

**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.**

## **Important Notice of Privacy Practices**

**Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center  
The Rehabilitation Hospital of Connecticut, Inc.  
BlueRidge Health Services, Inc. d/b/a  
Saint Francis *Care* Behavioral Health  
Collaborative Laboratory Services, LLC  
Asylum Hill Family Medicine Center, Inc.  
Woodland Physician Associates, Inc.  
Saint Francis *Care* Medical Group, P.C.  
Burgdorf-Fleet Health Center  
Saint Francis Center for Women's Health  
Easter Seals Greater Hartford Rehabilitation Center, Inc.  
Saint Francis Hospital Clinics  
Saint Francis Dental Clinics  
Saint Francis Hospital Home Health Agency  
Health Enhancement Center  
Connecticut Radiation Oncology, P.C.  
Radiology Associates of Hartford, P.C.  
Woodland Anesthesiology Associates, P.C.**

**It is important to read and understand this Notice of Privacy Practices before signing our consent and acknowledgment forms.**

**If you have any questions about this Notice or would like further information concerning your privacy rights, please contact Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.**

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center  
Privacy Official  
114 Woodland Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06105  
860-714-4425  
privacyofficial@stfranciscare.org

# Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective Date: April 14, 2003

## Purpose of the Notice of Privacy Practices

This Notice of Privacy Practices (this “Notice”) describes the practices of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and the practices of the affiliates of the hospital including The Rehabilitation Hospital of Connecticut, Inc., BlueRidge Health Services, Inc., d/b/a Saint Francis *Care* Behavioral Health, Asylum Hill Family Medicine Center, Inc., Woodland Physician Associates, Inc., Saint Francis *Care* Medical Group, P.C., Easter Seals Greater Hartford Rehabilitation Center, Inc., Collaborative Laboratory Services, LLC, Burgdorf-Fleet Health Center, Saint Francis Hospital Clinics, Saint Francis Dental Clinics, Saint Francis Home Health Agency, Saint Francis Center for Women’s Health, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center Mount Sinai Campus, Health Enhancement Center, Connecticut Radiation Oncology, P.C., Radiology Associates of Hartford, P.C., Woodland Anesthesiology Associates, P.C. and the physicians on the medical staff of the Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center who are participating with the hospital in an organized health care arrangement for purposes of this notice and with respect to their activities at facilities associated with the entities mentioned above. Wherever in this Notice we refer to “SFHMC” or to “we” or “us” we are referring to any one of the entities mentioned in this paragraph.

This Notice of Privacy Practices (the “Notice”) is meant to inform you of the uses and disclosures of protected health information that we may make. It also describes your rights to access and control your protected health information and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of your protected health information. This notice applies to all of the records of your care either at the hospital or at the facilities of any of the entities mentioned above, whether made by us or your personal physician. Your personal physician will have a separate notice regarding his/her use and disclosure of your medical information created in his/her office.

Your “protected health information” is information about you created and received by us, including demographic information, that may reasonably identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition, or payment for the provision of your health care.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information. We are also required by law to provide you with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information and to abide by the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect. However, we may change our notice at any time. Any new revised Notice will apply to all of your protected health information maintained by us. You will not automatically receive a revised Notice. If you would like to receive a copy of any revised Notice you should access our web site at [www.saintfranciscare.com](http://www.saintfranciscare.com) or contact Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center either by telephone or by asking at your next appointment.

## How We May Use or Disclose Your Protected Health Information

SFHMC will ask you to sign consent and acknowledgement forms that allow SFHMC to use and disclose your protected health information for treatment, payment and health care operations and acknowledges your receipt of this Notice.

The following categories describe some of the different ways that we may use or disclose your protected health information. Even if not specifically listed below, SFHMC may use and disclose your protected health information as permitted or required by law or as authorized by you. We will make reasonable efforts to limit access to your protected health information to those persons or classes of persons, as appropriate, in our workforce who need access to carry out their duties. In addition, if required, we will make reasonable efforts to limit the protected health information to the minimum amount necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of any use or disclosure and to the extent such use or disclosure is limited by law.

