

## **PRIVACY STATEMENT**

Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic collects certain information from visitors through this Web site and via the Vehracity Patient Portal. This statement describes what information is collected and how that information may be used and shared with third parties.

HIPAA-required **Notice of Privacy Practices** is a separate document that describes how medical information about patients may be used and disclosed. This document can be viewed below.

**Collection & Use of Personal Information** As a visitor to Allertol.com, you do not have to submit any personal information in order to use this Web site. Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic collects only voluntarily provided personal information.

- Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic will use the personal information that you provide primarily for the purposes for which it was collected.
- Various employees and persons/vendors performing services for Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic may see and/or have access to the personal information that you submit.
- Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic may enter the information you submit into our electronic databases.
- Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic may be required by law to disclose your personal information.

**Cookies** Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic may use browser cookies to collect non-personal identifiable information. A cookie is numeric code that a website transfers to your hard drive for record-keeping purposes. Our Web server may collect the following general information about you:

- The name of the domain from which you accessed the Internet
- The pages you visited,
- The name and release number of the web browser software
- The date and time when you accessed our Web site, and
- The Internet address from which you linked to us.

If your browser accepts cookies, we may use cookies to know when you visit our site, measure the amount of traffic to our site, and customize our site to the interests of our visitors. When we examine data from cookies, it is always presented in an aggregate form. Except as outlined in the Information Security section below, we do not track or look at individuals' usage behavior.

**Disclosure of Information to Third Parties** Except as provided by this statement or as otherwise required or permitted by law, we do not disclose any non-public personal information about visitors to third parties. Under no circumstances will we ever disclose to a third party personal information about your medical conditions or interests, except when we believe in good faith that such disclosure is required or permitted by law.

**Information Security** For site security purposes and to ensure that this service remains available to all users, Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic Web servers employ industry-standard methods to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise cause damage. Unauthorized attempts to upload information or change information are strictly prohibited and may be punishable by law.

**External Links** The documents posted on this website may contain hypertext links or pointers to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. These links and pointers are provided for visitors' convenience. Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic does not control or guarantee the accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of any linked information from other sites. This Privacy Statement only applies to this Web site. When visitors follow a link to another site, even the sites of state agencies, local governments, and local officials, this statement will not apply. You should read the privacy statement of each of these sites if you have concerns about how they handle personally identifiable information. The inclusion of links or pointers to Web sites is not intended to assign importance to those sites or the information contained therein, nor is it intended to endorse or recommend any views expressed, or products or services offered on these sites.

**No Provider-Patient Relationship Created** Use of this website, its services, programs and health information does not replace, nor is it intended to serve as, a healthcare provider-patient relationship. Visitors must always consult with a professional for diagnosis and treatment of specific health problems.

**Changes to our Privacy Statement** Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic reserves the right to modify or amend this privacy statement at any time for any reason. By your continued use of the website, you consent to the terms of any revisions posted to the Web site.

**Public Information Act** Information collected or maintained by Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic may be subject to the Texas Public Information Act (Ch. 552, Texas Government Code).

Last update: September 24, 2012

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

This Notice is effective September 24, 2012

**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**

Aviso de prácticas de privacidad españoles se encuentra disponible en nuestro Oficial de Privacidad en 817-551-1010

**WE ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO PROTECT MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

We are required by law to protect the privacy of medical information about you and that identifies you. This medical information may be information about health care we provide to you or payment for health care provided to you. It may also be information about your past, present, or future medical condition.

We are also required by law to provide you with this Notice of Privacy Practices explaining our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information. We are legally required to follow the terms of this Notice. In other words, we are only allowed to use and disclose medical information in the manner that we have described in this Notice.

We may change the terms of this Notice in the future. We reserve the right to make changes and to make the new Notice effective for all medical information that we maintain. If we make changes to the Notice, we will:

- Post the new Notice in our waiting area.
- Have copies of the new Notice available upon request (you may always contact our Privacy Officer at 817-551-1010 to obtain a copy of the current Notice).

The rest of this Notice will:

- Discuss how we may use and disclose medical information about you.
- Explain your rights with respect to medical information about you.
- Describe how and where you may file a privacy-related complaint.

