



Caring...is Our Business!

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

***YOUR PRIVACY IS OUR PRIORITY
A GUIDE TO HOW WE PROTECT
AND UTILIZE HEALTH INFORMATION***

**“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.”**

Renee Olmsted, RHIA,
Director, Health Information Management
Privacy Officer

Oneida Healthcare Center
321 Genesee Street
Oneida, NY 13421
(315)361-2117

rolmsted@oneidahealthcare.org

Understanding Your Health Record and Information

Each time you visit our healthcare center, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care. This information, referred to as your health or medical record serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document describing the care you received
- Means by which you or a third party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided
- a tool in educating health professionals
- a source of data for medical research
- a source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation
- a source of data for facility planning and marketing
- a tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to:

- ensure its accuracy
- better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information
- make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of Oneida Healthcare Center, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your information - 45 CFR 164.522
- Obtain a paper copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices upon request - 45 CFR 164.520
- In most cases, inspect and copy your health record (a \$.75 cent/page charge will apply) - 45 CFR 164.524
- Amend your health record - 45 CFR 164.528
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information for reasons other than treatment, payment and health care operations - 45 CFR 164.528
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations. 45 CFR 164.522
- Authorize release of your information to a third party.
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken

All such requests as outlined above must be submitted in writing to the Director of Health Information Management at Oneida Healthcare Center.

OHC's Responsibilities

Oneida Healthcare Center is required by law to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information
- Provide you with this notice to outline our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information that we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms of this notice
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- Accommodate "reasonable" requests that you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will attempt to provide you with a revised notice at your next hospital visit as well as to post the revised notices about our healthcare center. We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice and/or permitted by law. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of this notice. Once you have acknowledged the receipt of this notice, we will use or disclose your personal health information as described below.

Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations **THIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE EXHAUSTIVE, BUT TO DESCRIBE POTENTIAL DISCLOSURE**

We will use your health information for treatment: Information obtained by a nurse, physician or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. We will also provide your physician or a subsequent healthcare provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you once you are discharged from this hospital.

We will use your health information for payment: A bill may be sent to you or a third party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you , as well as your diagnoses, procedures and supplies used. In addition, we may also tell your insurer about a treatment that you are going to undergo in order to obtain prior approval or to determine if your insurer will cover the treatment.

We will use your health information for health care operations:

Members of the medical staff, the risk or quality improvement manager, or members of the quality improvement team may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and service we provide. We will also utilize health information to assist us in deciding which services to offer, which services to discontinue, or to determine if new treatments and services are effective. In addition, it may be used for training of medical students, limited marketing and fundraising activities.

Other Permitted Uses and Disclosures that you need to be aware of that may not require your authorization:

- **Appointment Reminders/Sign In Sheets:** We may use and disclose information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care at the health center or clinic. In addition, we may use sign in sheets.
- **Business Associates:** There are some services provided in OHC through contracts with business associates. Examples include physician services in radiology, certain lab tests and copying services for our medical records. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job that we've asked them to do. We require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information with the diligence that we would.
- **Hospital Directory:** Unless you object, we will use your name, location in the facility, your general condition and your religious affiliation for directory purposes. This information may be provided to members of the clergy and, except for religious affiliations, to other people who ask for you by name.
- **Family, Friends, Others Directly Involved in Your Care:** We may use or disclose information, using our best judgment, to a friend or family member who is involved in your care or payment related to your care. We may also use it for the purpose of notification or assisting in the notification of a family member, personal representative or another person responsible for your care.
- **Research:** We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been internally approved. Protocols will be established within that research process to ensure the privacy of your health information.
- **Funeral Directors/Medical Examiners:** We may release information to funeral directors, medical examiners or coroners consistent with applicable law to carry out their duties.

- **Organ and Tissue Donation:** Consistent with applicable law, we may disclose health information to organ procurement organizations or other entities engaged in the procurement, banking, or transplantation of organs for the purpose of tissue donation and transplant.
- **Fundraising:** We may contact you as part of a fundraising effort. You may contact our Privacy Officer if you no longer want to receive fundraising materials.
- **Marketing:** We may contact you to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. You may contact our Privacy Officer if you no longer want to receive marketing materials.
- **Worker's Compensation:** We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.
- **Food and Drug Administration:** We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, track products, product defects, or post marketing surveillance information to enable product recalls, repairs or replacement.
- **Public Health:** As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability. This will also include: the reporting of births and deaths, victim/domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, disease exposure, trauma, congenital malformations, Alzheimer's, cancer cases, communicable disease issues.
- **Inmates /Correctional Institutions:** Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution, or agents thereof, health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.
- **Health Oversight Activities/Agencies:** Federal law makes provisions for your health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency for the purposes of auditing, accreditation, investigations, inspections, licensure.
- **Specialized Government Functions/Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** Includes military, veterans, National Security and Intelligence Activities. This may also include responding to subpoenas, court orders and qualified protective orders.

- **To Avert Serious Threat to Health and Safety:** OHC may disclose information when it is necessary to prevent a serious threat to a patient's health and safety, or the safety of the public or another person.
- **Employers under OSHA standards:** We may release to an employer, your health information when that information is related to the medical surveillance of the workplace, work-related illnesses and injuries, and when the employer requests healthcare to be provided to the employee by OHC.
- **Emergencies:** We may disclose your personal health information in an emergency situation. We will make every attempt to obtain your consent as soon as possible/practical after the delivery of treatment.

Incidental Uses/Disclosures: In order to ensure that communications essential to providing quality healthcare would not be hindered, incidental disclosures may occur. An example of this would be an unauthorized person overhears a confidential communication between providers at a nurses station.

For More Information or to Report a Problem

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the Privacy Officer at (315) 361-2117. If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Privacy Officer or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint. If you have any questions or complaints, please contact:

Renee Olmsted, RHIA
Director, Healthcare Informatics
Privacy Officer
Oneida Healthcare Center
321 Genesee Street
Oneida, NY 13421
(315) 361-2117
rolmsted@oneidahealthcare.org

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