



## NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

EFFECTIVE DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

**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.**



If you have any questions about this Notice, please call the Privacy Officer, (831) 755-0751 or email us at [Privacy@salinasvalleyhealth.com](mailto:Privacy@salinasvalleyhealth.com).

To obtain a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices please scan the QR Code.

### WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE?

This Notice describes the Salinas Valley Health (SVH) practices and that of

- Any health care professional authorized to enter information into your medical record.
- All departments, units and clinics of SVH.
- Any member of a volunteer group we allow to help you.
- All employees, staff and other SVH personnel.

All these entities, sites and locations follow the terms of this Notice. In addition, these entities, sites and locations may share medical information with each other for the treatment, payment or health care operations purposes described in this Notice.

### OUR PLEDGE REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal. We are committed to protecting medical information about you. We create a record of the care and services you receive within SVH. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This Notice applies to all of the records of your care generated by SVH, whether made by SVH personnel or your personal doctor. Your personal doctor may have different policies or notices regarding the doctor's use and disclosure of your medical information created in the doctor's office or clinic.

This Notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

We are required by law to:

- Make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept private (with certain exceptions)
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and
- Follow the terms of the Notice that is currently in effect.

### HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose medical information. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

#### Disclosure at Your Request

We may disclose information when requested by you. This disclosure at your request may require a written authorization by you.

#### For Treatment

We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, healthcare students, or other SVMHS personnel

who are involved in taking care of you. For example, a doctor treating you for a broken leg may need to know if you have diabetes because diabetes may slow the healing process. In addition, the doctor may need to tell the dietitian if you have diabetes so that we can arrange for appropriate meals. Different departments of SVH may also share medical information about you in order to coordinate the different things you need, such as prescriptions, lab work and x-rays. We also may disclose medical information about you to people outside the department, SVMHS or practice who may be involved in your medical care after you leave, such as skilled nursing facilities or home health agencies, physicians or other practitioners. For example, we may give your physician access to your health information to assist your physician in treating you.

### **For Payment**

We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at SVH may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party. For example, we may need to give your health plan information about your doctor visit or surgery you received at SVH so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for the doctor visit or surgery. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment. We may also provide basic information about you and your health plan, insurance company or other source of payment to practitioners outside SVH who are involved in your care, to assist them in obtaining payment for services they provide to you.

### **For Health Care Operations**

We may use and disclose medical information about you for health care operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run SVH and make sure that all of our patients receive quality care. For example, we may use medical information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine medical information about many patients to decide what additional services SVH should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new treatments are necessary. We may also disclose information to doctors, nurses, technicians, health care students, and other SVH personnel for review and learning purposes. We may also combine the medical information we have with medical information from other healthcare systems to compare how we are doing and see where we can make improvements in the care and services we offer. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of medical information so others may use it to study health care and health care delivery without learning who the specific patients are.

### **Persons Involved in Your Care**

We may use and disclose medical information about you to a family member or other person based on professional judgement by providers if they are involved in your care or paying for your care. Similarly, we may also disclose limited medical information to an entity authorized to assist in disaster relief efforts for the purpose of coordinating notification to someone responsible for your care of your general condition or location.

### **Health Information Exchanges (HIE) / Patient Portals**

We may use and share your health information with your doctors/providers involved in your care through MyChart, a Health Information Exchange (HIE) and the SVH Patient Portal using a secure internet connection. An HIE is a way of sharing health information with other participating health care providers or entities for treatment, payment and health care operation purposes. This allows your participating health care provider to have your most recent information available from other participating health care providers when making decisions about your care. You may opt-out and prevent your medical information from being available through the MyChart, or prevent the sharing of your health information by contacting SVH Health Information Management Department at 831-755-0751.

## **SMS**

If you sign up for text messaging, you agree receive text messages related to your relationship with Salinas Valley Health, including but not limited to updates related to your visits, MyChart account, one-time passcode, billing notifications, prescription reminders, and care management. Message and data rates may apply. You can opt-out of SMS messages by texting STOP to 73153. Your opt-out request will generate one final message confirming that you have been unsubscribed. You will no longer receive SMS messages from 73153. If you want to join again, sign up by updating your communication preferences in MyChart, ask clinic staff for help, or text HELP to 73153 for instructions.

If you are experiencing issues with the messaging program you can reply with the keyword HELP for more assistance, or you can get help directly by calling our help desk at 831-771-3885 from Mon-Fri 7:30am to 5:30pm. Carriers are not liable for delayed or undelivered messages.

Information gathered in the SMS campaign will not be shared for marketing purposes. Message and data rates may apply for any messages sent to you from us and to us from you. Message frequency may vary.

## **Appointment Reminders.**

We may contact you by phone, email, or text messaging with appointment reminders.

## **Internet Based Products and Services**

Working with third parties, we may share your health information so we can offer you internet-based products or services. Using the products and services you can:

- Schedule appointments.
- Reduce wait times in our emergency rooms.
- Find a physician or get access to your medical information through a portal.

