Hill Country Community Clinic

Notice of Privacy Practices

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.

Hill Country Community Clinic is committed to protecting patient privacy and follows all applicable Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and 42 CFR Part 2 requirements regarding the privacy of your health information. The following sections will explain how we may use and share your health information, what rights you have, and how we protect your information.

You have the right to:

Get a copy of your health record

You can see your health records electronically through the patient portal at any time. Upon written request, we will provide a paper or digital copy of your records within 15 days. Your records show the care given to you at Hill Country and the information you shared with us. They do not include our internal messages or records from other health care providers.

Ask us to correct your record

You can ask us to correct health information you believe is wrong or incomplete. We may say no but will explain why in writing within 60 days of receiving your request. Your request will be kept in your records.

Request confidential communication

You can ask us to contact you in a specific way, such as a certain phone number, or send mail to a different address. We will agree with all reasonable requests.

Choose someone to act for you

If someone has your medical power of attorney, or is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information. We will confirm this authority before acting. You may need to provide legal documentation.

Determine who receives your information

You can choose who receives certain health information. Tell us what you want, and we will follow your instructions. You have the right to tell us to:

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care.
- Share information in a disaster relief situation.
- Include your information in a health information exchange, so other providers, such as hospitals, can access it.

If you are unable to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may share your information if we believe it is in your best interest, or to reduce a serious and immediate threat to health or safety.

Request limits on use or sharing

You can ask us not to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or operations. We are not required to agree and may say no if it would affect your care. If you pay in full out of pocket for a

service, you can ask us not to share that information with your health insurer. We will agree unless the law requires us to share it.

Get a list of who has received your information

You can ask for a list of the times we shared your health information over the past six years, including who we shared it with and why. This list will not include information shared for treatment, payment, or operations, or certain other disclosures. The first list each year is free. We may charge a fee for additional requests within 12 months.

Get a copy of this notice

You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive it electronically. We will provide one promptly.

File a complaint

If you feel your rights have been violated, contact us using the information at the end of this notice. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

We use or share your health information in the following ways:

To treat you

We use your health information and share it with others involved in your care, whether at Hill Country Community Clinic or elsewhere. (Example: A doctor treating you for an injury asks another doctor about your overall health.)

To run our organization

We use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary. (Example: We use health information about you to manage treatment and services.)

To bill for your services

We use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities. (Example: We share information about you with your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.)

To support the public good

We may share your information to:

- Prevent disease, report births and deaths, help with product recalls, report adverse medication reactions, report suspected abuse or neglect, or reduce serious threats to health or safety.
- Support health research.
- Comply with the law, including reporting to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- Respond to organ and tissue donation requests.
- Assist a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when a person dies.
- Address workers' compensation claims.
- Support law enforcement, health oversight activities, and special government functions such as military or national security.
- Comply with court orders, administrative orders, or subpoenas.

Marketing

We will not share your information, unless you give us written permission, for marketing purposes, sale of your information, and most situations that involve psychotherapy notes.

For fundraising, we may contact you, but you can tell us to stop contacting you at any time.

Our Responsibilities

- We are required by law to protect the privacy and security of your health information.
- We will notify you promptly if your health information is exposed or improperly shared.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and offer you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information in other ways without your permission, spoken or written. You may change your mind at any time, just tell us in writing.

Additional Special Notices

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Certain Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment records have extra legal protection. We may only use or share them as the law allows. In most cases, we need your written permission first, stating what we can share, with whom, and for how long. You can cancel your permission at any time in writing. We may share SUD records without your permission when the law allows or requires it, including to:

- Use your information to treat you, bill for services, and run our clinic, as the law allows.
- Share information with outside partners who sign a written agreement to protect your information.
- Report a crime at our locations or against our employees.
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Respond to a medical emergency.
- Support audits and evaluations.
- Respond to a court order.

These protections apply to records from programs or staff whose main role is diagnosing, treating, or referring patients for SUD. Other situations to be aware of include:

- Protection in Criminal Cases - Your SUD records generally cannot be used to investigate or prosecute you for a crime. This requires a special court order with strict legal requirements, not just a regular subpoena.
- Limits to Further Sharing - When we share your SUD records, we must include a notice saying the recipient cannot share them again unless the law allows it.

Reproductive Health Treatment

Federal law provides additional protections for certain reproductive health care information. If someone requests this information, we require them to confirm in writing that they will not use it for a prohibited purpose. We may continue to use and share reproductive health care information as permitted or required by law, including providing treatment, process payment, and running health care operations; defend ourselves in legal or administrative proceedings; support health oversight audits or investigations; and meet other uses permitted or required by law.

Use of Technology

Hill Country Community Clinic uses electronic tools to support your care. These include electronic health records that store your health information, secure email, patient portals where you can view your health information online, telehealth visits by video or phone, and secure online storage. We use protections, such as employee training and computer security measures, to keep your health information private and

secure, as required by law. While no method of electronic storage or transmission can be guaranteed completely secure, we take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of unauthorized access, use, or sharing.

Changes to the Terms of this Notice

We can change this notice, and the changes will apply to all the information we have about you. The new notice will be available on request, in our office, and on our website.

Information, Questions, or Complaints

HIPAA Information: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html

42 CFR Part 2 Information: https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/part-2/index.html

Hill Country Community Clinic

Contact our Privacy Officer, Sarah Joy, by phone at (530) 337-5798 or by mail at PO Box 228, Round Mountain, CA 96084.

Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights

File a complaint by phone at 1-877-696-6775, by mail at 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, or online at www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.