share it with professionals who are treating you.

**Example:** A doctor sends us information about your diagnosis and treatment plan so we can arrange additional services.

**Run our organization**

- We can use and disclose your information to run our organization and contact you when necessary.
- **We are not allowed to use genetic information to decide whether we will give you coverage and the price of that coverage.** This does not apply to long term care plans.

**Example:** We use health information about you to develop better services for you.

**Pay for your health services**

- We can use and disclose your health information as we pay for your health services.

**Example:** We share information about you with your dental plan to coordinate payment for your dental work.

**Administer your plan**

- We may disclose your health information to your health plan sponsor for plan administration.

**Example:** Your company contracts with us to provide a health plan, and we provide your company with certain statistics to explain the premiums we charge.

*continued on next page*

**How else can we use or share your health information?** 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](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html).

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**Help with public health and safety issues**

- We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:
    - Preventing disease
    - Helping with product recalls
    - Reporting adverse reactions to medications
    - Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
    - Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety
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**Do research**

- We can use or share your information for health research.
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**Comply with the law**

- We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we're complying with federal privacy law.
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**Respond to organ and tissue donation requests and work with a medical examiner or funeral director**

- We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.
  - We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.
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**Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests**

- We can use or share health information about you:
    - For workers' compensation claims
    - For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
    - With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
    - For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services
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**Respond to lawsuits and legal actions**

- We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.
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## Our Responsibilities

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- 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](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html).

## 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, on our web site, and we will mail a copy to you.

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**Contact:** Shelly Barker  
Name of Entity: SDIS  
Address: PO Box 12613  
Salem, OR 97309  
Phone Number: 800-285-5461  
Email Address: [sbarker@sdao.com](mailto:sbarker@sdao.com)

*Privacy Official:* Frank Stratton  
*Phone Number:* 800-285-5461  
*Email Address:* [fstratton@sdao.com](mailto:fstratton@sdao.com)

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**Special Districts Group Health Plan  
P.O. Box 12613  
Salem, OR 97309**

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

This Notice of Privacy Practices (the “Notice”) describes the legal obligations of Special Districts Group Health Plan (the “Plan”) and your legal rights regarding your protected health information held by the Plan under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH Act). Among other things, this Notice describes how your protected health information may be used or disclosed to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations, or for any other purposes that are permitted or required by law.

We are required to provide this Notice of Privacy Practices to you pursuant to HIPAA.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects only certain medical information known as “Protected Health Information.” Generally, PHI is health information, including demographic information, collected from you or created or received by a health care provider, a health care clearing house, a health plan, or your employer on behalf of the group health plan from which it is possible to individually identify you and that relates to:

- your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition;
- the provision of health care to you; or
- the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to you.

If you have any questions about this Notice or about our privacy practices, please see the contact information at the bottom of this notice.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Notice is effective July 1, 2024.

### **OUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

We are required by law to:

- maintain the privacy of your protected health information;
- provide you with certain rights with respect to protected health information;
- provide you with a copy of this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information; and
- follow the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice and make the new provisions regarding your protected health information that we maintain, as allowed or required by law. If we make a material change to this Notice, we will provide you with a copy of our revised Notice of Practices.

## HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

### PRIMARY USES AND DISCLOSURES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Under the law, we may use or disclose your protected health information under certain circumstances without your permission. The following categories describe the different ways that we may use and disclose your protected health information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and present some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

- **For Treatment**

We may use or disclose your protected health information to facilitate medical treatment or services by providers. We may disclose medical information about you to providers, including doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, or other hospital personnel who are involved in taking care of you. For example, we might disclose information about your prior prescriptions to a pharmacist to determine if prior prescriptions contraindicate a pending prescription.

- **Payment**

We may use or disclose your protected health information to determine your eligibility for Plan benefits, to facilitate payment for the treatment and services you receive from health care providers, to determine benefit responsibility under the Plan, or to coordinate Plan coverage. For example, we may tell your health care provider about your medical history to determine whether a particular treatment is experimental, investigational, or medically necessary, or to determine whether the Plan will cover the treatment. We may also share your protected health information with a utilization review or precertification service provider. Likewise, we may share your protected health information with another entity to assist with the adjudication or subrogation of health claims or to another health plan to coordinate benefit payments.

