

**Spokane Midwives**

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

*Effective Date: April 14, 2003*

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 let us know.

**WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE**

This notice describes our office's practices and that of:

- Any health care professional authorized to enter information into your chart
- Our billing service: Larsen Billing Service
- All employees, staff and office personnel

**OUR PLEDGE REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION:**

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting medical information about you. We create a record of the care and services you receive from us. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by us.

This notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

We are required by law to:

- make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept private;
- offer you a copy of this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and
- follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

## HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose medical information. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

- **For Treatment.** We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to other licensed midwives, student midwives, and if necessary, to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, or other hospital personnel who are involved in taking care of you at a hospital. We also may disclose medical information about you to family members or friends who may be involved in your medical care after we leave your home, or after you leave the birth center or hospital.
- **For Payment.** We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and services you receive from us may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or third party. For example, we may need to give your health plan information or chart notes about labor management you received at home, the birth center, or the hospital so your health plan will pay us for that care. We may also tell your health plan about treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment.
- **Healthcare Operations.** We may use or disclose, as needed, your protected health information in order to support the business activities of our office. We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment from us. We will share your protected health information with our billing service. We have a written contract with our billing service that contains terms that will protect the privacy of your protected health information. We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you. We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.** We may release medical information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. We may also tell your family or friends your condition.
- **As Required By Law.** We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state, or local law.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.** We may use and disclose medical information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and

safety or the health and safety of your baby or of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

## SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- **Public Health Risk.** We may disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:
  - to prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
  - to report births and deaths;
  - to report child abuse or neglect;
  - to report reactions to medications or problems with products;
  - to notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
  - to notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition;
  - to notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.
- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government to monitor the health care system, government programs, an compliance with civil rights laws.
- **Lawsuits and Disputes.** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you 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.
- **Law Enforcement .** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process.

## YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU.

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you:

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records.

To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to us. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request.

- **Right to Amend** If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our office.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to us. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
  - is not part of the medical information kept by or for our office;
  - is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
  - is accurate and complete.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information. This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations as described in the Notice of Privacy Practices. It excludes disclosures we may have made to you, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. You have the right to receive specific information regarding these disclosures that occurred after April 14, 2003. You may request a shorter timeframe. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations.
  - **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. *We are not required to agree to your request.* If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you or your baby with emergency treatment.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to our office. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply, for example, disclosures to

your spouse.

- **Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to our office. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

- **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time.

### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

- We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. You may ask us to give you a copy of a revised notice.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

**You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**

### **OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, we will no longer use or disclose medical information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you.