

# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

FOR  
ST. JOSEPH NURSING HOME  
UTICA, NEW YORK



(St. Joseph Nursing Home is referred to in this document as “the provider”)

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.

This Notice of Privacy Practices is being provided to you as a requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This Notice describes how we may use and disclose your Protected Health Information to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information in some cases. Your “protected health information” means any of your written and oral health information, including demographic data that can be used to identify you. This is health information that is created or received by your health care provider, and that relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

## **I. Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information:**

Your protected Health Information may be used by the Provider, your physician, office staff, or other staff providing care to you and others outside the facility which are involved with your care, treatment, payment, or other healthcare operations. The provider may use your protected health information for purposes of providing treatment, obtaining payment for treatment, and conducting health care operations. Your protected health information may be used or disclosed only for these purposes unless the provider has obtained your authorization or the use or disclosure is otherwise permitted by the HIPAA Privacy Regulations or State law. Disclosures of your protected health information for the purposes described in this Notice may be made in writing, orally, or by facsimile.

### **A. Treatment:**

We will use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party for treatment purposes, including but not limited to, for example, we may disclose your protected health information to a pharmacy to fulfill a prescription, to a laboratory to order a blood test, or to a home health agency that is providing care in your home. We may also disclose protected health information to other physicians who may be treating your or consulting with your physician with respect to your care. In some cases, we may also disclose your protected health information to an outside treatment provider for purposes of the treatment activities of the other provider.

**B. Payment:**

Your protected health information will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for the services that we provide. This may include certain communications to your health insurer to get approval for the treatment that we recommend. For example only, if a hospital admission is recommended, we may need to disclose information to your health insurer to get prior approval for the hospitalization. We may also disclose protected health information to your insurance company to determine whether you are eligible for benefits or whether a particular service is covered under your health plan. In order to get payment for your services, we may also need to disclose your protected health information to your insurance company to demonstrate the medical necessity of the services or, as required by your insurance company, for utilization review. WE may also disclose resident information to another provider involved in your care for the other provider's payment activities.

**C. Operations:**

We may use or disclose your protected health information as necessary, for our own health care operations in order to facilitate the function of St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc. and to provide quality care to all residents. Health care operations include, but are not limited to, such activities as:

- Quality assurance, assessment, and improvement activities
- Employee review activities
- Training programs including those in which students, trainees, or practitioners in health care learn under supervision
- Accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities
- Review and auditing, including compliance reviews, medical reviews, legal services, and maintaining compliance programs
- Business management and general administrative activities
- Development, management, and administrative activities

In certain situations, we may also disclose resident information to another provider or health plan for their health care operations. In addition, we may also combine health information about many residents to decide which additional services to offer residents.

**D. Other Uses and Disclosures:**

As part of treatment, payment, and healthcare operations, we may also use or disclose your protected health information for the following purposes:

- To remind you of an appointment
- To inform you of potential treatment alternatives or options
- To inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you
- To contact you to raise funds for the provider or an institutional foundation related to the provider. If you do not wish to be contacted regarding fundraising, please contact our Privacy Officer, set forth herein or as identified in supplemental notices

**II. Uses and Disclosures Beyond Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations Permitted Without Authorization or Opportunity to Object:**

Federal privacy rules allow us to use or disclose your protected health information without your permission or authorization for a number of reasons including the following:

**When Legally Required:**

We will disclose your protected health information when we are required to do so by any Federal, State, or Local Law

**When There Are Risks to Public Health:**

We may disclose your protected health information for the following public activities and purposes:

- To prevent, control, or report disease, injury, or disability as permitted by law
- To report vital events such as birth or death as permitted or required by law
- To conduct public health surveillance, investigations, and interventions as permitted or required by law
- To collect or report adverse events and product defects, track FDA regulated products, enable product recalls, repairs, or replacements to the FDA and to conduct post marketing surveillance
- To notify a person who has been exposed to communicable disease or who may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease as authorized by law
- To report to an employer information about an individual who is a member of the workforce as legally permitted or required

**To Report Abuse, Neglect, Or Domestic Violence:**

We may notify government authorities if we believe that a resident is the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will make this disclosure only when specifically required or authorized by law or when the resident agrees to the disclosure

**To conduct Health Oversight Activities:**

We may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities including audits; civil, administrative, or criminal investigations, proceedings, or actions; inspections; licensure or disciplinary actions; or other activities necessary for appropriate oversight as authorized by law. We will not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and your health information is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits

**In Connection With Judicial and Administrative Proceedings:**

We may disclose your protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceedings in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal as expressly authorized by such order or in response to a subpoena in some circumstances.

**For Law Enforcement Purposes:**

We may disclose your protected health information to a law enforcement official for law enforcement purposes as follows:

- As required by law for reporting of certain types of wounds or other physical injuries
- Pursuant to court order, court-ordered warrant, subpoena, summons, or similar process
- For the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person
- Under certain limited circumstances, when you are the victim of a crime

To a law enforcement official if the provider has a suspicion that your death was the result of criminal conduct  
In an emergency in order to report a crime

**To Coroners, Funeral Directors, and for Organ Donation:**

We may disclose protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, to determine cause of death or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law. We may also disclose protected health information to a funeral director, as authorized by law, in order to permit the funeral director to carry out their duties. We may disclose such information in reasonable anticipation of death. Protected health information may be used and disclosed for cadaveric organ, eye, or tissue donation purposes.

