



**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".**

## **PRIVACY NOTICE**

This page describes the type of information we gather about you, with whom that information may be shared and the safeguards we have in place to protect it. You have the right to the confidentiality of your medical information and the right to approve or refuse the release of specific information except when the release is required by law. If the practices described in this brochure meet your expectations, there is nothing you need to do. If you prefer that we not share information we may honor your written request in certain circumstances described below. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact our **Privacy Officer** at the address below.

## **WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE**

This notice describes Cannon Memorial Hospital's practices regarding the use of your medical information and that of:

- Any health care professional authorized to enter information into your hospital chart or medical record.
- All departments and units of the hospitals, clinics or doctor's offices you may visit.
- Any member of a volunteer group we allow to help you while you are in the hospital.
- All employees, staff and other personnel who may need access to your information.
- All entities, sites and locations of Cannon Memorial Hospital follow the terms of this notice. In addition, these entities, sites and locations may share medical information with each other for treatment, payment or health care purposes described in this notice.

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## **OUR PLEDGE REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION:**

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal. Protecting medical information about you is important. We create a record of the care and services you receive. 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 Cannon Memorial Hospital, whether made by health care professionals or other personnel.

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:

- keep medical information that identifies you, private;
- give you 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 may use and disclose medical information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed.

**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 doctors, nurses, technicians, or other health care professionals who are involved in taking care of you. 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 health care professionals 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 medical

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information about you to people outside the hospital who may be involved in your medical care after you leave the hospital or that provide services that are part of your care.

**For Payment.** We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and services you receive may be billed and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party. For example, your insurance may need to know about surgery you received so they will pay us or reimburse you for the surgery. We may also use and disclose medical information about you to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your insurance will cover the treatment.

**For Health Care Purposes.** We may use and disclose medical information about you for health care purposes. This is necessary to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. 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 also disclose information to doctors, nurses, technicians, and other hospital personnel for review and learning purposes. 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.

**Appointment Reminders.** We may use and disclose medical information in an effort to remind you of an appointment for treatment or medical care.

**Treatment Alternatives.** 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.

**Health-Related Benefits and Services.** We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

**Hospital Directory.** We may include certain limited information about you in the hospital directory while you are a patient at the hospital. This information may include your name, location in the hospital, your general condition (e.g., fair, stable, etc.) and your religious affiliation. The directory information, except for your religious affiliation, may also be released to people who ask for you by name. Your religious affiliation may be given to a member of the clergy, such as a priest or rabbi, even if they don't ask for you by name. This is so your family, friends and clergy can visit you in the hospital and generally know how you are doing.

**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

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may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. We may also tell your family or friends your condition and that you are in the hospital. In addition, we may disclose medical information about you to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort so that your family can be notified about your condition, status and location.

**Research.** Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose medical information about you for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all patients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. All research projects, however, are subject to a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of medical information, trying to balance the research needs with patients' need for privacy of their medical information. Before we use or disclose medical information for research, the project will have been approved through this research approval process, but we may, however, disclose medical information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project, for example, to help them look for patients with specific medical needs, so long as the medical information they review does not leave the hospital. We will almost always ask for your specific permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at the hospital.

**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 the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

**Fundraising Activities.** We may use medical statistical information about you in an effort to raise money for Cannon Memorial Hospital and its operations. We may disclose medical information to a foundation related to the hospital so that the foundation may raise money for the hospital. We only would release contact information, such as your name, address and phone number. If you do not want Cannon Memorial Hospital to contact you for fundraising efforts, you must notify our **Privacy Officer** in writing at the address below.

## **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

**Organ and Tissue Donation.** If you are an organ donor, we may release medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

**Military and Veterans.** If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities.

**Workers' Compensation.** We may release medical information about you for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

**Public Health Risks.** 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.

**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 programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

**Lawsuits and Disputes.** We may disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful order from a court.

**Law Enforcement.** We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official as part of law enforcement activities; in investigations of criminal conduct or of victims of

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crime; in response to court orders; in emergency circumstances; or when required to do so by law.

**Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors.** We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients of the hospital to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.

**Protective Services for the President, National Security and Intelligence Activities.** We may release medical information about you to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state or conduct special investigations, or for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

**Inmates.** If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

## **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, but does not include psychotherapy notes.

To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to our Director of Health Information Management at the address on the last page. 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.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another licensed health care professional chosen by Cannon Memorial Hospital will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

**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.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our Director of Health Information Management. 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 Cannon Memorial Hospital;
- 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 request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of certain disclosures we made of medical information about you.

To request an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to our Director of Health Information Management.

**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 health care 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 emergency treatment.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to our Director of Health Information Management at the address below. 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

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**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 Director of ,Health Information Management. 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 at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice.

You may obtain a copy of this notice at our web site, [www.cannonhospital.org](http://www.cannonhospital.org). To obtain a paper copy of this notice, please request one in writing from our Privacy Officer at the address below.

#### **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. We will post a copy of the current notice. The notice will contain, in the top right-hand corner, the effective date.

#### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with Cannon Memorial Hospital or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with Cannon Memorial Hospital,, contact Administration at the address and phone number listed below. 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 to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, thereafter 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.

Administration  
Privacy Officer  
Director, Health Information Management

Any of the above may be contacted at Cannon Memorial Hospital, P.O. Box 188,  
Pickens, S.C. Phone # 864-878-4791