## **Salinas Valley Health Website**

We may collect non-personal information, such as a domain name and IP address. The domain name and IP address reveals nothing personal about you other than the IP address from which you have accessed our site. We may also collect information about the type of internet browser you are using, operating system, what brought you to our website, as well as which of our web pages you have accessed. Additionally, if you communicate with us regarding our website or our services, we will collect any information that you provide to us in any such communication. We may contact you via email in the future to tell you about specials, new products or services, or changes to this privacy policy.

## **Cookies**

We use "cookies" on this site. A cookie is a piece of data stored on a site visitor's hard drive to help us improve your access to our site and identify repeat visitors to our site. For instance, when we use a cookie to identify you, you would not have to log in a password more than once, thereby saving time while on our site. Cookies can also enable us to track and target the interests of our users to enhance the experience on our site. Usage of a cookie is in no way linked to any personally identifiable information on our site.

## **Sharing**

We will not sell or otherwise provide the information we collect to outside third parties for the purpose of direct or indirect mass email marketing.

We will disclose personal information and/or an IP address, when required by law or in the good-faith belief that such action is necessary to:

- Cooperate with the investigations of purported unlawful activities and conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on our company.
- Protect and defend the rights or property of our website and related properties.
- Identify persons who may be violating the law, the rights of third parties, or otherwise misusing our website or its related properties.

Please keep in mind that whenever you voluntarily disclose personal information online - for example through email, discussion boards, or elsewhere - that information can be collected and used by others. In short, if you post personal information online that is accessible to the public, you may receive unsolicited messages from other parties in return. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for maintaining the secrecy of your personal information. Please be careful and responsible whenever you are online.

### **Links**

This website may contain links to other sites. Please be aware that we are not responsible for the content or privacy practices of such other sites. We encourage our users to be aware when they leave our site and to read the privacy statements of any other site that collects personally identifiable information.

### **Surveys and Contests**

From time-to-time, our site may request information via surveys or contests. Participation in these surveys or contests is completely voluntary and you may choose whether or not to participate and therefore disclose this information. Information requested may include contact information (such as name and shipping address), and demographic information (such as zip code, age). Contact information will be used to notify the winners and award prizes. Survey information will be used for purposes of monitoring or improving the use and satisfaction of this site.

### **Public Health**

Public health as used in the terms public health surveillance, “public health investigation,” and “public health intervention,” means population level activities to prevent disease in and promote the health of populations. Such activities include identifying, monitoring, preventing, or mitigating ongoing or prospective threats to the health or safety of a population, which may involve the collection of protected health information. But such activities do not include those with any of the following purposes:

- To conduct a criminal, civil, or administrative investigation into any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating health care.
- To impose criminal, civil, or administrative liability on any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating health care.
- To identify any person for any of the activities described at paragraphs (1) or (2) of this definition.

### **Reproductive Health**

The HIPAA Privacy Rule to Support Reproductive Health Care Privacy prohibits disclosure of Reproductive Health Information for:

1. conducting a criminal, civil or administrative investigation into any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing or facilitating legally rendered reproductive healthcare,
2. imposing criminal, civil or administrative liability on any person for the mere act of seeking, obtaining, providing or facilitating legally rendered reproductive healthcare,
- or
3. to identify any person for these purposes.

Reproductive Health Care means health care, as defined in this section that affects the health of an individual in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. This definition shall not be construed to set forth a standard of care for or regulate what constitutes clinically appropriate reproductive health care.

## **Fundraising Activities**

We may disclose medical information to a foundation related to SVH so that the foundation may contact you in raising money for SVH. If you do not want SVH to contact you for fundraising efforts, you must notify the Privacy Officer at 450 East Romie Lane, Salinas, California, 93901. Such notification must be in writing.

## **SVMHS Directory**

We may include certain limited information about you in the SVH directory while you are a patient. This information may include your name, location in the hospital, room, your general condition (e.g., fair, stable, etc.) and your religious affiliation. Unless there is a specific written request from you to the contrary, this directory information, except for your religious affiliation, may also be released to people who ask for you by name. Your religious affiliation may be given to a member of the clergy, such as a priest or rabbi, even if they don't ask for you by name. This information is released so your family, friends and clergy can visit you and generally know how you are doing.

## **Marketing and Sale**

Most uses and disclosures of medical information for marketing purposes, and disclosures that constitute a sale of medical information, require your authorization.

## **Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care**

We may release medical information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care as directed by you. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care. Unless there is a specific written request from you to the contrary, we may also tell your family or friends your condition and that you are in SVH. In addition, we may disclose medical information about you to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort so that your family can be notified about your condition, status and location. If you arrive at the Emergency Department either unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate, we are required to attempt to contact someone we believe can make healthcare decisions for you (e.g., a family member or agent under a healthcare power of attorney).

