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SAHARA CLINIC

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HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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

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

OUR LEGAL DUTY

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We are also required 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 are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect (09/23/13), and will remain in effect until we replace it.

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.

USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

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

Treatment: You give permission for our doctor & clinical staff to perform any necessary procedures to properly complete diagnosis & treatment. We may disclose your medical and health information to our employees and others who are involved in providing the care you need. We may also share your health information with a third party such as another physician or another healthcare provider who does services that we do not provide.

Payment: We may use and disclose your health information to obtain payment for services we provide you, unless you request that we restrict such disclosure to your health plan when you have paid out-of-pocket and in full for services rendered.

Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include, but are not limited to 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.

Your Authorization: In addition to our use of your health information for treatment, payment or healthcare operations, you may give us written authorization to use your 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 your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in this Notice. Therefore, if you decline to give us the necessary authorization(s), we may decline to treat you or to continue treatment if you revoke any authorization you have given us.

To Your Family and Friends: We must disclose your health information to you, as described in the Patient Rights section of this Notice. 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. However, you have the right to request restrictions on disclosure to family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you.

Unsecured Email: We will not send you unsecured emails pertaining to your health information without your prior authorization. If you do authorize communications via unsecured email, you have the right to revoke the authorization at any time.

Persons Involved In Care: We may use or disclose health information to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. If you are present, then prior to use or disclosure of your health information, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. We will also use 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 prescriptions, medical supplies, x-rays, or other similar forms of health information.

Marketing Health-Related Services: We may contact you about products or services related to your treatment, case management or care coordination, or to propose other treatments or health-related benefits and services in which you may be interested. We may also encourage you to purchase a product or service when you visit our office. We may receive payment for communications to you in relation to our provision, coordination, or management of your health care, including our coordination or management of your health care with a third party, our consultation with other health care providers relating to your care, or if we refer you for health care. We will not otherwise use or disclose your

health information for marketing purposes without your written authorization. We will disclose whether we receive payments for marketing activity you have authorized.

Change of Ownership: If this practice is sold or merged with another practice or organization, your health records will become the property of the new owner. However, you may request that copies of your health information be transferred to another health practice.

Required by Law: We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

Public Health: We may and are sometimes legally obligated, to disclose your health information to public health agencies for purposes related to preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability; reporting abuse or neglect; reporting domestic violence; reporting to the Food and Drug Administration problems with products and reactions to medications; and reporting disease or infection exposure. Upon reporting suspected elder or dependent adult abuse or domestic violence, we will promptly inform you or your personal representative unless we believe the notification would place you at risk of harm or would require informing a personal representative we believe is responsible for the abuse or harm.

Abuse or Neglect: We may disclose your health information to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

National Security: We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody of protected health information of inmate or patient under certain circumstances.

Appointment Reminders: We may contact you to provide you with appointment reminders via voicemail, postcards, or letters. We may also leave a message with the person answering the phone if you are not available.

Sign In Sheet and Announcement: Upon arriving at our office, we may use and disclose medical information about you by asking that you sign an intake sheet at our front desk. We may also announce your name when we are ready to see you.

PATIENT RIGHTS

Below are your rights with respect to your protected health information.

Access: You have the right to look at or get 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 a request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this Notice. If you request copies, we will charge you for each page, per hour for staff time to locate and copy your health information and postage will be added if you want the copies mailed to you. 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 for a full explanation of our fee structure.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we disclosed your health information for purposes, other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities for the last 6 years. 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. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency). In the event you pay out-of-pocket and in full for services rendered, you may request that we not share your health information with your health plan. We must agree to this request.

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 means or location you request.

Breach Notification: In the event your unsecured protected health information is breached, we will notify you as required by law. In some situations, you may be notified by our business associates.

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.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice at any time and we will issue a revised Notice of Privacy Practices, which will contain the changes. Those changes may apply to any of your protected health information that we maintain. You then have the right to object or withdraw as provided in this notice.

QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us at Sahara Clinic and ask for the Office Manager.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may send a written complaint to our office. Upon request, we will provide you with an address for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to file your complaint.

We support your right to the privacy of your health information. It is our policy not to retaliate in any way for anyone filing a complaint.