

Notice of Privacy Practices

Your Information. Your Rights. Our Responsibilities.

Heywood Healthcare is required by law to maintain the privacy of your medical and health information (protected health information), to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information, and to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect. This notice is applicable to Heywood Healthcare affiliated entities, including Heywood Hospital, Athol Hospital, Heywood Medical Group, Winchendon Health Center, and The Quabbin Retreat.

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.**

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 an electronic or paper copy of your medical record

- You can ask to see or get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.

Ask us to correct your medical record

- You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is 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.

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 say “yes” to all reasonable requests.

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.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say “yes” unless a law requires us to share that information.

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 at (978) 630-6400 or in writing to Heywood Healthcare Privacy Officer, 242 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440.
- 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 Ave, 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.

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.

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

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation
- Include your information in a hospital directory

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 never share your information unless you give us written permission:

Marketing purposes or sale of your information. Most sharing of psychotherapy notes.

In the case of fundraising: We may contact you for fundraising efforts, but you can tell us not to contact you again.

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways:

Treat you: We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you. *Example: A doctor treating you for an injury asks another doctor about your overall health condition.*

Run our organization: We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary. *Example: We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services.*

Bill for your services: We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities. *Example: We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.*

We are also 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 visit [hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html](https://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.

Comply with the law: 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.

Respond to organ and tissue donation requests: We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

Work with a medical examiner or funeral director: 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, 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. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

For more information see: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html.

Retention

Heywood Healthcare maintains medical records per the requirements of applicable Massachusetts Code of Regulations. Hospital records are maintained for a minimum of 20 years after the patient's discharge or final treatment. Medical practice and outpatient health center records are maintained for a minimum of 7 years. A copy of the medical record retention policy is available upon request.

Changes to the Terms of this Notice

We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. When changes are made to our privacy practices, a revised

notice will be posted on our web site, in our hospital patient registration areas, medical office reception areas, and available upon request as of its effective date. The effective date of this notice is March 25, 2022.

Questions about this notice may be directed to the Heywood Healthcare Privacy Officer via email at compliance@heywood.org or via phone (978) 630-6400.