## **Research**

Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose medical information about you for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all patients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. All research projects, however, are subject to a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of medical information, trying to balance the research needs with patients' need for privacy of their medical information. Before we use or disclose medical information for research, the project will have been approved through this research approval process, but we may, however, disclose medical information about you to people preparing to conduct a research project, for example, to help them look for patients with specific medical needs, so long as the medical information they review does not leave SVH. We will almost always ask for your specific permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care at SVH.

## **As Required by Law**

We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.

## **To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety**

We may use and disclose medical information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, would only be to someone able to help prevent the threat.

## **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

### **Organ and Tissue Donation**

We may release medical information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation.

### **Military and Veterans**

If you are a member of the armed forces, we may release medical information about you as required by military command authorities. We may also release medical information about foreign military personnel to the appropriate foreign military authority.

### **Workers' Compensation**

We may release medical information about you for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

### **Public Health Risks**

We may disclose medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
- To report births and deaths;
- To report the abuse or neglect of children, elders and dependent adults;
- To report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- To notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
- To notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition;
- To notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.
- To notify emergency response employees regarding possible exposure to HIV/AIDS, to the extent necessary to comply with state and federal laws.

### **Health Oversight Activities**

We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs and compliance with civil rights laws.

### **Lawsuits and Disputes**

If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request (which may include written notice to you) or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

### **Law Enforcement**

We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons, or similar process
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person
- About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement
- About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct
- About criminal conduct at SVMHS
- In emergency circumstances to report a crime; the location of the crime or victims; or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.



## **Special Categories of Information**

In some circumstances, your health information may be subject to restrictions that may limit or preclude some uses or disclosures described in this Notice. For example there are special restrictions on the use of certain categories of information – e.g., test for HIV or treatment for mental health conditions or alcohol and drug abuse. Government health benefits programs, such as Medi-Cal, may also limit the disclosures of beneficiary information for purposes unrelated to the program.

## **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors**

We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also release medical information about patients of SVH to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.

## **National Security and Intelligence Activities**

We may release medical information about you to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counter-intelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

## **Protective Services for the President and Others**

We may disclose medical information about you to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President, other authorized persons or foreign heads of state or conduct special investigations.

## **Inmates**

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may disclose medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This disclosure would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

## **Multidisciplinary Personnel Teams**

We may disclose health information to a multidisciplinary personnel team relevant to the prevention, identification, management, or treatment of an abused child and the child's parents, or elder abuse and neglect.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you.

### **Right to Inspect and Copy**

You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records, but may not include some mental health information. To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to Director, Health Information Management, 450 East Romie Lane, Salinas, California 93901. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other supplies associated with your request.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another licensed health care professional chosen by the Hospital will review your request and the denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

## 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 the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for SVH. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the Director, Health Information Management/Privacy Officer, 450 East Romie Lane, Salinas, CA 93901. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request. We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that

- Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment,
- Is not part of the medical information kept by or for SVH,
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy, or
- Is accurate and complete.

Even if we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to submit a written addendum, not to exceed 250 words, with respect to any item or statement in your record you believe is incomplete or incorrect. If you clearly indicate in writing that you want the addendum to be made part of your medical record we will attach it to your records and include it whenever we make a disclosure of the item or statement you believe to be incomplete or incorrect.

## Right to an Accounting of Disclosures

You have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures.” This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you other than our own uses for treatment, payment and health care operations, (as those functions are described above) and with other expectations pursuant to the law.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer. Your request must state a time period which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, we may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred. In addition, we will notify you as required by law following a breach of your unsecured protected health information.

## Right to Request Restrictions

You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery you had.

***We are not required to agree to your request, except to the extent that you request us to restrict disclosure to a health plan or insurer for payment or health care operations purposes if you, or someone else on your behalf (other than the health plan or insurer), has paid for the item or service out of pocket in full. Even if you request this special restriction, we can disclose the information to a health plan or insurer for purposes of treating you.***

If we do agree to a special restriction; 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 the 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, for example, disclosures to your spouse.



### **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. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail. To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the 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.

### **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice**

You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this Notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice, you may obtain a copy of this notice at our website at [www.salinavalleyhealth.com](http://www.salinavalleyhealth.com).

### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right to make the revised or changed notice effective for 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 in the registration areas of the SVH. The notice will contain on the first page, the effective date in the top right-hand corner. In addition, each time you register at or are admitted to the SVH for treatment or health care services as an inpatient or outpatient, we will offer you a copy of the current notice in effect.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with SVH or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with SVH, contact the Privacy Officer, HIM Department, 450 East Romie Lane, Salinas, California, 93901. All complaints must be submitted in writing.

***You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.***

### **OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this Notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, this will stop any further use or disclosure of your medical information for the purposes covered by your written authorization, except if we have already acted in reliance on your permission. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided you.