

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION

**PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.
THE PRIVACY OF YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.**

OUR LEGAL DUTY

We are required by federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information to give you this Notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. We must follow the privacy practices that we describe in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect April 14, 2003, and will remain in effect until replaced.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our Notice effective for all health information that we maintain, including health information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and make the new Notice available upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

**J PAUL DIAZ, DMD, FAGD
JOHN C. BENNETT, DMD
2603 University Blvd.
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
(205) 345-3400**

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

We use and disclose health information about you for treatment, payment and healthcare operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use or disclose your health information to a physician or other healthcare provider providing treatment to you.

Payment: We may use and disclosure your health information to obtain payment for service we provide for you.

Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your health information for our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

To your Family and Friends: We may disclose your health information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare. Before we disclose your health information to these people, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to your use or disclosure. If you are not present, or in the event of your incapacity or an emergency we will disclose your medical information based on our professional judgment and our experience with common practice to make reasonable inferences of your best interest in allowing a person to pick up filled prescription, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information. We may use or disclose information about you to notify or assist in notifying a person involved in your care, of your location and general condition.

Appointment Reminders: We may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards or letters).

Disaster Relief: We may use or disclose your health information to a public or private entity authorized by law or by its charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Public Benefit: We may use or disclose your medical information as authorized by law for the following purposes:

- ?? As required by law;
- ?? For public health activities, including disease and vital statistic reporting, child abuse reporting, FDA oversight, and to employers regarding work-related illness or injury;
- ?? To report adult abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
- ?? To health oversight agencies;
- ?? In response to court and administrative orders and other lawful processes;
- ?? To law enforcement officials pursuant to subpoenas and other lawful processes, concerning crime victims, suspicious deaths, crimes on our premises reporting crimes in emergencies, and for purposes of identifying or locating a suspect or other person;
- ?? To coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors;
- ?? To an organ procurement organization;
- ?? To avert a serious threat to health or safety;
- ?? In connection with certain research activities;
- ?? To the military and to federal officials for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and national security activities;
- ?? To correctional institutions regarding inmates; and
- ?? As authorized by state worker's compensation laws.

YOUR AUTHORIZATION: You may give us written authorization to use health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by our authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us

written authorization, we cannot use or disclosure your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Access: You have the right to view of obtain copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. You must make request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may request copies by sending a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. If you request an alternative format, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format. If you prefer, we will prepare a summary or an explanation of your health information for a fee. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for a full explanation or our fee structure.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operation and certain other activities, for at least 6 years, but not before April 14, 2003. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your health information (must be in writing). We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency).

Alternative Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your health information by alternative means or to alternative locations. (You must make your request in writing). Your request must specify the alternative means or location, and provide satisfactory explanation how payments will be handled under the alternative mains or location you request.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your health information. (Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended). We may deny your request under certain circumstances.

OVER

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you believe that:

1. We may have violated your privacy rights,
2. We made a decision about access to your health information incorrectly,
3. Our response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information was incorrect, or
4. We should communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations.

You may contact us using the information listed below. You may also submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request.

We support your right to privacy of your health information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Contact Officer:

**Cathy Megelin
2603 University Blvd.
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401**

Phone: (205) 345-3400

Fax: (205) 345 6555