

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES REGARDING YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

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 health information is private. The Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) understands that the information it collects about you and your health is personal. DSS is required by state and federal law to protect your health information from being improperly used or released. This notice will tell you what DSS may legally do with your protected health information. It will also tell you your rights about such information kept by DSS.

DSS is required to provide you this notice regarding your protected health information. DSS will follow the requirements described in this notice. DSS reserves the right to change this notice. All changes to this notice will apply to all of your protected health information. If this notice is changed, the new notice will be available on the DSS' website, in your local DSS office or it will be mailed to you upon request.

Information Handling

In our normal business operations, DSS may receive protected health information, which is information identifying you and which includes some indication of your medical condition. This information may be about you or your family members and the law requires that it be protected. DSS is allowed to use this information and share it with others, if the protected health information is being used for your treatment, the payment of your medical expenses, or for health care operations. Examples of this include:

- to medical professionals and health information networks about Medicaid eligibility as part of health care operations; or
- to insurance companies and health care providers about paying claims; and/or
- to hospitals, medical professionals, and health information networks for your treatment.

A health information network is a group of hospitals and caregivers who share health information. DSS is part of the network.

DSS follows the laws that tell us when we *must* share health information and when we can share health information, without your permission. DSS will share information:

- as required by law, subject to limited restrictions
- to public health authorities to report such things as contagious diseases and for birth, death and immunizations records
- to the police or military as required by law
- for court and administrative proceedings
- to health oversight authorities to see that government programs are being run properly
- to the federal government to protect the country, the president, government workers, and for other government programs
- to funeral directors or coroners
- for organ donation purposes or research involving a DSS program
- to family, relatives or others who help in your care

Sometimes, health information that can normally be released cannot be released. For example, if state law says the information will not be released and federal law allows it to be released, it will not be released. The same is true if federal law says the information cannot be released, but state law allows it to be released. Whichever law is more restrictive is the one that will apply.

Other than the examples listed, DSS may not share any of your information without your written permission. You can authorize DSS to share as much of your information as you wish. You can also cancel your permission for DSS to share that information.

(Over)

Your Rights

1. You have the right to request that DSS limit the information it shares about you, but DSS does not have to agree to such requests.
 2. You have the right to receive your information from DSS privately. DSS will provide it to whatever address you choose and in the form you choose. DSS will charge for providing a copy of your records unless it is being sent to an exempt organization or an organization that does not charge DSS for records. No charge will be imposed on requests by foster children for a copy of their foster care records.
 3. You have the right to inspect and copy your information that DSS has. This right may be limited if the information contains notes taken by a mental health provider during treatment sessions.
 4. You have the right to ask that the information in DSS' file be changed. However, there are limits regarding what may be changed.
 5. You have the right to receive a list of the parties outside DSS that have received your information.
 6. If an unauthorized disclosure of DSS records containing your PHI occurs and it is deemed a breach because there is a possibility the disclosure might lead to harm, you have the right to be notified by DSS and informed of what happened and how best to protect yourself.
 7. You also have the right to request this notice on paper, electronically or both.
- These protections and rights became effective April 14, 2003. Electronic copies of this notice are available at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/hipaa/hprivacy.pdf>. If you have questions or complaints, or want to make a request, contact:

DSS Privacy Officer
Division of Legal Services
P.O. Box 1527
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Telephone: (573) 751-3229
Voice: (800) 735-2466
TDD: (800) 735-2966

Regional Manager
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
601 East 12th Street, Room 248
Kansas City, MO 64106
Voice: (816) 426-7277
TDD: (816) 426-7065

Your health care services will not be affected by any complaint made to DSS or the offices listed above.