

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Recently the Grand Junction Fire Department responded to a 9-1-1 medical emergency incident where you were medically evaluated. The resulting written report resides as protected health information in our records system. This handout describes how medical information is protected, used and disclosed by the Grand Junction Fire Department as required under the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) statute. **Please review it carefully.**

The City of Grand Junction Fire Department is required by law to maintain the privacy of certain confidential health care information, known as *Protected Health Information* or *PHI*, and to provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. This notice describes your legal rights, advises you of our privacy practices, and lets you know how the Grand Junction Fire Department is permitted to use and disclose PHI about you.

The Grand Junction Fire Department is required to abide by the terms of the version of this Notice currently in effect. In most situations, we may use this information without your permission, but there are some situations where we may use it only after we obtain your written authorization, if required by law.

Uses and Disclosures of PHI: The Grand Junction Fire Department may use PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment and Health care operations, in most cases without your written permission. Examples of our use of your PHI:

Treatment: Includes verbal and written information obtained about you and use pertaining to your medical condition and treatment provided to you by us and other medical personnel (including doctors and nurses who give orders to allow us to provide treatment to you). Also, information we give to other health care personnel to whom we transfer your care and treatment, and includes transfer of PHI via radio or telephone to the hospital or dispatch center as well as providing the hospital with a copy of the written record we create in the course of providing you with treatment and transport.

Payment: Includes any activities we must undertake in order to be reimbursed for the services we provide to you, such as organizing your PHI and submitting bills to insurance companies (either directly or through a third party billing company), management of billed claims for services rendered, medical necessity determinations and reviews, utilization review, and collection of outstanding accounts.

Health Care Operations: This includes quality assurance activities, licensing, and training programs to ensure that our personnel meet our standards of care and follow established policies and procedures, obtaining legal and financial services, conducting business planning, processing grievances and complaints, creating reports that do not individually identify you for data collection purposes.

Use and Disclosure of PHI without your authorization:

- In treating you or in obtaining payment for services provided to you or in other health care operations;
- For treatment activities of another health care provider;
- To another health care provider or entity for the payment activities of the provider or entity that receives the information (such as the hospital or insurance company);
- To another health care provider (such as the hospital to which you are transported) for the health care operations activities of the entity that receives the information as long as the entity receiving the information has or has had a relationship with you and the PHI pertains to that relationship.
- To your family, relatives, or friends if we infer from the circumstances that you would not object or if we obtain your verbal agreement or if we give you an opportunity to object and you do not do so. In situations where you are not capable of objecting, we may, in our professional judgment, determine that a disclosure to your family member, relative, or friends is in your best interest. In that situation, we will disclose *only* health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care;
- A public health authority as required by law, as part of a public health investigation, or to notify a person about exposure to a possible communicable disease as required by law;
- For law enforcement activities in limited situations;
- For military, national defense and security and other special government functions;
- For worker's compensation purposes;
- To coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors for identifying a deceased person, determining cause of death, or carrying on their duties as authorized by law;
- If you are an organ donor, we may release health information to organizations that handle organ procurement, transplantation or an organ donation bank, as necessary;
- For research projects, subject to strict oversight and approvals;
- We may use or disclose health information about you in a way that does not personally identify you or reveal who you are.

Any other use or disclosure of PHI, other than those listed above will only be made with your written authorization.

You may revoke your authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that we have already used or disclosed medical information in reliance on that authorization.

Patient Rights: As a patient, you have a number of rights with respect to the protection of your PHI, including the right to:

- *Access, copy or inspect your PHI-*You may come to our offices, inspect and copy most of the medical information about you that we maintain. We will normally provide you with access to this information within 30 days of your request. We may also charge you a reasonable fee for you to copy any medical information that you have a right to access. In limited circumstances, we may deny you access to your medical information, and you may appeal certain types of denials. We have forms available to request access to your PHI and we will provide a written response if we deny you access and let you know your appeal rights. If you wish to inspect and copy your medical information, you should contact the Privacy Officer.
- *Amend your PHI-*You have the right to ask us to amend written medical information that we may have about you. We will generally amend your information within 60 days of your request and will notify you when we have amended the information. We are permitted by law to deny your request to amend your medical information only in certain circumstances, like when we believe the information you have asked us to amend is correct. If you wish to request that we amend the medical information that we have about you, you should contact the Privacy Officer.
- *Request an accounting of our use and disclosure of your PHI-*You may request an accounting from us of certain disclosures of your medical information that we have made in the last 6 years prior to the date of your request. We are not required to give you an accounting of information we have used or disclosed for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations, or when we share your health information with our business associates, like our billing company or a medical facility to which we have transported you.
- We are not required to give you an accounting of our uses of protected health information for which you have already give us written authorization. If you wish to request an accounting of the medical information about you that we have used or disclosed that is not exempted from the accounting requirement, you should contact the Privacy Officer.
- *Request that we restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI-*You have the right to request that we restrict how we use and disclose the medical information that we have about you for treatment, payment or health care operations, or to restrict the information that is provided to family, friends and other individuals involved in your health care. But, if you request a restriction and the information you asked us to restrict is needed to provide you with emergency treatment, then we may use the PHI or disclose the PHI to a health care provider to provide you with emergency treatment. The City of Grand Junction Fire Department is not required to agree to any restrictions you request, but any restrictions agreed to by the Grand Junction Fire Department are binding on the Grand Junction Fire Department.

Internet, Electronic Mail and the Right to Obtain Copy of Paper Notice on Request

You may obtain a copy of this Notice on our web site at: www.gjcity.org

Revisions to the Notice: The City of Grand Junction Fire Department reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time. The changes will be effective immediately and will apply to all protected health information that we maintain. Any material changes to the Notice will be promptly posted in our facilities and posted to our web site. You can get a copy of the latest version by contacting the Privacy Officer identified below.

Your Legal Rights and Complaints: You also have the right to complain to us, or to the Secretary of the United States, Department of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint with us or to the government. Should you have any questions, comments or complaints, you may direct all inquires to the Privacy Officer listed below.

If you have any questions or if you wish to file a complaint or exercise any rights listed in this Notice, please contact:

John Howard, Privacy Officer
City of Grand Junction Fire Department
330 S. 6th Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501
970 244-1412