

Pediatrics West^{PC}

You're 18 now...

What does HIPAA mean to you!

A guide to understanding the privacy of your medical records.

What is HIPAA?

Every time you go into a doctor's office or hospital you are asked to sign a HIPAA Form. We have such a form that tells you about how we protect your medical and health information, and gives us permission to use your health information for treatment, payment and the operation of our practice. It also gives you the ability to tell us which family members you want to have us share information.

In addition to the HIPAA Form we will also give you our official privacy policy brochure. It will explain how your medical information is used, to whom it may be given, and how you can get access to it.

Up until this point, your parents have had to sign this Form for you. But now you are 18 years old! In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are a legal adult and YOU are in charge of your own medical records. Sounds a bit scary, but it isn't.

We want you to understand your rights and responsibilities regarding your medical records. We hope this brochure answers your questions.

What Do I Need To Do?

You will need to sign your own HIPAA Form once you reach your 18th birthday. On this Form you will need to tell us if your mom, dad, step-mom, step-dad or any other person can participate in your health care and have access to your health information. You do not have to allow anyone else to participate in your health care.

Participating in your health care includes requesting referrals, getting lab or x-ray results, talking to your doctor or nurse practitioner, and seeing your records.

This is your personal decision to make. We want you to make the best choice for your health care needs.

What If I Don't Want to Sign the HIPAA Form?

That is your choice. However, our HIPAA Form also contains the release that allows us to use and disclose your information with other providers and to bill health insurers. If you decide not to sign the form, then we are unable to perform any services, including testing for strep throat, writing a prescription for you, or billing your insurance.

Please ask to speak with a manager if you have any other questions about this Form. We want you to make the best informed decisions as a young adult.

Can I Change My Mind?

Of course! You can make changes, deletions or additions to your HIPAA Form whenever you want. We just need you to come into the office and fill out a new one.

If you are away at school we can mail you a new one or fax it to you.

Your parents will not be able to sign a form for you, even if you have them listed on your HIPAA form.

Remember, you are in charge of who can access your health information.

When can you give out my information without my permission?

There are circumstances that require us to release your medical information without your consent.

If our providers feel you are in danger or may cause danger to yourself or others, we may contact your parents, guardians, or local authorities.

If we receive a court order or subpoena, we may be obligated to release your medical information.

If you are being abused or neglected, we are required to report this to the appropriate agency.

If you have a communicable disease that puts the public at risk, we are responsible for reporting it to the local Department of Public Health.

I Am Still Under My Parents' Insurance... Is that a Problem?

That's okay, but you should know that your parents can get information through the insurance company about the treatments and tests you receive by coming to our office.

The only true way to keep everything CONFIDENTIAL if you are insured through another person is to pay for all services out-of-pocket at the time of service and not have us bill the health insurer. This will include any lab tests or x-rays that are done as well.

We know that is not usually an option because it can be very expensive, but you need to know that your mom and dad have the right to access their insurance records, and can therefore see what services we provided to you that are billed to your parents' insurance. If you request us to keep your health information confidential from your parents we can only grant that request by not billing your family health plan and you will have to be financially responsible to pay us for your services. If you have questions or want to further discuss your options regarding this matter, please just let us know and we would be happy to sit down with you.

What about My Very Sensitive Information?

Even if you sign the HIPAA Form allowing your parents or guardians access to your health information, we will not disclose any of the following categories of sensitive and private information without asking you for special authorization to disclosure such information:

- Birth control information
- Sexual activity
- Sexually related transmitted disease information, testing and results
- Gynecological Visits
- Any other sexually related information
- Mental Health issues (unless it is determined that you are a danger to yourself or others)
- Drug or Alcohol Use (unless it is determined that you are a danger to yourself or others)

This special authorization is required from you before we can share these categories of information with any other provider outside our practice, to a health insurer, and even to your parents.

How Will You Contact Me?

We need to have a current phone number to contact you. We can call your home number or cell phone. We especially need a cell number if you don't allow your parents to know your medical information or if we need to discuss confidential information with you. You can specify on your HIPAA Form the best way for us to reach you.

Remember, if you live at home and we mail anything to your home address, we have no control over your parents opening your mail. This is not always the best option for any communications you instruct us to keep private just between you and your Pediatrics West caregiver.

Contact us if you have any questions

(978) 577-0437