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NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Effective date of notice: 3/31/03

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.

Our Promise

Dear Patient,

This is not meant to alarm you! It is our desire to communicate to you that we are taking the new Federal (HIPAA-Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) laws written to protect the confidentiality of your health information seriously. We do not ever want you to delay treatment because you are afraid your personal health history might be unnecessarily made available to others outside of our office.

So what has changed?

Why a privacy policy now?

The most significant variable that has motivated the Federal government to legally enforce the importance of the privacy of health information is the rapid evolution of computer technology and its use in healthcare. The government has appropriately sought to standardize and protect the privacy of the electronic exchange of your health information. This has challenged us to review not only how your health information is used within our computers, but also with the Internet, phone, faxes, copy machines and charts. We believe this has been an important exercise for us because it has disciplined us to put in writing the policies and procedures we use to ensure the protection of your health information everywhere it is to be used.

We want you to know about these policies and procedures which we developed to make sure your health information will not be shared with anyone who does not require it. Our office is subject to State and Federal law regarding the confidentiality of your health information and in keeping with these laws, we want you to understand our procedures and your rights as our valuable patient.

We will use and communicate your HEALTH INFORMATION only for the purpose of providing your treatment; obtaining payment and conducting healthcare operations. Your health information will not be used for other purposes unless we have asked for and been voluntarily given your written permission.

How your HEALTH INFORMATION may be used

To Provide Treatment

We will use your HEALTH INFORMATION within our office to provide you with the best dental care possible. This may include administrative and clinical office procedures designed to optimize scheduling and coordination of care between hygienist, dental assistant, dentist and front office staff. In addition, we may share your health information with physicians, referring dentists/specialists, clinical and dental laboratories, pharmacies, or other personnel providing your treatment.

To Obtain Payment

We may include your health information with an invoice used to collect payment for treatment you receive in our office. We may do this with insurance forms filed for you in the mail, or sent electronically. We will be sure to only work with companies with a similar commitment to the security of your health information.

To Conduct Health Care Operations

Your health information may be used during performance evaluations of our staff. Some of our best teaching opportunities use clinical situations experienced by patients receiving care here at our office. As a result, health information may be included in training programs for students, interns, associates and business and clinical employees. It is also possible that health information will be disclosed during audits by insurance companies or government appointed agencies as part of their quality assurance and compliance reviews. Your health information may be reviewed during the routine processes of certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

In Patient Reminders

Because we believe regular care is very important to your oral and general health, we will remind you of a scheduled appointment or that it is time for you to contact us and make an appointment. Additionally, we may contact you to follow up on your care and inform you of treatment options or services that may be of interest to you or your family.

In these communications there is an important part of our philosophy of partnering with our patients to be sure they receive the best preventive and restorative care modern dentistry can provide. They may include postcards, letters, telephone reminders, cell phone text messages or e-mail (unless you tell us you do not want to receive these reminders).

Abuse or Neglect

We will notify government authorities if we believe a patient is the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. We will make this disclosure only when we are compelled by our ethical judgement, when we believe we are specifically required or authorized by law or with the patient's agreement.

We may be required to disclose to Federal officials or military authorities health information necessary to complete an investigation related to public health or national

security. Health information could be important when the government believes that the public safety could benefit when the information could lead to the control or prevention of an epidemic or the understanding of new side effects of a drug treatment or medical device.

For Law Enforcement

As permitted or required by State or Federal law, we may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain purposes, including under certain limited circumstances, if you are a victim of a crime or in order to report a crime.

Family, Friends and Caregivers

We may share your health information with those you tell us will be helping you with your home hygiene, treatment, medications or payments. In case of an emergency, where you are unable to tell us what you want, we will use our best judgement when sharing your health information only when it will be important to those participating in providing your care.

Patient Rights

This new law is careful to describe that you have the following rights related to your health information.

Restrictions

You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. Our office will make every effort to honor reasonable restriction preferences from our patients.

Confidential Communications

You have the right to request that we communicate with you in a certain way. You may request that we only communicate your health information privately, with no other family members present or through mailed communications. We will make every effort to honor your requests for confidential communications. Please let us know your specific requests, if any.

Inspect and Copy Your Health Information

You have the right to read, review and copy your health information, including your chart, x-rays and billing records. If you would like a copy of your health information, please let us know. However, we may need to charge a fee to duplicate and assemble your copy.

Amend Your Health Information

You have the right to ask us to update or modify your records if you believe your health information records are incorrect or incomplete. We will be happy to accommodate you as long as our office maintains this information. In order to standardize our processes, please provide us with your request in writing and describe your reasons for the change.

Your request may be denied if the health information record in question was not created by our office, is not part of our records, or if the records containing your health information are determined to be accurate and complete.

Documentation of Health Information

You have the right to ask us for a description of how and where your health information was used by our office for any reason other than for treatment, payment or health care operations. Our documentation procedures will enable us to provide information on health information usage from April 14th, 2003 and forward. Please let us know in writing the time period for which you are interested. We may need to charge you a reasonable fee for your request.

Request a Paper Copy of this Notice

You have the right to ask us for a paper copy of this Notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy, contact the Privacy Officer, 365 Portland Ave., Gladstone, OR 97027.

Notice of Policy Changes

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you this Notice of our Privacy Practices. We are required to practice the policies and procedures described in this notice but we do reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice. If we change our privacy practices, we will be sure all patients receive a copy of the revised Notice.

Complaints

If you believe your privacy rights have been compromised, you may file a complaint with our office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with our office, contact the Privacy Officer at 503-655-4111, 365 Portland Ave. Gladstone, OR 97027. **Please let us know of your concerns or complaints in writing.**

Authorization to Use or Disclose Health Information

Other than is stated above or where Federal, State or Local law requires us, we will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization as provided below. You may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.

Thank you very much for taking time to review how carefully we are using your health information. If you have any questions, we want to hear from you. If not, we would appreciate very much your acknowledging your receipt of our policy by signing this card.

Patient Acknowledgement:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

Patient name _____

Signature _____ Date _____