

PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective date of this notice: April 3, 2003

For the purpose of the Notice of Privacy and the Authorization for the Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information, the term "you" or "your" as used in the context of these notices, applies to Melmark consumers or students, parents or guardians, or other persons acting *in loco parentis* whose authority is granted by a court of law, or by appointment as personal representative by a consumer's guardian or parent, or by a consumer who deems himself/herself to be competent to do so.

If you have questions about this notice, please contact any of the individuals listed in the cover letter attached.

**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.**

SUMMARY

In the course of receiving services from Melmark, you will provide us with personal information about your health, with the understanding that this information will be kept confidential. We may also obtain information about your health from others who have provided you with care or examinations or tests. This notice of our privacy practices is intended to inform you of the ways we may use your information and the occasions on which we may disclose this information to others.

We use consumers' information when providing treatment, we disclose consumers' information to other health care providers to assist them to provide you with treatment, we may disclose information to insurance companies as necessary to receive payment, we may use the information within our organization to evaluate quality and improve health care operations, and we may make other uses and disclosures of consumers' information as required by law or as permitted by Melmark policies.

KINDS OF INFORMATION THAT THIS NOTICE APPLIES TO

This notice applies to any information in our possession that would allow someone to identify you and learn something about your health. It does not apply to information that contains nothing that could reasonably be used to identify you.

WHO MUST ABIDE BY THIS NOTICE

- Melmark

- All employees, staff, students, interns, volunteers and other personnel whose work is under the direct control of Melmark.
- Any physician, psychologist, psychiatrist, and/or other clinical professional who may participate with Melmark in an organized health care arrangement to provide a clinically integrated care setting in which our consumers may receive care from more than one health care professional.

This notice applies to services you receive in Melmark's facilities. This includes services from physicians who are not employed by Melmark. If you also receive services from any of these physicians in their own offices, they may give you a different notice of privacy practices that applies to their offices.

The people and organizations to which this notice applies (referred to as "we," "our," and "us") have agreed to abide by its terms. We may share your information with each other for purposes of treatment, and as necessary for payment and operations activities as described below.

OUR LEGAL DUTIES

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information.
- We are required to provide this notice of our privacy practices and legal duties regarding health information to anyone who asks for it.
- We are required to abide by the terms of this notice until we officially adopt a new notice.

HOW WE MAY USE OR DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION.

We may use your health information, or disclose it to others, for a number of different reasons. This notice describes these reasons. For each reason, we have written a brief explanation. We also provide some examples. These examples do not include all of the specific ways we may use or disclose your information. But any time we use your information, or disclose it to someone else, it will fit one of the reasons listed here.

- 1. Treatment.** We will use your health information to provide you with medical care and services. This means that to the extent allowed by state regulatory requirements, our employees, staff, students, interns, volunteers and others whose work is under our direct control, may read your health information to learn about your medical condition and use it to make decisions about your care. For instance, a Melmark nurse may read your medical chart in order to care for you properly. We will also disclose your information to others who need it in order to provide you with medical treatment or services. For instance, we may send your doctor information regarding treatment we have administered.
- 2. Payment.** We will use your health information, and disclose it to others, as necessary to obtain payment for the services we provide to you. For instance, an employee in our finance office may use your health information to prepare a bill. And we may send that bill, and any health information it contains, to your insurance company. We may also disclose some of your health information to companies with whom we contract for payment-related services. For instance, we may give information about you to a collection company that we contract with to collect bills for us. We will not use or disclose more information for payment purposes than is necessary.
- 3. Health Care Operations.** We may use your health information for activities that are necessary to operate this organization. This includes reading your health information to review the performance of our staff. We may also use your information and the information of other patients to plan what services we need to provide, expand, or reduce. We may also provide health information to students who are authorized to receive training here to the extent allowed by our licensing regulations. We may

disclose your health information as necessary to others who we contract with to provide administrative services. This includes our lawyers, auditors, accreditation services, and consultants, for instance.

4. Legal Requirement to Disclose Information. We will disclose your information when we are required by law to do so. This includes reporting information to government agencies that have the legal responsibility to monitor the health care system. For instance, we may be required to disclose your health information, and the information of others, if we are audited by the Social Security Administration, Medicare or Medicaid. We will also disclose your health information when we are required to do so by a court order or other judicial or administrative process.

5. Public Health Activities. We will disclose your health information when required to do so for public health purposes. This includes reporting certain diseases, births, deaths, and reactions to certain medications. It may also include notifying people who have been exposed to a disease.

6. To Report Abuse. We may disclose your health information when the information relates to a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence as well as when the information is relevant in the management of an investigation or unusual incident as required under our licensing regulations. We will make this report only in accordance with laws that require or allow such reporting.

7. Law Enforcement. We may disclose your health information for law enforcement purposes. This includes providing information to help locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, or in connection with suspected criminal activity. We must also disclose your health information to a federal agency investigating our compliance with federal privacy regulations. We must also disclose your health information to local, state or federal agencies or to school districts to whom we may be subject with regard to our licensing requirements, our compliance with our licensing requirements, our compliance with school districts or counties authorities' guidelines.

8. Specialized Purposes. We may disclose the health information of members of the armed forces as authorized by military command authorities. We may disclose your health information for a number of other specialized purposes. We will only disclose as much information as is necessary for the purpose. For instance, we may disclose your information to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors; to organ procurement organizations according to your authorization to appropriate agencies (for organ, eye, or tissue donation); or for national security, intelligence, and protection of the president. We also may disclose health information about an inmate to a correctional institution or to law enforcement officials, to provide the inmate with health care, to protect the health and safety of the inmate and others, and for the safety, administration, and maintenance of the correctional institution.