If, at any time, you have questions about information in this Notice or about our privacy policies, procedures or practices, you can contact our Privacy Officer at 817-551-1010

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU IN SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES</b></p>
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We use and disclose medical information about patients every day. This section of our Notice explains in some detail how we may use and disclose medical information about you in order to provide health care, obtain payment for that health care, and operate our business efficiently. This section then briefly mentions several other circumstances in which we may use or disclose medical information about you. For more information about any of these uses or disclosures, or about any of our privacy policies, procedures or practices, contact our Privacy Officer at 817-551-1010

### **1. Treatment**

We may use and disclose medical information about you to provide health care treatment to you. In other words, we may use and disclose medical information about you to provide, coordinate or manage your health care and related services. This may include communicating with other health care providers regarding your treatment and coordinating and managing your health care with others.

**Example:** Jane is a patient at the health department. The receptionist may use medical information about Jane when setting up an appointment. The nurse practitioner will likely use medical information about Jane when reviewing Jane's condition and ordering a blood test. The laboratory technician will likely use medical information about Jane when processing or reviewing her blood test results. If, after reviewing the results of the blood test, the nurse practitioner concludes that Jane should be referred to a specialist, the nurse may disclose medical information about Jane to the specialist to assist the specialist in providing appropriate care to Jane.

### **2. Payment**

We may use and disclose medical information about you to obtain payment for health care services that you received. This means that, within the health department, we may use medical information about you to arrange for payment (such as preparing bills and managing accounts). We also may disclose medical information about you to others (such as insurers, collection agencies, and consumer reporting agencies). In some instances, we may disclose medical information about you to an insurance plan before you receive certain health care services because, for example, we may want to know whether the insurance plan will pay for a particular service.

**Example:** Jane is a patient at the health department and she has private insurance. During an appointment with a nurse practitioner, the nurse practitioner ordered a blood test. The health department billing clerk will use medical information about Jane when he prepares a bill for the services provided at the appointment and the blood test. Medical information about Jane will be disclosed to her insurance company when the billing clerk sends in the bill.

**Example:** The nurse practitioner referred Jane to a specialist. The specialist recommended several complicated and expensive tests. The specialist's billing clerk may contact Jane's insurance company before the specialist runs the tests to determine whether the plan would pay for the test.

### **3. Healthcare Operations**

We may use and disclose medical information about you in performing a variety of business activities that we call "health care operations." These "health care operations" activities allow us to, for example, improve the quality of care we provide and reduce health care costs. For example, we may use or disclose medical information about you in performing the following activities:

- Reviewing and evaluating the skills, qualifications, and performance of health care providers taking care of you.
- Providing training programs for students, trainees, health care providers or non-health care professionals to help them practice or improve their skills.
- Cooperating with outside organizations that evaluate, certify or license health care providers, staff or facilities in a particular field or specialty.
- Reviewing and improving the quality, efficiency and cost of care that we provide to you and our other patients.
- Improving health care and lowering costs for groups of people who have similar health problems and helping manage and coordinate the care for these groups of people.
- Cooperating with outside organizations that assess the quality of the care others and we provide, including government agencies and private organizations.
- Planning for our organization's future operations.
- Resolving grievances within our organization.
- Reviewing our activities and using or disclosing medical information in the event that control of our organization significantly changes.
- Working with others (such as lawyers, accountants and other providers) who assist us to comply with this Notice and other applicable laws.

**Example:** Jane was diagnosed with diabetes. The health department used Jane's medical information – as well as medical information from all of the other health department patients diagnosed with diabetes – to develop an educational program to help patients recognize the early symptoms of diabetes. (Note: The educational program would not identify any specific patients without their permission).

**Example:** Jane complained that she did not receive appropriate health care. The health department reviewed Jane's record to evaluate the quality of the care provided to Jane. The health department also discussed Jane's care with an attorney.

### **4. Persons Involved in Your Care**

We may disclose medical information about you to a relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify if that person is involved in your care and the information is relevant to your care. If the patient is a minor, we may disclose medical information about the minor to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the minor except in limited circumstances. For more information on the privacy of minors' information, contact our Privacy Officer at 817-551-1010

We may also use or disclose medical information about you to a relative, another person involved in your care or possibly a disaster relief organization (such as the Red Cross) if we need to notify someone about your location or condition.

You may ask us at any time not to disclose medical information about you to persons involved in your care. We will agree to your request and not disclose the information except in certain limited circumstances (such as emergencies) or if the patient is a minor. If the patient is a minor, we may or may not be able to agree to your request.

