

PRAFUL U. BHATT, M.D.  
PEDIATRICS AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE  
72 EAST CHURCH STREET  
LOCK HAVEN, PA 17745  
Tel: 570-748-4565

**Effective Date of this Notice: August 25, 2014**

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

As Required by the Privacy Regulations Created as a Result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD (AS A PATIENT OF THIS PRACTICE) MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION.**

**PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

### **A. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY**

Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your child's **individually identifiable health information (IIHI)**. In conducting our business, we will create records regarding your child and the treatment and services we provide to your child. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies your child. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your child's IIHI. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your IIHI
- Your privacy rights in your IIHI
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your IIHI

**The terms of this notice apply to all records containing your child's IIHI that are created or retained by our practice. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practices. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all of your records that our practice has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we may create or maintain in the future. Our practice will post a copy of our current Notice in our offices in a visible location at all times, and you may request a copy of our most current Notice at any time.**

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**B. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Praful U. Bhatt, M.D.      72 East Church Street      Lock Haven, PA 17745  
Tel: 570-748-4565**

**C. WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION (IIHI) IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS**

The following categories describe the different ways in which we may use and disclose your child's IIHI.

**1. Treatment.** Our practice may use your child's IIHI to treat your child. For example, we may ask that laboratory tests (such as blood or urine tests) be performed on your child, and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We might use your IIHI in order to write a prescription for your child, or we might disclose your IIHI to a pharmacy when we order a prescription for you. Many of the people who work for our practice – including, but not limited to, our doctors and nurses – may use or disclose your child's IIHI in order to treat your child or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your child's IIHI to others who may assist in your child's care, such as your spouse, or grandparents. Finally, we may also disclose your child's IIHI to other health care providers for purposes related to your child's treatment.

We may use or disclose your child's medical information for emergency treatment. If this happens, we shall try to obtain your consent as soon as reasonable after the delivery of treatment. If our practice is required by law to treat your child and has attempted to obtain your consent, but is unable to do so, the practice may still use or disclose your child's medical information to treat the child.

We may use and disclose your child's medical information, if the practice attempts to obtain consent from you but is unable to do so due to substantial communication barriers and, in our professional judgment, you would have intended to consent to use or disclose under the circumstances.

**2. Payment.** Our practice may use and disclose your child's IIHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items your child may receive from us. For example, we may contact your health insurer to certify that you/your child are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your child's treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for your child's treatment. We also may use and disclose your IIHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Also, we may use your child's IIHI to bill you directly for services and items. We may disclose your IIHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their billing and collection efforts.

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**3. Health Care Operations.** Our practice may use and disclose your child's IIHI to support the business activities of our practice. These activities include, but are not limited to, reviewing our treatment of you, employee performance reviews, training of medical and physician assistant students, licensing, marketing and arranging or conducting other business activities. As examples of the ways in which we may use and disclose your information for our operations, we may use a sign-in sheet at the registration desk; call you by your name when your physician is ready to see you. We may disclose your IIHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their health care operations.

We may share your medical information with third party "business associates" that perform activities on our behalf, such as billing for the practice. Whenever an arrangement between our office and business associates involves the use or disclosure of your medical information, we will have a written contract that contains terms that asks the "business associates" to protect the privacy of your medical information.

**4. Appointment Reminders.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment.

**5. Treatment Options .** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.

**6. Health-Related Benefits and Services.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

**7. Release of Information to Family/Friends.** Our practice may release your IIHI to a friend or family member or a relative that is involved in your child's care, or who assists in taking care of your child. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a babysitter take their child to the pediatrician's office for treatment of a cold. In this example, the babysitter may have access to this child's medical information. If you are unable to agree or object to such a disclosure to a family member, we may disclose such information if we determine that it is in the best interest of your child, based upon our professional judgment. We may use or disclose medical information to notify or assist in notifying a family member or any other person that is responsible for your child's care, of the location, general condition or death.

**8. Disclosures Required By Law.** Our practice will use and disclose your/your child's IIHI when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law.

#### **D. USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR CHILD'S IIHI IN CERTAIN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

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The following categories describe unique scenarios in which we may use or disclose your child's identifiable health information:

**1. Public Health Risks.** Our practice may disclose your/your child's IIHI to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:

- maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths
- reporting child abuse or neglect
- preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability
- notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease
- notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition
- reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices to Food and Drug Administration
- notifying individuals if a product or device they may be using has been recalled
- notifying appropriate government agency (ies) and authority (ies) regarding the potential abuse or neglect of a child or an adult patient (including domestic violence); However, we will only disclose this information if the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to disclose this information
- notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.