- **For Health Care Operations**

We may use and disclose your protected health information for other Plan operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the Plan. For example, we may use medical information in connection with conducting quality assessment and improvement activities; underwriting, premium rating, and other activities relating to Plan coverage; submitting claims for stop-loss (or excess-loss) coverage; conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services audit services, and fraud and abuse detection programs; business planning and development such as cost management; and business management and general Plan administrative activities. However, we will not use your genetic information for underwriting purposes.

- **Treatment Alternatives or Health-Related Benefits and Services**

We may use and disclose your protected health information to send you information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that might be of interest to you.

- **To Business Associates**

We may contract with individuals and entities known as Business Associates to perform various functions on our behalf or to provide certain types of services. In order to perform these functions or to provide the services, our Business Associates will receive, create, maintain, transmit, use, and/or disclose protected health information, but only after they agree in writing with us to implement appropriate safeguards regarding your protected health information. For example, we may disclose your protected health information to a Business Associate to process your claims for Plan benefits or to provide support services, such as utilization

management, subrogation, or pharmacy benefit management, but only after the Business Associate enters into a Business Associate contract with us.

- **As Required by Law**

We will disclose your protected health information when required to do so by federal, state, or local law. For example, we may disclose your protected health information when required by national security laws or public health disclosure laws.

- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety**

We may use and disclose your protected health information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety, or the health and safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat. For example, we may disclose your protected health information in a proceeding regarding the licensure of a physician.

- **To Plan Sponsors**

For the purpose of administering the Plan, we may disclose to certain employees of the Employer protected health information. However, those employees will only use or disclose that information as necessary to perform Plan administration functions or as otherwise required by HIPAA, unless you have authorized further disclosures. Your protected health information cannot be used for employment purposes without your specific authorization.

## **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

In addition to the above, the following categories describe other possible ways that we may use and disclose your protected health information without your specific authorization. For each category of uses or disclosures, we will explain what we mean and present some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

- **Organ and Tissue Donation**

If you are an organ donor, we may release your protected health information after your death to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye, or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

- **Military**

If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release your protected health information as required by military command authorities. We may also release protected health information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.

- **Workers' Compensation**

We may release your protected health information for workers' compensation or similar programs, but only as authorized by, and to the extent necessary to comply with, laws relating to workers' compensation and similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.



- **Public Health Activities**

We may disclose your protected health information for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:

- to prevent or control disease, injury, or disability;
- to report births and deaths;
- to report child abuse or neglect;
- to report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- to notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
- to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition; and
- to notify the appropriate government authority if we believe that a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree, or when required or authorized by law.

- **Health Oversight Activities**

We may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

- **Lawsuits and Disputes**

If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your protected health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose your protected health information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone involved in a legal dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain a court or administrative order protecting the information requested.

- **Law Enforcement**

We may disclose your protected health information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons, or similar process;
- to identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- about the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstance, we are unable to obtain the victim's agreement;
- about a death that we believe may be the result of criminal conduct; and
- about criminal conduct.

- **Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors**

We may release protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients to funeral directors, as necessary to carry out their duties.

- **National Security and Intelligence Activities**

We may release your protected health information to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

- **Inmates**

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or are in the custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose your protected health information to the correctional institution or law-enforcement official if necessary (1) for the institution to provide you health care; (2) to protect your health and safety and the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

- **Research**

We may disclose your protected health information to researchers when:

- the individual identifiers have been removed; or
- when an institutional review board or privacy board has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of the requested information, and approves the research.

## **REQUIRED DISCLOSURES**

The following is a description of disclosures of your protected health information we are required to make.

- **Government Audits**

We are required to disclose your protected health information to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when the Secretary is investigating or determining our compliance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

- **Disclosures to You**

When you request, we are required to disclose to you the portion of your protected health information that contains medical records, billing records, and any other records used to make decisions regarding your health care benefits. We also are required to provide, upon your request, an accounting of most disclosures of your protected health information that are for reasons other than payment, treatment, or health care operations, and if the protected health information was not disclosed pursuant to your individual authorization.