9. To Avert a Serious Threat. We may disclose your health information if we decide that the disclosure is necessary to prevent serious harm to the public or to an individual. The disclosure will only be made to someone who is able to prevent or reduce the threat.

10. Family and Friends. We may disclose your health information to a member of your family or to someone else who is involved in your medical care or payment for care. We may notify family or friends if you are in the hospital, and tell them your general condition. In the event of a disaster, we may provide information about you to a disaster relief organization so they can notify your family of your condition and location. We will not disclose your information to family or friends if you object.

11. Facility Directory. We may list your name and appropriate protected health information in our directory or common database if you are admitted to Melmark. We will only disclose the information in the directory to visitors who ask for you by name. If you ask, we will not list you in the directory, or we will omit any information you ask us to omit.

12. Research. In the event that we conduct research projects, we may disclose your identifiable health information if you give us permission to do so. Federal and state rules govern any disclosure of your health information for research purposes without your authorization or your authorization.

- 13. Information to Patients.** We may use your health information to provide you with additional information. This may include sending appointment reminders to your address. This may also include giving you information about treatment options or other health-related services that we provide.
- 14. Fund Raising.** We may use your identifying information to contact you to ask for donations to Melmark.

YOUR RIGHTS

- 1. Authorization.** We will not use or disclose your health information for any other reason without your authorization. We may use or disclose your health information for any purpose that is listed in this notice without your written authorization. If you authorize us to use or disclose your health information, you have the right to revoke the authorization at any time. For information about how to authorize us to use or disclose your health information, or about how to revoke an authorization, contact the person listed under "Whom to Contact" at the end of this notice. You may not revoke an authorization for us to use and disclose your information to the extent that we have taken action in reliance on the authorization. If the authorization is to permit disclosure of your information to an insurance company, as a condition of obtaining coverage, other laws may allow the insurer to continue to use your information to contest claims or your coverage, even after you have revoked the authorization.
- 2. Request Restrictions.** You have the right to ask us to restrict how we use or disclose your health information. We will consider your request. But we are not required to agree. If we do agree, we will comply with the request unless the information is needed to provide you with emergency treatment. We cannot agree to restrict disclosures that are required by law.
- 3. Confidential Communication.** You have the right to ask us to communicate with you at a special address or by a special means. For example, you may ask us to send mail to a different address rather than to your home. Or you may ask us to speak to you personally on the telephone rather than sending your health information by mail. We will not ask you to explain why you are making the request. We will agree to any reasonable request.
- 4. Inspect And Receive a Copy of Health Information.** You have a right to inspect the health information about you that we have in our records, and to receive a copy of it. This right is limited to information about you that is kept in records that are used to make decisions about you. For instance, this includes medical and billing records. If you want to review or receive a copy of these records, you must make the request in writing. We may charge a fee for the cost of copying and mailing the records. To ask to inspect your records, or to receive a copy, contact the person listed under "Whom to Contact" at the end of this notice. We will respond to your request within 30 days. We may deny you access to certain information. If we do, we will give you the reason, in writing. We will also explain how you may appeal the decision.
- 5. Amend Health Information.** You have the right to ask us to amend health information about you, which you believe is not correct, or not complete. You must make this request in writing, and give us the reason you believe the information is not correct or complete. We will respond to your request in writing within 30 days. We may deny your request if we did not create the information, if it is not part of the records we use to make decisions about you, if the information is something you would not be permitted to inspect or copy, or if it is complete and accurate.
- 6. Accounting of Disclosures.** You have a right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures of your information to others. This accounting will list the times we have given your health information to others. The list will include dates of the disclosures, the names of the people or organizations to whom the information was disclosed, a description of the information, and the reason. We will provide the first list of disclosures you request at no charge. We may charge you for any additional lists you

request during the following 12 months. You must tell us the time period you want the list to cover. You may not request a time period longer than six years. We cannot include disclosures made before April 14, 2003. Disclosures for the following reasons will not be included on the list: disclosures for treatment, payment, or health care operations; disclosures of information in a facility directory; disclosures for national security purposes; disclosures to correctional or law enforcement personnel; disclosures that you have authorized; and disclosures made directly to you.

7. Paper Copy of this Privacy Notice. You have a right to receive a paper copy of this notice. If you have received this notice electronically, you may receive a paper copy by contacting the person listed under "Whom to Contact" at the end of this notice.

8. Complaints. You have a right to complain about our privacy practices, if you think your privacy has been violated. You may file a complaint with our Privacy Official, or with the person listed under "Whom to Contact" at the end of this notice. You may also file a complaint directly with the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, at the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 509F HHH Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20201. All complaints must be in writing. We will not take any retaliation against you if you file a complaint.

OUR RIGHT TO CHANGE THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices, as described in this notice, at any time. We reserve the right to apply these changes to any health information, which we already have, as well as to health information we receive in the future. Before we make any change in the privacy practices described in this notice, we will write a new notice that includes the change. We will post the new notice in the foyer or our main entrance. The new notice will include an effective date.

WHOM TO CONTACT

Contact the persons listed below:

- For more information about this notice, or
- for more information about our privacy policies, or
- if you want to exercise any of your rights, as listed on this notice, or
- if you want to request a copy of our current notice of privacy practices.

President's Office or
Privacy Official
Melmark
2600 Wayland Road
Berwyn, PA 19312
(610) 353-1726

Copies of this notice are also available at such locations as the information desk, consumers' residences public bulletin boards, and gymnasium entrance, nursing stations and day and school programs' public bulletin board. This notice is also available by e-mail. Contact the person named above, or send e-mail to: andrewward@melmark.org. This notice is also available on our website: www.melmark.org.