**Example:** Jane's husband regularly comes to the health department with Jane for her appointments and he helps her with her medication. When the nurse practitioner is discussing a new medication with Jane, Jane invites her husband to come into the private room. The nurse practitioner discusses the new medication with Jane and Jane's husband.

## 5. Required by Law

We will use and disclose medical information about you whenever we are required by law to do so. There are many state and federal laws that require us to use and disclose medical information. For example, state law requires us to report gunshot wounds and other injuries to the police and to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. We will comply with those state laws and with all other applicable laws.

## 6. National Priority Uses and Disclosures

When permitted by law, we may use or disclose medical information about you without your permission for various activities that are recognized as "national priorities." In other words, the government has determined that under certain circumstances (described below), it is so important to disclose medical information that it is acceptable to disclose medical information without the individual's permission. We will only disclose medical information about you in the following circumstances when we are permitted to do so by law. Below are brief descriptions of the "national priority" activities recognized by law. For more information on these types of disclosures, contact our Privacy Officer at [817-551-1010](tel:817-551-1010)

- **Threat to health or safety:** We may use or disclose medical information about you if we believe it is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious threat to health or safety.
- **Public health activities:** We may use or disclose medical information about you for public health activities. Public health activities require the use of medical information for various activities, including, but not limited to, activities related to investigating diseases, reporting child abuse and neglect, monitoring drugs or devices regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, and monitoring work-related illnesses or injuries. For example, if you have been exposed to a communicable disease (such as a sexually transmitted disease), we may report it to the State and take other actions to prevent the spread of the disease.
- **Abuse, neglect or domestic violence:** We may disclose medical information about you to a government authority (such as the Department of Social Services) if you are an adult and we reasonably believe that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence.
- **Health oversight activities:** We may disclose medical information about you to a health oversight agency – which is basically an agency responsible for overseeing the health care system or certain government programs. For example, a government agency may request information from us while they are investigating possible insurance fraud.
- **Court proceedings:** We may disclose medical information about you to a court or an officer of the court (such as an attorney). For example, we would disclose medical information about you to a court if a judge orders us to do so.

- **Law enforcement:** We may disclose medical information about you to a law enforcement official for specific law enforcement purposes. For example, we may disclose limited medical information about you to a police officer if the officer needs the information to help find or identify a missing person.
- **Coroners and others:** We may disclose medical information about you to a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director or to organizations that help with organ, eye and tissue transplants.
- **Workers' compensation:** We may disclose medical information about you in order to comply with workers' compensation laws.
- **Research organizations:** We may use or disclose medical information about you to research organizations if the organization has satisfied certain conditions about protecting the privacy of medical information.
- **Certain government functions:** We may use or disclose medical information about you for certain government functions, including but not limited to military and veterans' activities and national security and intelligence activities. We may also use or disclose medical information about you to a correctional institution in some circumstances.

## 7. Authorizations

Other than the uses and disclosures described above (#1-6), we will not use or disclose medical information about you without the "authorization" – or signed permission – of you or your personal representative. In some instances, we may wish to use or disclose medical information about you and we may contact you to ask you to sign an authorization form. In other instances, you may contact us to ask us to disclose medical information and we will ask you to sign an authorization form.

If you sign a written authorization allowing us to disclose medical information about you, you may later revoke (or cancel) your authorization in writing (except in very limited circumstances related to obtaining insurance coverage). If you would like to revoke your authorization, you may write us a letter revoking your authorization or fill out an Authorization Revocation Form. Authorization Revocation Forms are available from our Privacy Officer. If you revoke your authorization, we will follow your instructions except to the extent that we have already relied upon your authorization and taken some action.

**YOU HAVE RIGHTS WITH RESPECT  
TO MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

You have several rights with respect to medical information about you. This section of the Notice will briefly mention each of these rights. If you would like to know more about your rights, please contact our Privacy Officer at [817-551-1010](tel:817-551-1010)

### 1. Right to a Copy of This Notice

You have a right to have a paper copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. In addition, a copy of this Notice will always be posted in our waiting area. If you would like to have a copy of our Notice, ask the receptionist for a copy or contact our Privacy Officer at [817-551-1010](tel:817-551-1010)

### 2. Right of Access to Inspect and Copy

You have the right to inspect (which means see or review) and receive a copy of medical information about you that we maintain in certain groups of records. If we maintain your medical records in an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, you may obtain an electronic copy of your medical records. You may also instruct us in writing to send an electronic copy of your medical records to a third party. If you would like to inspect or receive a copy of medical information about you, you must provide us with a request in writing. You may write us a letter requesting access or fill out an **Access Request Form**. Access Request Forms are available from our Privacy Officer.

