

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

### **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.**

This Notice of Privacy Practices is being provided to you as a requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This notice describes how CardioVascular Associates of North Alabama, P.C. (CVA) may use and disclose medical information about you to carry out treatment, payment for our health care services and for other health care operations or purposes that are permitted or required by law. It also describes your rights to access and control medical information about you. As a patient of CVA, one of the responsibilities you have entrusted to us is the protection of your personal medical information. **Our physicians and staff take this responsibility very seriously.**

The uses and disclosures listed below may be limited by Alabama Requirements described under Regulatory Requirements.

#### **Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI) for Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations**

The following describes the different ways that we (CVA) may use and disclose your PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations.

**For Treatment** – We may use PHI about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. For example, we may disclose your PHI to doctors, nurses, technicians, training doctors, or other health care professionals who are involved in taking care of you.

**For Payment** – We may use and disclose PHI about you so that the treatment and services you receive may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party. For example, we may disclose your PHI to your insurance company so that they will pay for our services rendered to you.

**For Healthcare Operations** – We may use and disclose your PHI for health care operations. Some of these operations include the use or disclosure of your PHI for quality improvement, doctor/employee review activities, compliance, and the training of medical residents and other health care professionals, which includes preceptorships for health care affiliates. For example, we may compare the treatment you received to other similar episodes of care to ensure that CVA continues to provide the highest quality services.

#### **Business Associates**

We may disclose PHI to “business associates”, who perform services on behalf of our practice. Some examples of our business associates are transcription services, collection agency, and call answering service. Whenever an arrangement between our Practice and a business associate involves the use or disclosure of your PHI, we will have a written contract with that business associate that will protect your privacy.

#### **Uses and Disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) Based upon Your Written Authorization**

Other uses and disclosures of PHI not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to our Practice (described below) will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission to use or disclose your PHI, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, thereafter we will no longer use or disclose PHI about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission.

#### **Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made With Your Agreement or Opportunity to Object.**

Unless you object, we may disclose some of your PHI to a family member, other relative, friend, or other persons you identify. We may also notify these people about your location and condition. When you are unable to agree or object, we may still disclose your PHI for these purposes in certain circumstances.

#### **Other Permitted and Required Uses and Disclosure That May Be Made Without Your Authorization**

In addition to using and disclosing your PHI for treatment, payment and health care operations, we may use or disclose your PHI without your written authorization in the following situations:

- As required by law: We may use or disclose your PHI when required to do so by applicable law. For example, in certain circumstances, we may also disclose PHI to report about an individual that we reasonably believe to be a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.
- For public health purposes.
- For health oversight activities authorized by law: We may disclose your PHI to the government for oversight activities, such as audits, investigations, inspections, licensure and disciplinary actions, and other activities necessary for monitoring the health care system.
- For Workers’ Compensation claims. (These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illnesses.)
- To a coroner, medical examiner or funeral director for the purpose of identifying a decedent, determining a cause of death, or as necessary to enable such parties to carry out their duties.
- For cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donations.
- For medical research purposes.
- To prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public.
- For specialized government functions: In certain circumstances, we may use and disclose your PHI if you are a veteran or in the military. We may also disclose your PHI to authorized federal officials for intelligence and other national security activities, for the protection of the President or others, and for special investigations. If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under custody of a law enforcement officer, we may disclose your PHI to the correctional facility or official in certain circumstances.

## **Communication**

We may use and disclose your PHI to contact you (by telephone or mail) and remind you of an appointment, or to inform you of treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. We may be required to leave a message on your answering machine, when contacting you by telephone to remind you about an appointment, provide instructions prior to a diagnostic test or procedure, or to discuss payment. We may also use and disclose your PHI to encourage you to purchase or use a product or service through face-to-face communication or by giving you a promotional gift of nominal value.

## **Your Rights Regarding Medical Information About You**

**Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect and copy PHI that may be used to make decisions about your care. To inspect and copy PHI, you must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. You will be notified when your record is ready to inspect or copies are completed. If you request a copy of the information, we will charge you a reasonable fee for the cost of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request. We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain circumstances.

**Right to Amend.** If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have a right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing to our Privacy Officer, and it must explain why you are requesting an amendment to your PHI. We may deny your request in certain circumstances. If this request is denied, CVA will send you a written letter supporting reason for denial.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosure." This is a list of certain disclosures we have made of your PHI. You must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. Your request must state a time period that may not be longer than six years and not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the cost but we will notify you of this charge before it is incurred to you.

**Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the PHI we use or disclose. We are not required to agree to your request. If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. In your request, you must tell us: 1) what information you want to limit; 2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both; and, 3) to whom you want the limits to apply. **Any previous restrictions given verbally or written to a CVA employee are no longer valid and must be requested in the above manner.**

**Right to Request Confidential Communications.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted. **Any previous requests given verbally or written to a CVA employee are no longer valid and must be requested in the above manner.**

**Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice.** Even if you agreed to receive this notice electronically, you have a right to request a paper copy by writing our Privacy Officer or asking for a copy at the reception/check-in desk at our CVA facility.

## **Regulatory Requirements**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your medical information, and we must abide by the terms of this notice. (That is, the version that is currently in effect). We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for the medical information we already have about you, as well as any information we receive in the future. We will post a copy of the current notice, with the effective date listed in the bottom right hand corner of the last page.

In addition to the privacy protections provided under federal law (which are described in this notice), Alabama law (referred to in this notice as the Alabama Requirements) requires us in certain situations to get your written consent (or, under some statutes or rules, written consent from your attorney, guardian, or upon court order) before we can use or disclose your information.

The Alabama Requirements may apply:

- If you qualify as a patient that suffers from a sexually transmitted disease;
- If you qualify as a patient that receives benefits from the State of Alabama for certain developmental disabilities or mental retardation;
- If you qualify as a patient that the Alabama Medicaid program has asked us to serve as a Case Management Service Provider for;
- If you qualify as a patient that receives rehabilitative services through the Alabama Medicaid program;
- If you qualify as a patient that receives certain benefits under the Alabama Medicaid's Preventive Health Education program.

## **Complaints**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with us or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (or his or her designee). To file a complaint with CVA, contact our Privacy Officer at the address below. All complaints must be submitted in writing. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

**If you have any questions about CVA's Notice of Privacy Practices, please contact the Privacy Officer listed below.**

### **Privacy Officer**

**Julia A. McCutcheon**

**880 Montclair Road, First floor**

**Birmingham, Alabama 35213**

**Telephone No. (205) 599-3637**

**Fax No. (205) 599-9067**

**Email address: [privacy@cvapc.com](mailto:privacy@cvapc.com)**

**Effective date: April 14, 2003**