**2. Health Oversight Activities.** Our practice may disclose your child's IIHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.

**3. Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your IIHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to obtain an order protecting the information the party has requested.

**4. Law Enforcement.** We may release IIHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- Regarding a crime victim in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
- Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct
- Regarding criminal conduct at our offices
- In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process
- To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive or missing person

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- In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of the perpetrator)

**5. Deceased Patients.** Our practice may release IIHI to a medical examiner or coroner to identify a deceased individual or to identify the cause of death. If necessary, we also may release information in order for funeral directors to perform their jobs.

**6. Organ and Tissue Donation.** Our practice may release your IIHI to organizations that handle organ, eye or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.

**7. Research.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI for research purposes in certain limited circumstances. We will obtain your written authorization to use your IIHI for research purposes except when an Internal Review Board or Privacy Board has determined that the waiver of your authorization satisfies the following: (i) the use or disclosure involves no more than a minimal risk to your privacy based on the following: (A) an adequate plan to protect the identifiers from improper use and disclosure; (B) an adequate plan to destroy the identifiers at the earliest opportunity consistent with the research (unless there is a health or research justification for retaining the identifiers or such retention is otherwise required by law); and (C) adequate written assurances that the PHI will not be re-used or disclosed to any other person or entity (except as required by law) for authorized oversight of the research study, or for other research for which the use or disclosure would otherwise be permitted; (ii) the research could not practicably be conducted without the waiver; and (iii) the research could not practicably be conducted without access to and use of the PHI.

**8. Serious Threats to Health or Safety.** Our practice may use and disclose your IIHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.

**9. Military.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI if you are a member of U.S. or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.

**10. National Security.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI to federal officials for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We also may disclose your IIHI to federal officials in order to protect the President, other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.

**11. Inmates.** Our practice may disclose your IIHI to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate or under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you, (b) for the safety and security of the institution, and/or (c) to protect your health

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and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.

**12. Workers' Compensation.** Our practice may release your IIHI for workers' compensation and similar programs.

## **E. YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR IIHI**

You have the following rights regarding the IIHI that we maintain about you:

**1. Confidential Communications .** You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request to **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745** specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate **reasonable** requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.

**2. Requesting Restrictions .** You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI for treatment, payment or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your IIHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. We would agree to your request to restrict disclosure of your information if: (i) the disclosure is for the purpose of carrying out payment or health care operations and is not required by law; and (ii) the information pertains solely to a health care item or service for which you (and not your health plan) have paid us in full.

**We are not required to agree to your request, if we believe it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your child's medical information especially when it is needed to provide emergency treatment.** If we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your IIHI; you must make your request in writing to **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**

Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:

- (a) the information you wish restricted;
- (b) whether you are requesting to limit our practice's use, disclosure or both; and
- (c) to whom you want the limits to apply.

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**3. Inspection and Copies.** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the IIHI that may be used to make decisions about you, including patient medical records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing to **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745** in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your IIHI. Our practice may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain limited circumstances; however, you may request a review of our denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct reviews.

**4. Amendment.** You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the IIHI kept by or for the practice; (c) not part of the IIHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.

**5. Accounting of Disclosures.** All of our patients have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures.” An “accounting of disclosures” is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our practice has made of your IIHI for non-treatment, non-payment or non-operations purposes. Use of your IIHI as part of the routine patient care in our practice is not required to be documented. For example, the doctor sharing information with the nurse; or the billing department using your information to file your insurance claim. In order to obtain an accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**. All requests for an “accounting of disclosures” must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period is free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists within the same 12-month period. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

**6. Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You are entitled to receive a paper copy of our notice of privacy practices. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this notice; contact **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**

**You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us at a location other than your primary residence.** We will try to accommodate reasonable requests. Please make this request in writing to our Privacy Contact.

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**You have the right to be notified in the event that our practice (or a business associate of ours) discovers a breach of unsecured protected health information.**

**7. Right to File a Complaint.** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our practice or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our practice, contact **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**. All complaints must be submitted in writing. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.**

**8. Right to Provide an Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures.** Our practice will obtain your written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your IIHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your IIHI for the reasons described in the authorization. Please note, we are required to retain records of your care. Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please contact **Praful Bhatt, M.D. 72 East Church Street Lock Haven, PA 17745**