- **For Treatment** - We may use and disclose protected health information about you to provide you with medical treatment and services. We may disclose this information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, or other hospital personnel who are involved in taking care of you at the hospital or at affiliated facilities. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken leg may need to know if you have diabetes because diabetes may slow the healing process. In addition, the doctor may need to tell the dietitian if you have diabetes so that we can arrange for appropriate meals. Different departments of the hospital or affiliated entities also may share medical information about you in order to coordinate the different things you need, such as prescriptions, lab work, and x-rays. We also may disclose protected health information about you to individuals or facilities outside the hospital who may be involved in your medical care after you leave the hospital, such as nursing homes, family members, clergy or others who will use the information to provide services that are part of your care. Finally, we may use or disclose your protected health information in an emergency situation.
- **For Payment** - We may use and disclose your protected health information so that we can bill and receive payment for the treatment and related services you receive. For billing and payment purposes, we may disclose your health information to your payment source, including an insurance or managed care company, Medicare, Medicaid, or another third party payor. For example, we may need to give your health plan information about the treatment you received so your health plan will pay us or reimburse us for the treatment, or we may contact your health plan to confirm your coverage or to request prior authorization for a proposed treatment.
- **For Health Care Operations** - We may use and disclose your protected health information as necessary for operations of SFHMC, such as quality assurance and improvement activities, reviewing the competence and qualifications of health care professionals, medical review, legal services and auditing functions, and general administrative activities of SFHMC. For example, we may use medical information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may combine medical information about many hospital patients to decide what additional services the hospital should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are effective. We may also disclose information to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, and other hospital personnel for review and learning purposes. We may combine the medical information we have with medical information from other hospitals to compare how we are doing and see where we can make improvements in the care and services we offer. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of medical information so others may use it to study health care and health care delivery without learning who the specific patients are.
- **Business Associates** - There may be some services provided by our business associates, such as billing and transcription services, or legal and accounting consultants. We may disclose your protected health information to our business associates so they can perform the jobs we have asked them to do. To protect your health information, we require our business associates to enter into written contracts that require them to appropriately safeguard your information.
- **Appointment Reminders** - We may use and disclose protected health information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment at SFHMC.
- **Treatment Alternatives and Other Health-Related Benefits and Services** - We may use and disclose protected health information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives and to tell you about health related benefits, services, or medical education classes that may be of interest to you.
- **Fundraising Activities** - We may use information about you to contact you in an effort to raise money for SFHMC and its operations. The information we release will be limited to your contact information, such as your name, address and telephone number and the dates you received treatment or services at SFHMC. A description of how to opt out of receiving any further fundraising communications will be included with any fundraising materials you receive from SFHMC. If you request that your information not be used or disclosed for fundraising purposes, we will make a reasonable effort to ensure that you do not receive future fundraising communications.

- **Facility Directory** – Unless you are admitted to SFHMC for psychiatric disabilities or for alcohol or substance abuse treatment, or unless you object, we may include limited information about you in our facility directory while you are a patient at SFHMC facilities, including your name, location in the facility, your general condition (e.g., fair, stable, etc.) and your religious affiliation. The directory information, except for your religious affiliation, may be released to people who ask for you by name. Your information and religious affiliation may also be given to a member of the clergy, even if the clergy member does not ask for you by name.
- **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment of Your Care** - Unless you object, we may disclose your protected health information to a family member, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify, if the information relates to that person’s involvement in your health care, or to notify that person of your location or general condition or payment related to your health care. In addition, we may disclose your protected health information to a public or private entity authorized by law to assist in a disaster relief effort. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure we may disclose such information if we determine that it is in your best interest based on our professional judgment or if we reasonably infer that you would not object.
- **Public Health Activities** - We may disclose your protected health information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to collect or receive such information, such as for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability; reporting births, deaths or other vital statistics; reporting child abuse or neglect; notifying individuals of recalls of products they may be using; notifying a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition.
- **Health Oversight Activities** - We may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, inspections, accreditation, licensure, and disciplinary actions.
- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings** - If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose your protected health information in response to your authorization or a court or administrative order. We may also disclose your protected health information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process if such disclosure is permitted by law.
- **Law Enforcement** - We may disclose your protected health information for certain law enforcement purposes if permitted or required by law. For example, to report gunshot wounds; to report emergencies or suspicious deaths; to comply with a court order, warrant, or similar legal process; or to answer certain requests for information concerning crimes.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners, Funeral Directors, Organ Procurement Organizations** - We may release your protected health information to a coroner, medical examiner, funeral director, or, if you are an organ donor, to an organization involved in the donation of organs and tissues.
- **Research Purposes** - Your protected health information may be used or disclosed for research purposes, but only if the use and disclosure of your information has been reviewed and approved by the Saint Francis Institutional Review Board, or if you provide authorization. You may be identified as a possible candidate for a research study. You may be contacted to inquire if you would like to participate in research. Information from your medical record may be used for research, but will not include any identifiable information about you.
- **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety** - We may use and disclose your protected health information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would be to someone able to help prevent the threat.
- **Military and National Security** - If required by law, if you are a member of the armed forces, we may use and disclose your protected health information as required by military command authorities or the Department of Veterans Affairs. If required by law, we may disclose your protected health information to authorized federal officials for the conduct of lawful intelligence, counter-intelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law. If required by law, we may disclose your protected health information to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state or conduct special investigations.

