

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.

A federal regulation, known as the "HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Privacy Rule", requires that we provide detailed notice in writing of our privacy practices. We know that this Notice is long. The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires us to address many specific things in this Notice.

Please note: The use of the word "you" refers to the patient. If the patient is a minor (under 18 years of age), "you" refers to the parent or custodial guardian of the minor acting on the child or children's behalf.

Our commitment to protecting Health Information about you.

In this notice, we describe the ways that we may use and disclose health information about our patients. The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires that Needham Pediatrics protect the privacy of health information that identifies a patient, or where there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify a patient. This information is called "protected health information" or "PHI". This Notice describes your rights as our patient and the obligation of Needham Pediatrics regarding the use and disclosure of PHI. We are required by law to:

- Maintain the privacy of PHI about you;
- Give you this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI and,
- Comply with the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices that is currently in effect.

We reserve the right to make changes to this Notice and to make such changes effective for all PHI we may already have about you. If and when this Notice is changed, Needham Pediatrics will post a copy in our office in a prominent location. We will also provide you, upon your request, with a revised notice.

How we may use and disclose protected health information about you

Uses and disclosures for treatment, payment, and health care operations

The following describes the different ways we may use and disclose PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. The examples included with each category do not list every type of use or disclosure that may fall within that category.

Treatment

Needham Pediatrics may use and disclose PHI about you to provide, coordinate or manage your health care and related services. We may consult with other health care providers regarding your treatment and coordinate and manage your health care with others.

For example, if you are referred to another physician, we may disclose PHI to your new physician regarding whether you are allergic to any medications or to give pertinent information that a physician may

need with regards to that referral or follow-up. Payment: Needham Pediatrics may use and disclose PHI for the purpose of billing and collection of payment for the treatment and services provided to you. Before providing treatment or services, we may share details with your health plan concerning the services you are scheduled to receive.

For example, we may ask for payment approval from your health plan before we provide care of services. We may use and disclose PHI to confirm you are receiving the appropriate amount of care to obtain payment for services. We may use and disclose PHI for billing, claims management, and collection activity. We may disclose PHI to insurance companies providing you with additional coverage. We may disclose limited PHI to consumer reporting agencies relating to collection of payments owed to us.

We may also disclose PHI to another health care provider or to a company or health plan required to comply with HIPAA Privacy Rule for the payment activities of that health care provider, company, or health plan.

For example, we may allow a health insurance company to review PHI for the insurance company to review PHI for the insurance company's activities to determine the insurance benefits to be paid for your care.

Health care operations

Needham Pediatrics may use and disclose PHI in performing business activities which are called health care operations. Health care operations include doing things that allow us to improve the quality of care we provide and to reduce health care costs. We may use and disclose PHI about you in the following health care operations:

- Reviewing and improving the quality, efficiency, and cost that we provide to our patients. For example, we may use PHI about you to develop ways to assist our physicians and staff in deciding how we can improve the medical treatment we provided to others.
- Improving health care and lowering the cost for groups of people who have similar health problems and helping to manage and coordinate the care for these groups of people. We may use PHI to identify groups of people with similar health problems to give them information, for instance, about treatment alternatives, and educational classes.
- Reviewing and evaluating the skills, qualifications, and performance of health care providers taking care of you and our other patients.
- Providing training programs for students, trainees, health care providers, or non-health care professionals (for example, billing staff) to help them practice or improve their skills.
- Cooperating with outside organizations that assess the quality of the care that we provide.
- Cooperating with various people who review our activities. For example, PHI may be seen by doctors reviewing the services provided to you and by accountants, lawyers, and others who assist us in complying with the law and managing our business.
- Assisting us in making plans for the future of Needham Pediatrics' operations and growth.

- Resolving grievances within our practice.
- Reviewing our activities and using or disclosing PHI in the event that we sell our practice to someone else or combine with another practice.
- Business planning and development, such as cost-management analysis.
- Business management and general administrative activities of Needham Pediatrics, including managing our activities related to complying with the HIPAA Privacy Rule and other legal requirements
- Creating “de-identified” information that is not identifiable to any individual.

If another health care provider, company, or health plan that is required to comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule has or once had a relationship with you, we may disclose PHI about you for certain health care operations of that health care provider or company.

For example, such health care operations may include, reviewing and improving the quality, efficiency, and cost of care provided to you, reviewing and evaluation the skills, qualifications, and performance of health care providers, providing training programs for students, trainees, health care providers, or non-health care providers or staff in a particular field or specialty and assisting with legal compliance activities of that health care provider or company.

We may also disclose PHI for the health care operations of an “organized health care arrangement” in which we participate. An example of an “organized health care arrangement” is the joint care provided by a hospital and the doctors who see patients at the hospital.

Business associates

There are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. Examples include software support. If these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job that we have asked them to do and bill you or your third-party payer for services rendered. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information through a written contract.

Communication from our office

We may contact you to remind you of appointments and to provide you with information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Other uses and disclosures we can make without your written authorization

Individuals involved in your care or payment for your care

We may disclose PHI about you to your family member, close friend, or any other person identified by you if that information is directly relevant to the person’s involvement in your care or payment for your care. If you are present and able to consent or object (or if you are available in advance), then we may only use or disclose PHI if you do not object after you have been informed of your opportunity to object. If you are not present or you are unable to consent or object, we may exercise professional judgment in determining whether the use or disclosure of PHI is relevant and in your best interest.

