

APPENDIX H – Notice of Privacy Practices

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.

State and Federal laws require us to maintain the privacy of your health information and to inform you about our privacy practices by providing you with this Notice. We must follow the privacy practices as described below. This Notice will take effect on 02/10/2014 and will remain in effect until it is amended or replaced by us.

It is our right to change our privacy practices provided law permits the changes. Before we make a significant change, this Notice will be amended to reflect the changes and we will make the new Notice available upon request. We reserve the right to make any changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information maintained, created and/or received by us before the date changes were made.

You may request a copy of our Privacy Notice at any time by contacting our Privacy Officer, Lisa Taylor. Information on contacting us can be found at the end of this Notice.

TYPICAL USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We will keep your health information confidential, using it only for the following purposes:

Treatment: We may use your protected health information (PHI) including electronic protected health information (ePHI) to provide you with our professional services which may include electronic disclosure. We have established “minimum necessary” or “need to know” standards that limit various staff members’ access to your health information according to their primary job functions. Everyone on our staff is required to sign a confidentiality statement.

Disclosure: We may disclose and/or share protected health information (PHI) including electronic disclosure with other health care professionals who provide treatment and/or service to you. These professionals will have a privacy and confidentiality policy like this one. Health information about you may also be disclosed to your family, friends and/or other persons you choose to involve in your care, only if you agree that we may do so.

(a) Right to an Accounting of Disclosures: You have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures” of your protected information if the disclosure was made for purposes other than providing services, payment, and or business operations. In light of the increasing use of Electronic Medical Record technology (EMR), the HITECH Act allows you the right to request a copy of your health information in electronic form if we store your health information electronically. Disclosures can be made available for a period of 6 years prior to your request and for electronic health information 3 years prior to the date on which the accounting is requested. To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. Lists, if requested, will be according to our actual costs as required by Texas law. You may request an electronic copy of your patient records. Please contact our Privacy Officer for a fee and/or for an explanation of our fee structure.

(b) Right to Request Restriction of PHI: You may request a restriction on our use and disclosure of PHI. Unless you pay in full for your treatment at the time of treatment we are not required to agree to your request. The HITECH Act restricts provider’s refusal of an individual’s request not to disclose PHI in instances where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health operations (and is not for purposes of carrying out treatment); and the PHI pertains solely to a healthcare item or service for which our facility has been paid out of pocket in full.

Payment: We may use and disclose your PHI and ePHI to seek payment for services we provide to you. This disclosure involves our business office staff and may include insurance organizations or other businesses that may become involved in the process of mailing statements and/or collecting unpaid balances.

Emergencies: We may use or disclose your health information to notify, or assist in the notification of a family member or anyone responsible for your care, in case of any emergency involving your care, your location, your general condition or death. If at all possible we will provide you with an opportunity to object to this use or disclosure. Under emergency conditions or if you are incapacitated we will use our professional judgment to disclose only that information directly relevant to your care. We will also use our professional judgment to make reasonable inferences of your best interest by allowing someone to pick up filled prescriptions, x-rays or other similar forms of health information and/or supplies unless you have advised us otherwise.

Healthcare Operations: We will use and disclose your health information to keep our practice operable. Examples of personnel who may have access to this information include, but are not limited to, our medical records staff, outside health or management reviewers and individuals performing similar activities.

Required by Law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law. (Court or administrative orders, subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process) We will use and disclose your information when requested by national security, intelligence and other State and Federal officials and/or if you are an inmate or otherwise under the custody of law enforcement.