



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective Date: September 23, 2013

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.

About Us

In this Notice, we use terms like "we," "us," "our," or "Practice" to refer to **Texas Oncology**, its physicians, employees, staff and other personnel. All of the sites and locations of **Texas Oncology** follow the terms of this Notice and may share health information with each other for treatment, payment or health care operations purposes and for other purposes as described in this Notice.

Purpose of This Notice

This Notice describes how we may use and disclose your health information to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law. This Notice also outlines our legal duties for protecting the privacy of your health information and explains your rights to have your health information protected. We will create a record of the services we provide you, and this record will include your health information. We need to maintain this information to ensure that you receive quality care and to meet certain legal requirements related to providing you care. We understand that your health information is personal, and we are committed to protecting your privacy and ensuring that your health information is not used inappropriately.

Our Responsibilities

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. We are also required to notify you of a breach of your unsecured health information. We will abide by the terms of this Notice.

How We May Use or Disclose Your Health Information

The following categories describe examples of the way we use and disclose health information without your written authorization:

For Treatment: We may use and disclose your health information to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, your health information will be shared with your oncology doctor and other health care providers who participate in your care. We may disclose your health information to another oncologist for the purpose of a consultation. We may also disclose your health information to your primary care physician or another health care provider to be sure they have all the information necessary to diagnose and treat you.

For Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to others so they will pay us or reimburse you for your treatment. For example, a bill may be sent to you, your insurance company, or a third-party payer. The bill may contain information that identifies you, your diagnosis, and treatment or supplies used in the course of treatment. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your health plan will cover the treatment.

For Health Care Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in order to support our business activities. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the Practice and make sure our patients receive quality care. For example, we may use your health information for quality assessment activities, training of medical students, necessary credentialing, and for other essential activities. We may also disclose your health information to third-party "business associates" that perform various services on our behalf, such as transcription, billing, and collection services. In these cases, we will enter into a written agreement with the business associate to ensure they protect the privacy of your health information.

We may ask you to sign your name to a sign-in sheet at the registration desk, and we may call your name in the waiting room when we call you for your appointment.

Appointment Reminders: We may use and disclose your health information in order to contact you and remind you of an upcoming appointment for treatment or health care services.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care and Notification: If you verbally agree to the use or disclosure and in certain other situations, we will make the following uses and disclosures of your health information. We may disclose to your family, friends, and anyone else whom you identify who is involved in your medical care or who helps pay for your care, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or paying for your care. We may also make these disclosures after your death.

If you would like us to refrain from releasing your health information to a family member or friend who is involved in your care, you must make your request in writing and submit it to the Medical Records Manager of your local Texas Oncology office.

We may use or disclose your information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or any other person responsible for your care regarding your physical location within the Practice, general condition, or death. We may also use or disclose your health information to disaster-relief organizations so that your family or other persons responsible for your care can be notified about your condition, status, and location.

We are also allowed to the extent permitted by applicable law to use and disclose your health information without your authorization for the following purposes:

As Required by Law: We may use and disclose your health information when required to do so by federal, state, or local law.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings: If you are involved in a legal proceeding, we may disclose your health information in response to a court or administrative order. We may also release your health information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Health Oversight Activities: We may use and disclose your health information to health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government benefit programs, compliance with government regulatory programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

Law Enforcement: We may disclose your health information, within limitations, to law enforcement officials for several different purposes:

- To comply with a court order, warrant, subpoena, summons, or other similar process;
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- About the victim of a crime, if the victim agrees or we are unable to obtain the victim's agreement;
- About a death we suspect may have resulted from criminal conduct;
- About criminal conduct we believe in good faith to have occurred on our premises; and
- To report a crime not occurring on our premises, the nature of a crime, the location of a crime, and the identity, description, and location of the individual who committed the crime, in an emergency situation.

Public Health Activities: We may use and disclose your health information for public health activities, including the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury, or disability;
- To report births or deaths;
- To report child abuse or neglect;
- Activities related to the quality, safety, or effectiveness of FDA-regulated products;
- To notify a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition as authorized by law; and
- To notify an employer of findings concerning work-related illness or injury or general medical surveillance that the employer needs to comply with the law if you are provided notice of such disclosure.

Serious Threat to Health or Safety: If there is a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person, we may use and disclose your health information to someone able to help prevent the threat or as necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.

Organ/Tissue Donation: If you are an organ donor, we may use and disclose your health information to organizations that handle procurement, transplantation, or banking of organs, eyes, or tissues.

