

COUNTY OF KINGS



NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective 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.

YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS

Kings County creates records of health care to provide quality care and comply with legal requirements. Your personal health information is private. Kings County is committed to safeguarding your personal health information to the extent reasonably possible. Kings County must obey various laws on how we use and share your health information including keeping your health information confidential from unauthorized access. However there may be some circumstances which your personal health information may lawfully be shared by Kings County.

HOW WE MAY USE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Kings County may use and share information about you to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations and for other purposes permitted or required by law. This information includes such things as your name, address, personal facts, medical history and medical care given to you.

We use this information and share it with others for the following reasons:

For treatment: We may use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate or manage your health care and any related services. We may disclose information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, therapists, interns, volunteers, or other department personnel who are involved in your care or case management.

For payment: We may use and disclose, as needed, your protected health information, to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, we

may need to contact your health care plan to determine eligibility, the coverage of recommended treatment, and the reimbursement requirements.

For health care operations: We may use and disclose information in your health record to judge the quality of health care you receive or for review and training purposes. We may use or disclose information about you to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for services. We may also use this information in audits or fraud investigations, or for planning and general administration.

SOME OTHER WAYS WE MAY SHARE YOUR INFORMATION

The law also allows us to use or give out information we have about you for the following purposes:

- To contact you about your health insurance or Medi-Cal benefits;
- For public health activities, such as preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability;
- For judicial and administrative proceedings, in response to a legal order or other lawful process;
- For limited law enforcement purposes as required by law;
- For research studies that meet all privacy law requirements, such as research related to preventing disease;
- To avoid a serious and immediate threat to health or safety, such as a terrorist attack;
- For national security activities;
- To coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors;
- For organ donations;
- For purposes required by law, such as reporting abuse or neglect, or workers' compensation;
- To agencies that oversee the health care system, for audits or investigations;
- To the federal government when it is checking on how we are meeting privacy laws;
- To other government agencies that provide public benefits to determine your eligibility;
- To military authorities, if you are a member of the armed forces;
- To determine your eligibility for or entitlement to veterans benefits;
- To create a collection of information which can no longer be traced back to you

WHEN WRITTEN PERMISSION IS NEEDED

Before Kings County uses your personal health information for any reason not listed above, it must get written permission from you. Further, if you do give us written permission to use or share your information for reasons other than stated above, you may take back your permission in writing at any time.

Kings County will not disclose your personal health information to outside parties for marketing, fundraising, or any other reasons not listed above without prior written authorization.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW?

You have the right to ask us not to use or share your personal health care information in the ways described above, however, we may not be able to agree with your request. Requests must be in writing and state what information you want to limit, whether to limit use, disclosure, or both; and, to whom limits apply.

You have the right to ask us to contact you only in writing or at a different address, post office box, or telephone number. We will accept reasonable requests when necessary to protect your safety.

You and/or your personal representative have the right to see and get a copy of your personal health information. Your request must be in writing. If your personal representative is making the request, we will require that he or she provide credible proof that he or she is in fact your personal representative. You may be charged a fee for the costs of copying and mailing records. We may keep you from seeing all or parts of your records for reasons allowed by law. If we deny your request for access to your records, you may ask for a review of the denial or send a letter to disagree with the denial, which will be kept with your personal health information.

If you believe that certain information in our records about you is wrong, you have the right to ask us to amend the records. Requests must be in writing and provide a reason to support your request. We may deny your request if the information is not created or kept by Kings County, or is already accurate and complete. If your request is denied, you may send in a statement disagreeing with our decision, which will be kept with your records.

IMPORTANT

KINGS COUNTY DOES NOT HAVE COMPLETE COPIES OF YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS. IF YOU WANT TO LOOK AT, GET A COPY OF, OR CHANGE YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR, CLINIC OR MANAGED CARE PLAN

You have the right to request a list of the times when we have shared your health information after April 14, 2003. The list will tell you whom we shared information with, when, for what reasons, and what information was shared. The list will not include when we gave information to you, or with your permission, or shared it for treatment, payment, or health care operations.

You have a right to get a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices when you request it. You can also find this Notice on our website at:

<http://www.countyofkings.com/health/>

HOW DO YOU CONTACT US TO USE YOUR RIGHTS OR TO COMPLAIN

If you want to use any of the privacy rights explained in this Notice, or, if you believe that we have not protected your privacy and wish to complain, please call or write us at: Privacy Officer, Kings County Counsel's Office, 1400 West Lacey Blvd., Hanford, CA 93230, (559) 584-1411, Extension 2445.

COMPLAINTS

You have a right to file a complaint if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated. Under the law, Kings County cannot penalize you for filing a complaint.

You may file a complaint by calling or writing the County Administrative Officer at 1400 West Lacey Blvd., Hanford, CA 93230, (559) 582-3211, Extension 2510. You may also contact the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, Attn: Regional Manager, 50 United Nations Plaza, Room 322, San Francisco, CA 94102, telephone numbers - (415) 437-8310, (415) 437-8311 (TDD), fax – (415) 437-8329. Or you may call the U.S. Office of Civil Rights at (800) 368-1019 or 866-788-4989 TTY.

Kings County cannot take away your health care benefits or do anything to hurt you in any way if you choose to file a complaint or use any of the privacy rights in this Notice.

If you have any questions about this Notice, and want further information, please contact the Privacy Officer, Kings County Counsel's Office, 1400 West Lacey Blvd., Hanford, CA 93230, (559) 582-3211, Extension 2445.

CHANGES TO NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Kings County must obey the Notice in effect on April 14, 2003. We have the right to change our privacy practices. If we do make any changes, we will revise this Notice and get it to you right away.