



HealthPartners' Commitment to Privacy

An Important Notice to Practitioners Concerning Privacy

As a healthcare professional, you understand the importance of patient privacy. Similarly, HealthPartners, as a health plan, understands the importance of protecting the privacy of our members - your patients - from the improper use or disclosure of their personal information. We want to make sure that you are aware of and understand HealthPartners' privacy policies and practices. We also want to make sure that you are aware of and understand our expectations of how you, as a practitioner, will safeguard patients' and members' personal information. We believe that, with our mutual cooperation guided by clear expectations, our members and patients will continue to receive the best quality care and be able to trust that their personal information is appropriately protected.

Consents

Whenever necessary, HealthPartners obtains written and dated member consent and/or authorization for the use and disclosure of personal information. We also expect that you will obtain consents and authorizations from your patients, whenever appropriate.

- Routine consents should be obtained by you, as necessary, to permit the use of personal health information for future, known and/or routine needs. These consents should address the use and release of personal information for purposes of payment, treatment and health care operations, including health plan administration; care management and quality reviews.
- Special consents (also known as authorizations) should be obtained by you or by us, as appropriate, prior to the use or release of information beyond the scope of the routine consent.
- When one of our members is unable to provide consent, we ensure that an appropriate individual is identified to give consent on his or her behalf.

Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

HealthPartners is committed to making sure that personal information is used and disclosed only in accordance with applicable laws and professional and accreditation standards. It is imperative that both HealthPartners and its practitioners understand the following appropriate uses and disclosures:

- Personal information may be used within HealthPartners and its related organizations to administer and manage our health plans and to provide or facilitate care and services to our members.
- Information collected about our members and former members is, on occasion, shared with nonaffiliated third parties with whom we contract to administer or provide selected functions for our health plans. This includes self-insured employers, brokers and consultants that use information for the

purposes of plan administration and claims payment. These nonaffiliated parties must agree to comply with stringent privacy and security protections.

- Information may also be shared with certain regulators, law enforcement and accreditation organizations for limited purposes, as required by law or in order to maintain our licensure and accreditation.
- HealthPartners may also use member and patient information to conduct utilization reviews, discharge planning, case management and disease management services, quality improvement activities and some research studies. All reasonable precautions are taken to safeguard any confidential information.

Access to Health Records and Information

It is appropriate for both HealthPartners and practitioners to limit access to health records and personal health information. While there are many laws and standards that govern access, here are some general guidelines that practitioners and health plans should follow to ensure appropriate access:

- Our members (your patients) may access their own health records. The definition of “patient” also includes the surviving spouse or parents of a deceased patient, or a person the patient appoints in writing as a legally recognized representative. Members also have the right to request an amendment to their health records. However, as HealthPartners does not maintain original health records, members will be referred to their providers to discuss information maintained in their record.
- A spouse may not access their partner’s health information without an authorization (or consent) from the member (patient).
- A parent or legal guardian of a minor may access and authorize the release of the minor’s health information. However, if the minor is married, emancipated, has borne a child, or if the records in question concern venereal disease, chemical dependency, or pregnancy and related conditions, the parent or legal guardian may not access or consent to the release of the minor’s health information without the minor’s express written consent.
- Health information may be withheld from a person only if a physician or other licensed health care provider reasonably determines that information will be detrimental to his or her physical or mental health or is likely to cause him or her to inflict self-harm or harm to another. The practitioner must record and state the specific basis for which they are withholding information prior to the request.

In order to comply with evolving laws and standards, HealthPartners may occasionally modify our privacy practices. If we do so, we will communicate any material changes to you. If you have any questions regarding the aforementioned privacy guidelines, please feel free to contact Tobi Tanzer, VP Corporate Integrity and Privacy Officer at 952-883-5195, or Michelle Meadows, Privacy Manager at 952-883-6110.