

# RIVERSIDE SURGICAL ASSOCIATES, INC.

## Notice of Privacy Practices

**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 describes how we may use and disclose your Protected Health Information (**PHI**) 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 PHI. "Protected Health Information" is information about you, including demographic information, that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services.

We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We may change the terms of our notice, at any time. The new notice will be effective for all protected health information that we maintain at that time. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised Notice of Privacy Practices by calling the office and requesting that a revised copy be sent to you in the mail or asking for one at the time of your next appointment.

### **1. Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information**

#### **Uses and Disclosures of PHI Based Upon Your Written Consent**

You will be asked by your physician to sign a consent form. Once you have consented to use and disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations by signing the consent form, your physician will use or disclose your PHI as described in this Section 1. Your PHI may be used and disclosed by your physician, our office staff and others outside of our office that are involved in your care and treatment for the purpose of providing health care services to you. Your PHI may also be used and disclosed to pay your health care bills and to support the operation of the physician's practice.

Following are examples of the types of uses and disclosures of your PHI that the physician's office is permitted to make once you have signed our consent form.

**Treatment:** We will use and disclose your PHI to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. For example, we would disclose your PHI, as necessary, to a home health agency that provides care to you and to other physicians who may be treating you. Or, your PHI may be provided to a physician to whom you have been referred to ensure that the physician has the necessary information to diagnose or treat you. In addition, we may disclose your PHI from time-to-time to another physician or health care provider (e.g., a specialist or laboratory) who, at the request of your physician, becomes involved in your care by providing assistance with your health care diagnosis or treatment to your physician.

**Payment:** Your PHI will be used, as needed, to obtain payment for your health care services. This may include certain activities that your health insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the health care services we recommend for you such as; making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you for medical necessity, and undertaking utilization review activities. For example, obtaining approval for a hospital stay may require that your relevant PHI be disclosed to the health plan to obtain approval for the hospital admission. We may use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to contact you regarding your account balance.

**Healthcare Operations:** We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order to support the business activities of your physician's practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training of medical students, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities.

For example, we may disclose your PHI to medical school students that see patients at our office. In addition, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk where you will be asked to sign your name and indicate your physician. We may also call you by name in the waiting room when your physician is ready to see you. We may use or disclose your PHI, as necessary, to contact you to remind you of your appointment. We will share your PHI with third party "business associates" that perform various activities (e.g., billing, transcription services) for the

practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your PHI, we will have a written contract that contains terms that will protect the privacy of your PHI.

### **Uses and Disclosures of PHI Based upon Your Written Authorization**

Other uses and disclosures of your PHI will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law as described below. You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing, except to the extent that your physician or the physician's practice has taken an action in reliance on the use or disclosure indicated in the authorization.

### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made With Your Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

We may use and disclose your PHI in the following instances. You have the opportunity to agree or object to the use or disclosure of all or part of your PHI. If you are not present or able to agree or object to the use or disclosure of the PHI, then your physician may, using professional judgment, determine whether the disclosure is in your best interest. In this case, only the PHI that is relevant to your health care will be disclosed.

**Others Involved in Your Healthcare:** Unless you object, we may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, your PHI that directly relates to that person's involvement in your health care. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure, we may disclose such information as necessary if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment. We may use or disclose PHI to notify a family member, personal representative or any other person that is responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death.

**Emergencies:** We may use or disclose your PHI in an emergency treatment situation. If this happens, your physician shall try to obtain your consent as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of treatment. If your physician or another physician in the practice is required by law to treat you and the physician has attempted to obtain your consent but is unable to obtain your consent, he or she may still use or disclose your PHI to treat you.

**Communication Barriers:** We may use and disclose your PHI if your physician or another physician in the practice attempts to obtain consent from you but is unable to do so due to substantial communication barriers and the physician determines, using professional judgment, that you intend to consent to use or disclosure under the circumstances.

### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made Without Your Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object**

We may use or disclose your PHI in the following situations without your consent or authorization. These situations include:

**Required By Law:** We may use or disclose your PHI to the extent that law requires the use or disclosure. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

**Public Health:** We may disclose your PHI for public health activities and purposes to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive the information. The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability. We may also disclose your PHI, if directed by the public health authority, to a foreign government agency that is collaborating with the public health authority.

