

Notice of privacy practices

Your Information. Your Rights. Our Responsibilities.

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 Rights

See page 2 for more about these rights and how to exercise them.

You have the right to:

- Get a copy of your health and claims records
- Correct your health and claims records
- Request confidential communication
- Ask us to limit the information we share
- Get a list of those with whom we've shared your information
- Get a copy of this privacy notice
- Choose someone to act for you
- File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated

Your Choices

See page 3 for more about these rights and how to exercise them.

You have some choices in the way that we use and share information as we:

- Answer coverage questions from your family and friends
- Provide disaster relief
- Market our services and sell your information

Our Uses and Disclosures

See pages 3 & 4 for more about how we use and share your information.

We may use and share your information as we:

- Help manage the health care treatment you receive
- Run our organization
- Pay for your health services
- Administer your health plan
- Help with public health and safety issues
- Do research
- Comply with the law
- Respond to organ and tissue donation requests and work with a medical examiner or funeral director
- Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests
- Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

Your Rights

When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights. This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

Get a copy of your health and claims records

- You can ask to see or get a copy of your health and claims records and other health information we have about you. If the information is maintained electronically, you can request it in electronic format. Ask us how to do this.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health and claims records, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.
- You can ask us to correct your health and claims records if you think they are incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this.
- We may say “no” to your request, but we’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

Ask us to correct health and claims records

Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will consider all reasonable requests, and must say “yes” if you tell us you would be in danger if we do not.

Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us **not** to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations.
- We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.

Get a list of those with whom we've shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we've shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.
- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We'll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

Get a copy of this privacy notice

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

Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting us using the information on page 1.
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/.
- We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Substance use disorder treatment records

- We cannot use or disclose information about treatment for substance use disorder from programs subject to 42 CFR Part 2, or testimony relaying the content of such records, for any civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against you without your consent or a court order after notice and an opportunity to be heard is provided to you or the holder of the record. A court order authorizing use or disclosure must be accompanied by a subpoena or other legal requirement compelling disclosure before we would use or disclose records subject to 42 CFR Part 2.

Your Choices

In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:

For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share. If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in payment for your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.

In these cases, we require your written permission to share your information:

- Marketing purpose
- Sale of your information
- Most uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes

Our Uses and Disclosures

Help manage the health care treatment you receive

- We can use your health information and share it with professionals who are treating you.

Example: A doctor sends us information about your diagnosis and treatment plan so we can arrange additional services.

Run our organization

- We can use and disclose your information to run our organization and contact you when necessary.

Example: We use health information about you to develop better services for you.

Pay for your health services

- We can use and disclose your health information as we pay for your health services.

Example: We share information about you with your dental plan to coordinate payment for your dental work.

How else can we use or share your health information? We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes. For more information see: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html.

Help with public health and safety issues

- We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:
 - Preventing disease
 - Helping with product recalls
 - Reporting adverse reactions to medications
 - Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
 - Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

Do research

- We can use or share your information for health research.
- We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we're complying with federal privacy law.

Continued from previous page

Respond to organ and tissue donation requests and work with a medical examiner or funeral director

- We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.
- We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests

- We can use or share health information about you:
 - For workers' compensation claims
 - For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
 - With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
 - For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

- We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

Our Responsibilities

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.

- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time by telling us in writing, and once your information has been shared, it may be shared again by the recipient and may no longer be protected by this notice.
- For more information see: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html.

Changes to the Terms of this Notice

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request and will be posted on our website by the effective date of the new notice. If there is a material change to the notice, we will also provide a copy of the new notice or information about the new notice and how to obtain the new notice, in our next annual mailing to members.

Contact Us

You may write to us or call at any time to ask questions about your privacy rights.

If you feel that South Country Health Alliance has violated your privacy rights, you can also contact:

You may contact us at:

HIPAA Privacy Officer
South Country Health Alliance
6380 West Frontage Road
Medford, MN 55049

Telephone: 1-866-567-7242
TTY: 1-800-627-3529 or 711

Minnesota Dept of Human Services
Privacy Official
P.O. Box 64998
St. Paul, MN 55164-0998
Phone: (651) 431-4930 (voice)
TTY/TDD: 1-800-627-3529
Fax: (651) 431-7441

Office of Civil Rights
Medical Privacy, Complaints Division
U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services
233 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 886-2359 (voice)
TTY/TDD: (312) 353-5693
Fax: (312) 886-1807