

PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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NOTICE OF PRIVACY POLICIES

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Introduction

Portage County Combined General Health District (PCHD) is committed to treating and using protected health information about you or your child responsibly. This Notice of Health Information Practices describes the personal information we collect, and how and when we use or disclose that information. It also describes your rights as they relate to you or your child's protected health information. This Notice is effective February 17, 2004, and applies to all protected health information as defined by Federal Regulations.

Understanding Your Health Record/Information

Each time you visit or your child visits a PCHD clinic for Nursing services, a record of your visit is made. This record generally includes demographic information and immunization dates. Depending on the service provided, additional information may be recorded including: your health history or results of diagnostic procedures conducted at PCHD.. This information is referred to as a health or medical record. You or your child's medical record serves as a:

- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to you or your child's care.
- Legal document describing the care/services you or your child received.
- Means by which you or a third party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided.
- Tool in educating health professionals.
- Source of information for health professionals whose goal is to improve the health of residents in Portage County, Ohio, and The United States.

Understanding what is in your or your child's record and how this information is used helps to ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, and why others may access your health information, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

Your Health Information Rights

Although you or your child's health record is the physical property of PCHD, the information belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Obtain a paper copy of this notice of information practices upon request,
- Inspect and copy your or your child's health record as provided for in 45CFR 164.524,
- Amend the health record as provided in 45CFR 164.528,
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your or your child's health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.528,
- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your or your child's health information as provided in 45 CFR 164.522, and
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.

Our Responsibilities

Portage County Health Department is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your or your child's health information,
- Provide you with this notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you or your child,
- Abide by the terms of this notice,
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction, and
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.

We reserve the right to change our practices and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our information practices change, we will supply you with the updated notice at the time you seek services through PCHD.

We will not use or disclose your or your child's health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice. We will also cease to use or disclose your or your child's health information after we have received a written revocation of the authorization according to the procedures included in the authorization.

For More Information or to Report a Problem

If you have questions or would like additional information, you may contact the Privacy Officer, Rosemary Ferraro, RN, Director of Nursing, PCHD, at 330-296-9919, ext. 133.

If you believe your or your child's privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Privacy Officer or with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with either the Privacy Officer or the OCR (OCR). The address for the OCR is listed below:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

How we will use/disclose Health Information

We will use your or your child's health information for the following reasons:

- To document immunization dates, histories, and immunizations provided at the Portage County Health Department.
- For payment of services provided by the Portage County Health Department.
- For regular health operations, to include;
 - **Communication** with other health care providers or health departments, including the Ohio Department of Health.
 - **Notification** or communication with family members in regards to investigations relevant to private information.
 - **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, in regard to adverse events.
 - **Workers Compensation**, to comply with laws relating to workers compensation.
 - **Law enforcement**, for purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena.

Federal law makes provision for you or your child's health information to be released to an appropriate health oversight agency, public health authority, or attorney, provided that a work force member or business associate believes in good faith that we have engaged in unlawful conduct or have otherwise violated professional or clinical standards and are potentially endangering one or more patients, workers, or the public.

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