

# **Emerald Coast Urgent Care**

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

At Emerald Coast Urgent Care (ECUC), we are committed to treating and using protected health information (“PHI”) about you responsibly. This Notice of Privacy Practices (“Notice”) describes the personal information we collect, and how and when we use or disclose that information. It also describes your rights as they relate to your PHI. This Notice has been updated in accordance with the HIPAA Omnibus Rule and is effective March 1, 2013. It applies to all PHI as defined by federal regulations.

### **Understanding Your Health Record/Information**

Each time you visit ECUC; 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 or treatment. This information may be used or disclosed to:

- Plan your care and treatment.
- Communicate with other providers who contribute to your care.
- Serve as a legal document.
- Receive payment from you, your plan, or your health insurer.
- Assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve.
- Comply with state and federal laws that require us to disclose your health information.

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, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

### **Your Health Information Rights**

Although your health record is the physical property of ECUC, the information belongs to you. You have the right to request to:

- Access, inspect and copy your health record. We maintain an electronic medical record (“EMR”), you have the right to access your EMR in a machine readable electronic format and to direct us to send a machine readable copy directly to a third party. ECUC will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for the cost of supplies and labor of copying.
- Amend your health record which you believe is not correct or complete. ECUC is not required to agree to the amendment if ECUC did not create the information or if it is correct or complete.
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information.
- Communications of your health information by alternative means (e.g. e-mail) or at alternative locations (e.g. post office).
- Place a restriction to certain uses and disclosures of your information. In most cases ECUC is not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if ECUC does, ECUC will abide by the agreement (except in certain circumstances where disclosure is required or permitted, such as an emergency, for public health activities, or when disclosure is required by law). ECUC must comply with a request to restrict the disclosure of PHI to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations if the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or service for which we have been paid out of pocket in full.
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.
- Obtain a copy of your health care information in paper or a machine readable electronic format.

### **Our Responsibilities**

ECUC is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information.
- Provide you with this Notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you.
- Abide by the terms of the Notice currently in effect.
- Notify you in writing if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction.
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- Notify you in writing of a breach where your unsecured PHI has been accessed, acquired, used or disclosed to an unauthorized person. “Unsecured PHI” refers to PHI that is not secured through the use of technologies or methodologies that render the PHI unusable, unreadable, or indecipherable to unauthorized individuals.

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all PHI we maintain. Should our information practices change, such revised Notices will be made available to you.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your written authorization, except as described in this Notice.

### **For More Information or to Report a Problem**

If have questions and would like additional information, you may contact the ECUC Privacy Officer at (866) 330-7410.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a written complaint with CUCLA’s Privacy Officer, or with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Upon request, the Privacy Office will provide you with the address. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with either the Privacy Officer or the Office for Civil Rights.

**Treatment:** Information obtained by a nurse, physician, or other member of your health care team will be recorded in your medical record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. To promote quality care, ECUC operates an EMR. This is an electronic system that keeps health information about you. ECUC may also provide a subsequent healthcare provider with health information about you (e.g., copies of various reports) that should assist him or her in treating you in the future. ECUC may also disclose health information about you to, and obtain your health information from, electronic health information networks in which community healthcare providers may participate to facilitate the provision of care to patients such as yourself.

ECUC may use a prescription hub which provides electronic access to your medication history. This will assist ECUC health care providers in understanding what other medications may have been prescribed for you by other providers.

**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, diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

**Health Care Operations:** We 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 health care and service we provide.

**Business Associates:** We may contract with third parties to provide services on our behalf and disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do. We require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

**Notification:** We may use or disclose information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative, or another person responsible for your care, your location, and general condition.

**Communication from Offices:** We may call your home or other designated location and leave a message on voice mail, in person, or by text, in reference to any items that assist ECUC in carrying out Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations, such as appointment reminders, insurance items and any call pertaining to your clinical care. We may mail/email to your home or other designated location any items that assist ECUC in carrying out Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations, such as appointment reminders, patient satisfaction surveys and patient statements.

**Communication with Family/Personal Friends:** Health professionals, using their best judgment, may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friend or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care. When a family member(s) or a friend(s) accompany the patient into the exam room, it is considered implied consent that a disclosure of the patient medical data is acceptable.

**Open treatment areas:** Sometimes patient care is provided in an open treatment area. While special care is taken to maintain patient privacy, others may overhear some patient information while receiving treatment. Should you be uncomfortable with this, please bring this to the attention of our Privacy Officer.

**To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** We may use your health information or share it with others when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health or safety, or the health or safety of another person or the public.

**Research:** We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your PHI. Even without that special approval, we may permit researchers to look at PHI to help them prepare for research, for example, to allow them to identify patients who may be included in their research project, as long as they do not remove, or take a copy of, any PHI. We may use and disclose a limited data set that does not contain specific readily identifiable information about you for research. But we will only disclose the limited data set if we enter into a data use agreement with the recipient who must agree to (1) use the data set only for the purposes for which it was provided, (2) ensure the security of the data, and (3) not identify the information or use it to contact any individual.

**Marketing:** We may contact you by mail, e-mail or text to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. However, we must obtain your prior written authorization for any marketing of products and services that are funded by third parties. You have the right to opt-out by notifying us in writing.

**Sale of your PHI:** ECUC may not "sell" your PHI (i.e., disclose such PHI in exchange for remuneration) to a third party without your written authorization that acknowledges the remuneration unless such an exchange meets a regulatory exception.

**Health Oversight Activities:** We may release your health information to government agencies authorized to conduct audits, investigations, and inspections of our facility. These government agencies monitor the operation of the health care system, government benefit programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, and compliance with government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** We may disclose to the FDA health information relative to adverse events with respect to food, supplements, product and 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.

**Workers Compensation:** We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

**Law Enforcement:** We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law.

**Lawsuits and Disputes:** We may disclose your health information if we are ordered to do so by a court that is handling a lawsuit or other dispute. We may also disclose your information in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful request by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain a court order protecting the information from further disclosure.

**As Required by Law:** We may use or disclose your health information if we are required by law to do so.