

## **Stokes Dentistry**

### **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. If you have any questions about this Notice please contact the Privacy Officer. 336-983-4565 Effective Date: July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

We are committed to protect the privacy of your personal health information (PHI).

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use within our practice or network and disclose (share outside of our practice or network) your PHI to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations. We may also share your information for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. This Notice also describes your rights to access and control your PHI.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI. We will follow the terms outlined in this Notice.

We may change our Notice, at any time. Any changes will apply to all PHI. Upon your request, we will provide you with any revised Notice by:

- Posting the new Notice in our office.
- If requested, making copies of the new Notice available in our office or by mail.
- Posting the revised Notice on our website: [www.stokesdentistry.com](http://www.stokesdentistry.com)

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

**We may use or disclose (share) your PHI to provide health care treatment for you.**

- 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.
- We may also share your PHI with people outside of our practice that may provide medical care for you such as home health agencies.

**We may use and disclose your PHI to obtain payment for services. We may provide your PHI to others in order to bill or collect payment for services. There may be services for which we share information with your health plan to determine if the service will be paid for.**

PHI may be shared with the following:

- Billing companies
- Insurance companies, health plans
- Government agencies in order to assist with qualification of benefits
- Collection agencies

**We may use or disclose, as-needed, your PHI in order to support the business activities of this practice which are called health care operations.**

EXAMPLES:

- Training students, other health care providers, or ancillary staff such as billing personnel to help them learn or improve their skills.
- Quality improvement processes which look at delivery of health care and for improvement in processes which will provide safer, more effective care for you.
- Use of information to assist in resolving problems or complaints within the practice.

**We may use and disclosure your PHI in other situations without your permission:**

- **If required by law:** The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. For example, we may be required to report gunshot wounds or suspected abuse or neglect.

- **Public health activities:** The disclosure will be made for the purpose of controlling disease, injury or disability and only to public health authorities permitted by law to collect or receive information. We may also notify individuals who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition.
- **Health oversight agencies:** We may disclose protected health information 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.
- **Legal proceedings:** To assist in any legal proceeding or in response to a court order, in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, or other lawful process.
- **Police or other law enforcement purposes:** The release of PHI will meet all applicable legal requirements for release.
- **Coroners, funeral directors:** We may disclose protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner for identification purposes, determining cause of death or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law
- **Special government purposes:** Information may be shared for national security purposes, or if you are a member of the military, to the military under limited circumstances.
- **Correctional institutions:** Information may be shared if you are an inmate or under custody of law which is necessary for your health or the health and safety of other individuals.
- **Workers' Compensation:** Your protected health information may be disclosed by us as authorized to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar legally-established programs.

**Other uses and disclosures of your health information.**

- **Business Associates:** Some services are provided through the use of contracted entities called "business associates". We will always release only the minimum amount of PHI necessary so that the business associate can perform the identified services. We require the business associate(s) to appropriately safeguard your information. Examples of business associates include billing companies or transcription services.
- **Health Information Exchange:** We may make your health information available electronically to other healthcare providers outside of our facility who are involved in your care.
- **Treatment alternatives:** We may provide you notice of treatment options or other health related services that may improve your overall health.
- **Appointment reminders:** We may contact you as a reminder about upcoming appointments or treatment.

**We may use or disclose your PHI in the following situations UNLESS you object.**

- We may share your information with friends or family members, or other persons directly identified by you at the level they are involved in your care or payment of services. If you are not present or able to agree/object, the healthcare provider using professional judgment will determine if it is in your best interest to share the information. For example, we may discuss post procedure instructions with the person who drove you to the facility unless you tell us specifically not to share the information.
- We may use or disclose protected health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or any other person that is responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death.

- We may use or disclose your protected health information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts.

### **Your Privacy Rights**

You have certain rights related to your protected health information. All requests to exercise your rights must be made in writing to the attention of Privacy Officer.

**You have the right to see and obtain a copy of your protected health information.**

**You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information.**

**You have the right to request for us to communicate in different ways or in different locations.**

**You may have the right to request an amendment of your health information.**

**You have the right to a list of people or organizations who have received your health information from us.**

### **Additional Privacy Rights**

- You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us, upon request. We will provide you a copy of this Notice the first day we treat you at our facility. In an emergency situation we will give you this Notice as soon as possible.
- You have a right to receive notification of any breach of your protected health information.

### **Complaints**

If you think we have violated your rights or you have a complaint about our privacy practices you can make a written complaint to the office and we will respond.

You may also complain to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us.

If you file a complaint we will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

This notice was published and becomes effective on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.