**For Research Purposes:**

We may disclose your protected health information for research when the use or disclosure for research has been approved by an institutional review board or privacy board that has reviewed the research proposal and research protocols to address the privacy of your protected health information.

**In the Event of A Serious Threat To Health or Safety:**

We may, consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct, use or disclose your protected health information if we believe, in good faith, that such use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or safety or to the health and safety of the public.

**For Specialized Government Functions:**

In certain circumstances, the Federal regulations authorize the provider to use or disclose your protected health information to facilitate specified government functions relating to military and veterans activities, national security, and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, medical suitability determinations, correctional institutions, and law enforcement custodial situations.

**For Worker's Compensation:**

The provider may release your health information to comply with worker's compensation laws or similar programs.

**III. Uses and Disclosures Permitted Without Authorization But With Opportunity to Object:**

We may disclose your protected health information to your family member or a close personal friend if it is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care. We can also disclose your information in connection with trying to locate or notify family members or others involved in your care concerning your location, condition, or death.

You may object to disclosures made pursuant to the above paragraph. However, if you do not object to these disclosures or we can infer from the circumstances that you do not object or we determine, in the exercise of our professional judgment, that it is in your best interests for us to make disclosure of information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement with your care, we may disclose your protected health information as described

#### **IV. Uses and Discloses Which You Authorize:**

Other than as stated above, we will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. You may revoke said authorization in writing at any time except to the extent that we have taken action in reliance upon the authorization

#### **V. Your Rights:**

You have the following rights regarding your health information.

##### **The Right to Inspect and Copy Your Protected Health Information:**

You may inspect and obtain a copy of your protected health information that is contained in a designated record set for as long as we maintain the protected health information. A “designated record set” contains medical and billing records and any other records that your physician and the provider uses for making decisions about you.

Under Federal Law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records: psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding; and protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information. Depending on the circumstances, you may have the right to have a decision to deny access reviewed.

We may deny your request to inspect or copy your protected health information if, in our professional judgment, we determine that the access requested is likely to endanger your life or safety or that of another person, or that it is likely to cause substantial harm to another person referenced within the information. You have the right to request a review of this decision.

To inspect and copy your medical information, you must submit a written request to the Medical Records clerk whose contact information is listed on the last pages of this Notice. If you request a copy of your information, we may charge you a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other costs incurred by us in complying with your requests.

Please contact our Privacy Officer if you have questions about access to your medical record

##### **The Right to Request a Restriction on Uses and Disclosures of Your Protected Health Information:**

You may ask us not to use or disclose certain parts of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations. You may also request that we not disclose your health information to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.

St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc. is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. We will notify you if we deny your request to a restriction. If St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc. does agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your protected health information in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. Under certain circumstances, we may terminate our agreement to a restriction. You may request a restriction by contacting our Medical Records Clerk.

**The Right to Request to Receive Confidential Communications from us by Alternative Means or at an Alternative Location:**

You have the right to request that we communicate with you in certain ways. We will accommodate reasonable requests. We may condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other methods of contact. We will not require you to provide an explanation for your request. Requests must be made in writing to the Director of Social Services or the Medical Records Clerk.

**The Right to Have Your Physician Amend Your Protected Health Information:**

You may request an amendment of protected health information about you in a designated record set for as long as we maintain this information. In certain cases, we may deny your request for an amendment. If we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal. Requests for amendment must be in writing and must be directed to our Medical Records Clerk. In this written request, you must also provide a reason to support the requested amendments.

**The Right to Receive an Accounting:**

You have the right to request an accounting of certain disclosures of your protected health information made by St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc. This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than the treatment, payment, or health care operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. We are also not required to account for disclosures that you requested, disclosures that you agreed to by signing an authorization form, disclosures for a facility directory, to friends or family members involved in your care, or certain other disclosures we are permitted to make without your authorization. The request for an accounting must be made in writing to our Medical Records Clerk. The request should specify the time period sought for the accounting. We are not required to provide an accounting for disclosures that take place prior to April 14, 2003. Accounting requests may not be made for periods of time in excess of six years.

**VI. Our Duties:**

You have the right to express complaints to the provider and to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated. You may complain to the provider by contacting the provider verbally or in writing, using the contact information below. We encourage you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint.

**VII. Contact Person:**

The provider's contact person for all issues regarding resident privacy and your rights under the Federal privacy standards is the Director of Social Services. Information regarding matters covered by this Notice can be requested by contacting the Director of Social Services. Complaints against the provider can be mailed to the Director of Social Services by sending it to:

**Director of Social Services**

St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc.  
2535 Genesee Street  
Utica, New York 13501  
(315) 797-1230

**Medical Records Clerk**

St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc.  
2535 Genesee Street  
Utica, New York 13501  
(315) 797-1230

**Privacy Officer**

St. Joseph Nursing Home of Utica, Inc.  
2535 Genesee Street  
Utica, New York 13501  
(315) 797-1230

**VIII. Effective Date:**

This notice is effective April 14, 2003