For example, if you are brought into this office and are unable to communicate normally with your physician for some reason, we

may find it is in your best interest to give your prescription and other medical supplies to the friend/relative who brought you in for treatment. We may also use and disclose PHI to notify such persons of your location, general condition or death. We may also coordinate with disaster relief agencies to make this type of notification. We also may use professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable decisions about your best interests in allowing a person to act on your behalf to pick up filled prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other things that contain PHI about you.

Required by law

We may use and disclose PHI as required by federal, state, or local law. Any disclosure complies with the law and is limited to the requirements of the law.

Public health activities

Needham Pediatrics may use or disclose PHI to public health authorities or other authorized persons to carry out certain activities related to public health, including the following activities:

- to prevent or control disease, injury, or disability;
- to report disease, injury, or death;
- to report child abuse, domestic violence, or neglect;
- to report reactions to medications or problems with products or devices regulated by the Food and Drug Administration or other activities related to quaiify, safety or effectiveness of FDA regulated products or activities;
- to locate and notify persons of recalls of products they may be using;
- to notify a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease in order to control who may be at risk of contracting or spreading the disease; or
- to report to your employer, under limited circumstances, information related primarily to workplace injuries or illness

Lawsuits and other legal proceedings

We may use or disclose PHI when required by a court or administrative tribunal order. We may also disclose PHI in response to subpoenas or other required legal process when efforts have been made to advise you of the request or obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Law enforcement

Under certain conditions, Needham Pediatrics may disclose PHI to law enforcement officials for the following purposes where the disclosure is:

- about a suspected crime victim if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain a person’s agreement because of incapacity or emergency.
- to alert law enforcement of a death that we suspect was the result of criminal conduct
- required by law
- in response to a court order, warrant, subpoena, summons, administrative agency request, or other authorized process
- to identify or locate a suspect , fugitive, material witness, or missing persons,
- about a crime or suspected crime committed in the Needham Pediatrics office, or
- in response to a medical emergency not occurring at the office, if

necessary to report a crime including the nature of the crime, the location of the crime or the victim and the identity of the person who committed the crime.

Coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors

We may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person and determine the cause of death. In addition, we may disclose PHI to funeral directors, as authorized by law, so that they may carry out their jobs.

Organ and tissue donation

If you are an organ donor, we may use or disclose PHI to organizations that help procure, locate, and transplant organs in order to facilitate an organ, eye, or tissue donation and transplantation.

To avert a serious threat to health or safety

We may use or disclose PHI about you in limited circumstances when necessary to prevent a threat to the health or safety of a person or to the public. This disclosure can only be made to a person who is able to help prevent the threat.

Specialized government functions

Under certain circumstances Needham Pediatrics may disclose PHI:

- for national security and intelligence activities or;
- to help provide protective services for the President and others

Disclosures required by HIPAA Privacy Rule

We are required to disclose PHI to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services when requested by the Secretary to review Needham Pediatrics' compliance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule. We are also required, in certain cases, to disclose PHI to you upon your request to access PHI or for an accounting of certain disclosures about you.

Other uses and disclosures of protected health information require your authorization

All other uses and disclosures of PHI about you will only be made with your written authorization. If you have authorized us to use or disclose PHI about you, you may withdraw your authorization at any time, except if we have taken action (based on your authorization) already.

Worker's compensation

We may disclose PHI as authorized by workers' compensation laws or other similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

Your rights regarding protected health information about you

Under federal law, you have the following rights regarding PHI about you:

Right to request restrictions

You have the right to request additional restrictions on the PHI that we may use for treatment, payment, and health care operations. You may also request additional restrictions on our disclosure of PHI to certain individuals involved in your care that otherwise are permitted by the Privacy Rule. **We are not required to agree to your request.** If we do agree to your request, we are required to comply with our agreement except in certain cases, including where the information is needed to treat you in the case of an emergency. To request restrictions, **you**

must make you request in writing to our Privacy Official. In your request, please include the following:

1. the information that you want to restrict
2. how you want to restrict the information
3. to whom those restrictions apply

Right to receive confidential communications

You have the right to request that you receive communications regarding PHI in a certain manner or at a certain location. For example, you may request in writing, to our Privacy Official, that we contact you at home rather than at work or by regular mail to a post office box rather than your home. We are required to accommodate reasonable requests.

Right to inspect and copy

You have the right to request the opportunity to inspect and receive a copy of PHI about you in certain records we maintain. This includes your medical and billing records but does not include psychotherapy notes or information gathered or prepared for a civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings. We may deny your request to inspect and copy PHI only in limited circumstances. If you request a copy of PHI about you, we may charge you a reasonable fee for the copying, postage, labor and supplies used in meeting your request.

Right to amend

You have the right to request that we amend PHI about you as long as such information is kept by or for our office. To make this type of request, you must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Official, including your reason for the request. We may deny your request in certain cases.

Right to receive an accounting of disclosures

You have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures that Needham Pediatrics has made about you. This is a list of disclosures made by us during a specified period of up to 6 years other than disclosures made: for treatment, payment, and health care operations, for use in or related to a facility directory, to family members or friends involved in your care, or to you directly. This accounting applies to disclosures made after April 14, 2003. The first list you request in a 12-month period will be free, but we may charge you for a reasonable cost of providing additional lists in the same 12-month period. We will inform you of the cost at the time of the additional request, and you may choose to cancel your request at that time.

Right to a copy of this notice

You are able to ask for and receive this notice at any time. Please contact our Privacy Official (listed below) and a copy will be given to you upon request.

Complaints

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our office, please contact the Privacy Official at the address and telephone number listed below. We will not retaliate or take action against you for filing a complaint.

Privacy official contact

Colleen Maguire 781-444-7190 x209
145 Rosemary St, Entry K, Needham, MA 02494