**Communicable Diseases:** We may disclose your PHI, if authorized by law, to a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease or condition.

**Health Oversight:** We may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your PHI to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose your PHI if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information. In this case, the disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.

**Food and Drug Administration:** We may disclose your PHI to a person or company required by the Food and Drug Administration to report adverse events, product defects or problems, biologic product deviations, track products; to enable product recalls; to make repairs or replacements, or to conduct post marketing surveillance, as required.

**Legal Proceedings:** We may disclose PHI in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process.

**Law Enforcement:** We may disclose PHI, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes. These law enforcement purposes include (1) legal processes, (2) limited information requests for identification and location purposes, (3) pertaining to victims of a crime, (4) suspicion that death has occurred as a result of criminal conduct, (5) in the event that a crime occurs on the premises of the practice, and (6) medical emergency (not on the Practice's premises) and it is likely that a crime has occurred.

**Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation:** We may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, determining cause of death or to perform other duties authorized by law. We may also disclose PHI to a funeral director, as authorized by law, in order to carry out their duties. We may disclose such information in reasonable anticipation of death. PHI may be used and disclosed for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes.

**Research:** We may disclose your PHI to researchers when an institutional review board with established protocols to ensure the privacy of your PHI has approved their research.

**Criminal Activity:** Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, we may disclose your PHI, if we believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. We may also disclose PHI if it is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.

**Military Activity and National Security:** When the appropriate conditions apply, we may use or disclose PHI of individuals who are Armed Forces personnel (1) for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities; (2) for the purpose of a determination by the Department of Veterans Affairs of your eligibility for benefits, or (3) to foreign military authority if you are a member of that foreign military services. We may also disclose your PHI to authorized federal officials for conducting national security and intelligence activities, including for the provision of protective services to the President or others legally authorized.

**Workers' Compensation:** Your PHI may be disclosed by us, as authorized, to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally-established programs.

**Inmates:** We may use or disclose your PHI if you are an inmate of a correctional facility and your physician created or received your PHI in the course of providing care to you.

**Required Uses and Disclosures:** Under the law, we must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500 et. seq.

## **2. Your Rights**

Following is a statement of your rights with respect to your PHI and a brief description of how you may exercise these rights.

**You have the right to inspect and copy your PHI.** This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of PHI about you that is contained in a designated record set for as long as we maintain the PHI. A “designated record set” contains medical and billing records and any other records that your physician and the practice use 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 use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, and PHI that is subject to law that prohibits access to PHI. Depending on the circumstances, a decision to deny access may be reviewable. In some circumstances, you may have a right to have this decision reviewed.

**You have the right to request a restriction of your PHI.** This means you may ask us not to use or disclose any part of your PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations. You may also request that any part of your PHI not be disclosed 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.

Your physician is not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If your physician believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your PHI, your information will not be restricted. If your physician does agree to the requested restriction, we may not use or disclose your PHI in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. With this in mind, please discuss any restriction you wish to request with your physician. In order to request a restriction of your PHI, you must do so in writing to: **Riverside Surgical Associates, Inc. – Attn: Melanie Beavers, Practice Administrator, or by phone at (614) 261-1900, Ext# 106.**

**You have the right to request to receive communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative address.** We will accommodate reasonable requests. Please make this request in writing to our Privacy Contact.

**You may have the right to have your physician amend(change) your PHI.** If you think there is a mistake in your health information, or information needs to be added, you may request that we amend your PHI. In certain cases, we may deny your request. If we deny your request, you have the right to file a written statement of disagreement with us. We will prepare a written statement of our denial and provide you with a copy.

**You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your PHI.** This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices that occurred after April 14, 2003. It excludes disclosures we may have made to you, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations.

**You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us,** upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice electronically.

### **3. Complaints**

You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our privacy contact. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

You may contact our Privacy Contact, Melanie Beavers at (614) 261-1900 Ext# 106, with any questions regarding this notice. This notice was published and becomes effective on April 14, 2003.