## **OTHER DISCLOSURES**

- **Personal Representatives**

We will disclose your protected health information to individuals authorized by you, or to an individual designated as your personal representative, attorney-in-fact, etc., so long as you provide us with a written notice/authorization and any supporting documents (i.e., power of attorney). Note: Under the HIPAA privacy rule, we do not have to disclose information to a personal representative if we have a reasonable belief that:

- you have been, or may be, subjected to domestic violence, abuse, or neglect by such person; or
- treating such person as your personal representative could endanger you; and
- in the exercise of professional judgment, it is not in your best interest to treat the person as your personal representative.

- **Spouses and Other Family Members**

Subject only to limited exceptions, we will send all mail to you. This includes mail that relates to your spouse and other family members who are covered under the Health Plan, and includes mail with information on the

use of Health Plan benefits by the employee's spouse and information on the denial of any Health Plan benefits to the employee's spouse and other family members. If we agree to your request regarding Confidential Communications below, we will send mail as provided by the request.

- **Authorizations**

Other uses or disclosures of your protected health information not described above will only be made after obtaining your written authorization. For example, subject to specific conditions, we will not use or disclose psychiatric notes about you; we will not use or disclose your protected health information for marketing; and we will not sell your protected health information. You may revoke your authorization at any time, so long as you make the revocation in writing. Any revocation of authorization will only be effective as to future authorizations. It will not affect the authorizations as to any information that was used or disclosed in reliance upon your prior authorization.

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy**

You have the right to inspect and copy certain protected health information that may be used to make decisions about your Plan benefits. If the information you request is maintained electronically, and you request an electronic copy, we will provide a copy in the electronic form and format you request, if the information can be readily produced in that form and format; if the information cannot be readily produced in that form and format, we will work with you to come to an agreement on form and format. If we cannot agree on an electronic form and format, we will provide you with a paper copy.

To inspect and copy your protected health information, you must submit your request in writing to the contact information at the bottom of this notice. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request.

We will generally respond to your request within 30 days after it is received, and if we need additional time to process your request we will let you know during the initial 30-day period.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed by submitting a written request to the contact located at the bottom of this notice.

- **Right to Amend**

If you feel that the protected health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend your information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for the Plan.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the contact at the bottom of this notice. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We will generally respond to your request within 60 days. 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:

- is not part of the medical information kept by or for the Plan;

- 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 information that you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- is already accurate and complete.

If we deny your request, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and any future disclosures of the disputed information will include your statement.

- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures**

You have a right to an “accounting” of certain disclosures of your protected health information. The accounting will not include (1) disclosures for purpose of treatment, payment, or health care operations; (2) disclosures made to you; (3) disclosures made pursuant to your authorization; (4) disclosures made to friends or family in your presence or because of an emergency; (5) disclosures for national security purposes; and (6) disclosures incidental to otherwise permissible disclosures.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the contact at the bottom of this notice. Your request must state the time period you want the accounting to cover, which may not be longer than six years before the date of the request. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, paper or electronic). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be provided free of charge. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at the time before any costs are incurred.

- **Right to Request Restrictions**

You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on your on your protected health information that we use or disclose for treatment, payment, or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on your protected health information that we disclose to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery that you had.

Except as provided in the next paragraph, we are not required to agree to your request. However, if we do agree to the request, we will honor the restriction until you revoke it or we notify you.

We will comply with any restriction request if (1) except as otherwise required by law, the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes or carrying out payment or health care operations (and is not for purposes of carrying out treatment); and (2) the protected health information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which the health care provider involved has been paid in full by you or another person.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to the contact at the bottom of this notice. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply – for example, disclosures to your spouse.

- **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 mail.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the contact at the bottom of this notice. We will not ask you the reason for your request. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. We will accommodate all reasonable requests.

- **Right to Be Notified of a Breach**

You have the right to be notified in the event that we (or a Business Associate) discover a breach of unsecured protected health information.

- **Right to Receive a Paper Copy of This Notice**

You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice.

You may obtain a copy of this note at our website.

To obtain a paper copy of this notice, please see the contact information at the bottom of this notice.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Plan or with the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with the Plan, contact.

**Special Districts Insurance Services  
PO Box 12613  
Salem, OR 97309**

All complaints must be submitted in writing.

You will not be penalized, or in any other way retaliated against, for filing a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights or with us.