- **Workers' Compensation** - We may use or disclose your protected health information as permitted by laws relating to workers' compensation or related programs.
- **Mental Health Information** - Certain mental health information may be disclosed for treatment, payment and health care operations as permitted or required by law. Otherwise, we will only disclose such information pursuant to an authorization, court order or as otherwise required by law. For example, all communications between you and a psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker and certain therapists and counselors will be privileged and confidential in accordance with Connecticut and Federal law.
- **HIV-Related Information**. We may disclose HIV-related information as permitted or required by Connecticut law. For example, your HIV-related information, if any, may be disclosed without your authorization for treatment purposes, certain health oversight activities, pursuant to a court order, or in the event of certain exposures to HIV by personnel of SFHMC, another person, or a known partner.
- **Minors** - We will comply with Connecticut law when using or disclosing protected health information of minors. For example, if you are an unemancipated minor consenting to a health care service related to HIV/AIDS, venereal disease, outpatient mental health treatment or alcohol/drug dependence, and you have not requested that another person be treated as a personal representative, you may have the authority to consent to the use and disclosure of your health information.

### **When We May Not Use or Disclose Your Protected Health Information**

Except as described in this Notice, or as permitted by Connecticut or Federal law, we will not use or disclose your protected health information without your written authorization.

Your written authorization will specify particular uses or disclosures that you choose to allow. Under certain limited circumstances, SFHMC may condition treatment on the provision of an authorization, such as for research related to treatment. If you do authorize us to use or disclose your protected health information for reasons other than treatment, payment or health care operations, you may revoke your authorization in writing at any time by contacting SFHMC's Privacy Official. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your protected health information for the purposes covered by the authorization, except where we have already relied on the authorization.

### **Your Health Information Rights**

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information. The following briefly describes how you may exercise these rights.

- **Right to Request Restrictions of Your Protected Health Information** - You have the right to request certain restrictions or limitations on the protected health information we use or disclose about you. You may request a restriction or revise a restriction on the use or disclosure of your protected health information by providing a written request stating the specific restriction requested. You can obtain a Request for Restriction form from SFHMC. We are not required to agree to your requested restriction. If we do agree to accept your requested restriction, we will comply with your request except as needed to provide you with emergency treatment. If restricted protected health information is disclosed to a health care provider for emergency treatment, we will request that such health care provider not further use or disclose the information. In addition, you and SFHMC may terminate the restriction if the other party is notified in writing of the termination. Unless you agree, the termination of the restriction is only effective with respect to protected health information created or received after we have informed you of the termination.
- **Right to Receive Confidential Communications** - You have the right to request a reasonable accommodation regarding how you receive communications of protected health information. You have the right to request an alternative means of communication or an alternative location where you would like to receive communications. You may submit a request in writing to SFHMC requesting confidential communications. You can obtain a Request for Confidential Communications form from SFHMC.

- **Right to Access, Inspect and Copy Your Protected Health Information** - You have the right to access, inspect and obtain a copy of your protected health information that is used to make decisions about your care for as long as the protected health information is maintained by SFHMC. To access, inspect and copy your protected health information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to SFHMC. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of preparing, copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may deny, in whole or in part, your request to access, inspect and copy your protected health information under certain limited circumstances. If we deny your request, we will provide you with a written explanation of the reason for the denial. You may have the right to have this denial reviewed by an independent health care professional designated by us to act as a reviewing official. This individual will not have participated in the original decision to deny your request. You may also have the right to request a review of our denial of access through a court of law. All requirements, court costs and attorney's fees associated with a review of denial by a court are your responsibility. You should seek legal advice if you are interested in pursuing such rights.
- **Right to Amend Your Protected Health Information** - You have the right to request an amendment to your protected health information for as long as the information is maintained by or for SFHMC. Your request must be made in writing to SFHMC and must state the reason for the requested amendment. You can obtain a Request for Amendment form from SFHMC. If we deny your request for amendment, we will give you a written denial including the reasons for the denial and the right to submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial. We may rebut your statement of disagreement. If you do not wish to submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial, you may request that your request for amendment and your denial be disclosed with any future disclosure of your relevant information.
- **Right to Receive An Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information** - You have the right to request an accounting of certain disclosures of your protected health information by SFHMC or by others on our behalf. To request an accounting of disclosures, you must submit a request in writing, stating a time period beginning on or after April 14, 2003 that is within six (6) years from the date of your request. The first accounting provided within a twelve-month period will be free. We may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for each future request for an accounting within a single twelve-month period. However, you will be given the opportunity to withdraw or modify your request for an accounting of disclosures in order to avoid or reduce the fee.
- **Right to Obtain A Paper Copy of Notice** - You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this Notice, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically. You may request a copy of this Notice at any time by contacting SFHMC. In addition, you may obtain a copy of this Notice at our web site, [www.saintfranciscare.com](http://www.saintfranciscare.com).
- **Right to Complain** - You may file a complaint with us or the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our Privacy Official of your complaint. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint and we will make every reasonable effort to resolve your complaint with you.

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