We may deny your request in certain circumstances. If we deny your request, we will explain our reason for doing so in writing. We will also inform you in writing if you have the right to have our decision reviewed by another person.

If you would like a copy of the medical information about you, we will charge you a fee to cover the costs of the copy. Our fees for electronic copies of your medical records will be limited to the direct labor costs associated with fulfilling your request.

We may be able to provide you with a summary or explanation of the information. Contact our Privacy Officer for more information on these services and any possible additional fees.

### **3. Right to Have Medical Information Amended**

You have the right to have us amend (which means correct or supplement) medical information about you that we maintain in certain groups of records. If you believe that we have information that is either inaccurate or incomplete, we may amend the information to indicate the problem and notify others who have copies of the inaccurate or incomplete information. If you would like us to amend information, you must provide us with a request in writing and explain why you would like us to amend the information. You may either write us a letter requesting an amendment or fill out an **Amendment Request Form**. Amendment Request Forms are available from our Privacy Officer.

We may deny your request in certain circumstances. If we deny your request, we will explain our reason for doing so in writing. You will have the opportunity to send us a statement explaining why you disagree with our decision to deny your amendment request and we will share your statement whenever we disclose the information in the future.

### **4. Right to an Accounting of Disclosures We Have Made**

You have the right to receive an accounting (which means a detailed listing) of disclosures that we have made for the previous six (6) years. If you would like to receive an accounting, you may send us a letter requesting an accounting, fill out an **Accounting Request Form**, or contact our Privacy Officer. Accounting Request Forms are available from our Privacy Officer.

The accounting will not include several types of disclosures, including disclosures for treatment, payment or health care operations. If we maintain your medical records in an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, you may request that include disclosures for treatment, payment or health care operations. The accounting will also not include disclosures made prior to April 14, 2003.

If you request an accounting more than once every twelve (12) months, we may charge you a fee to cover the costs of preparing the accounting.

### **5. Right to Request Restrictions on Uses and Disclosures**

You have the right to request that we limit the use and disclosure of medical information about you for treatment, payment and health care operations. Under federal law, we must agree to your request and comply with your requested restriction(s) if:

1. Except as otherwise required by law, the disclosure is to a health plan for purpose of carrying out payment of health care operations (and is not for purposes of carrying out treatment); and,
2. The medical information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which the health care provided involved has been paid out-of-pocket in full.

Once we agree to your request, we must follow your restrictions (except if the information is necessary for emergency treatment). You may cancel the restrictions at any time. In addition, we may cancel a restriction at any time as long as we notify you of the cancellation and continue to apply the restriction to information collected before the cancellation.

## **6. Right to Request an Alternative Method of Contact**

You have the right to request to be contacted at a different location or by a different method. For example, you may prefer to have all written information mailed to your work address rather than to your home address.

We will agree to any reasonable request for alternative methods of contact. If you would like to request an alternative method of contact, you must provide us with a request in writing. You may write us a letter or fill out an **Alternative Contact Request Form**. Alternative Contact Request Forms are available from our Privacy Officer.

**YOU MAY FILE A COMPLAINT  
ABOUT OUR PRIVACY PRACTICES**

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated or if you are dissatisfied with our privacy policies or procedures, you may file a written complaint either with us or with the federal government.

**We will not take any action against you or change our treatment of you in any way if you file a complaint.**

To file a written complaint with us, you may bring your complaint directly to our Privacy Officer, or you may mail it to the following address:

Shea ENT and Allergy Clinic  
Privacy Officer  
11797 S. Freeway, Ste 132  
Burleson, TX 76028

To file a written complaint with the federal government, please use the following contact information:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 509F, HHH Building  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Toll-Free Phone: (800) 368-1019  
TDD Toll-Free: (800) 537-7697

Website: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/index.html>  
Email: [OCRAMail@hhs.gov](mailto:OCRAMail@hhs.gov)