

# Palomar Neurosurgery Center

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## *Notice of Privacy Practices* *Privacy Practice Manager – Leslie K.*

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.

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### OUT LEGAL DUTY

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of our health information. We are also required to give you this notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the Privacy Practices that are described in this notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect JULY 1, 2004 and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at anytime. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice.

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### **A. How this Medical Practice May Use or Disclose Your Health Information.**

This Medical Practice collects health information about you and stores it in a chart and a computer. This is your medical record. The medical record is the property of this medical practice, but the information in the medical record belongs to you. The law permits us to use or disclose your health information for the following purposes:

**1. TREATMENT:** We use medical information about you to provide your medical care. We disclose medical information to our employees and others who are involved in providing the care you need. For example, we may share your medical information with other physicians or other healthcare providers who will provide services which we do not provide. Or we may share this information with a pharmacist who needs it to dispense a prescription to you, or a laboratory that performs a test. We may also disclose medical information to members of your family or others who can help you when are sick or injured.

**2. PAYMENT:** We use and disclose medical information about you to obtain payment for the services provided. For example, we give your health plan the information it requires before it will pay us. We may also disclose information to other healthcare providers to assist them in obtaining payment for services they have provided you.

**3. HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS:** We may use and disclose medical information about you to operate this medical practice. For example, we may use and disclose this information for review and improve the quality of care we provide, or the competence and qualifications of our professional staff. Or we may use or disclose this information to get your health plan to authorize services or referrals. We may also use and disclose this information as necessary for medical reviews, legal services and audits, including fraud and abuse detection and compliance programs and business planning management. We may also share your medical information with our "business associates," such as our billing service, that perform administrative services for us. We have a written contract with each of these business associates that contains terms requiring them to protect the confidentiality of your medical information. Although federal law does not protect health information which is disclosed to someone other than another healthcare provider, health plan, or healthcare clearinghouse, under California law all recipients of healthcare information are prohibited from re-disclosing it except as specifically required or permitted by law. We may also share your information to help them with their quality assessment and improvement activities, their efforts to improve health or reduce health care costs, their programs, their accreditation, certification and licensing activities, or their healthcare fraud and abuse detection and compliance efforts.

**4. APPOINTMENT REMINDERS:** We may use and disclose medical information to contact and remind you about appointments. If you are not at home, we may leave this information on your answering machine or in a message left with the person answering the phone.

**5. SIGN IN SHEET:** We may use and disclose medical information about you by having you sign in when you arrive at our office. We may also call out your name when we are ready to see you.

**6. NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY:** We may disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care about your location, your general condition or in the event of your death. In the event of a disaster, we may disclose information to a relief organization so that they may coordinate these notification efforts. We may also disclose information to someone who is involved with your care helps you pay for your care. If you are able and available to agree or object, we will give you the opportunity to object prior to making these disclosures, although we may disclose this information in a disaster even over your objection if we believe it is necessary to respond to the emergency circumstances. If you are unable or

**7. MARKETING:** We will not use or disclose your medical information for marketing purposes without your authorization.

**8. REQUIRED BY LAW:** As required by law, we will use and disclose your health information, but we will limit or use our disclosure to the relevant requirements of the law.

**9. PUBLIC HEALTH:** We may, and are sometimes required by law to disclose your health information to public health authorities for purposes related to: preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability, Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications; and reporting disease or infection exposure.

**9. WORKER'S COMPENSATION:** We may disclose your health information as necessary to comply with worker's compensation laws. For example, to the extent your care is covered by worker's compensation, we will make periodic reports to your employer about your condition. We are also required by law to report cases of occupational injury or occupational illness to the employer or worker's compensation insurer.

**11. CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP:** In the event that this medical practice is sold or merged with another organization, your health information/record will become the property of the new owner, although you will maintain the right to request that copies of your health information be transferred to another physician or medical group.

## **B. When This Medical Practice May Not Use or Disclose Your Health Information**

Except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices, this medical practice will not use or disclose health information which identifies you without your written authorization. If you do authorize this medical practice to use or disclose your health information for another purpose, you may revoke your authorization in writing at any time.

## **C. Your Health Information Rights**

**1. RIGHT TO REQUEST SPECIAL PRIVACY PROTECTION:** You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information, by a written request specifying what information you want to limit and what limitations on our use or disclosure of information you wish to have imposed. We reserve the right to accept or reject your request, and will notify you of our decision.

**2. RIGHT TO INSPECT AND COPY:** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, with limited exceptions. To access your medical information, you must submit a written request detailing what information you want to access to and whether you want to inspect it or get a copy of it. We will charge a reasonable fee, as allowed by California federal law. We may deny your request under limited circumstances. If we deny your request to access your child's records or the records of an incapacitated adult you are representing because we believe allowing access would be reasonable likely to cause substantial harm to the patient, you will have the right to appeal our decision. If we deny your request to access your psychotherapy notes, you will have the right to have them transferred to another mental health professional.

**3. RIGHT TO HAVE A COPY OF NOTICE:** You have a right to a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices, even if you have previously requested its receipt by e-mail. If you would like to have a more detailed explanation of these rights or if you would like to exercise one or more of these rights, contact our Privacy Officer listed at the top of this Notice of Privacy Practices.

## **D. Changes to this Notice of Privacy Practices**

We reserve the right to amend this Notice of Privacy Practices at this time or in the future. Until such amendment is made, we are required by law to comply with this notice. After an amendment is made, the revised Notice of Privacy Protections will apply to all protected health information that we maintain, regardless of when it was created or received. We will keep a copy of the current notice posted in our reception area, and a copy will be available at each appointment.

## **E. Complaints**

Complaints about this Notice of Privacy Practice or how this medical practice handles your health information should be directed to our Privacy Officer listed at the top of this Notice of Privacy Practices.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this office handles a complaint, you may submit a formal complaint to:

Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Civil Rights  
Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg.  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Room 509F HHH Building  
Washington, DC 20201