

STATE OF ALABAMA  
**STATE EMPLOYEES' INSURANCE BOARD**  
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MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-4900  
334-263-8341 1-866-836-9737

**STATE EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN  
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

*This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review this notice carefully.*

The State Employees' Health Insurance Plan (the "Plan") considers personal information to be confidential. The Plan protects the privacy of that information in accordance with applicable privacy laws, as well as its own privacy policies.

The Plan is required by law to take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of your health information and to inform you about:

- the Plan's uses and disclosures of your health information;
- your privacy rights with respect to your health information;
- the Plan's obligations with respect to your health information;
- your right to file a complaint with the Plan and to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and
- the person or office to contact for further information about the Plan's privacy practices.

**Effective Date of Notice:** This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003.

**HOW THE PLAN USES AND DISCLOSES HEALTH INFORMATION**

This section of the notice describes uses and disclosures that the Plan may make of your health information for certain purposes without first obtaining your permission as well as instances in which we may request your written permission to use or disclose your health information. The Plan also requires their business associates to protect the privacy of your health information through written agreements.

**Uses and disclosures related to payment, health care operations and treatment.** The Plan and its business associates may use your health information without your permission to carry out payment or health care operations. The Plan may also disclose health information to the Plan Sponsor, the State of Alabama for purposes related to payment or health care operations.

**Payment** includes but is not limited to actions to make coverage determinations and payment (including billing, claims management, subrogation, plan reimbursement, review for medical necessity and appropriateness of care and utilization review and preauthorizations). For example, the Plan may tell an insurer what percentage of a bill will be paid by the Plan.

**Health care operations** include but are not limited to underwriting, premium rating and other insurance activities relating to creating or renewing insurance contracts, disease management, case management, conducting or arrangement for medical review, legal services and auditing functions, including fraud and abuse programs, business planning and development, business management and general administrative activities. It also includes quality assessment and improvement and reviewing competence or qualifications of health care professionals. For example, the Plan may use medical benefit claims information to conduct a review of the accuracy of how benefit claims are being paid.

**Other uses and disclosures that do not require your written authorization.** The Plan may disclose your health information:

- To persons and entities that provide services to the Plan and assure the Plan they will protect the information;
- If it constitutes summary health information, and it is used only for modifying, amending or terminating a group health plan or obtaining premium bids from health plans providing coverage under the group health plan;
- If it constitutes de-identified information;
- If it relates to workers' compensation programs;
- If it is for judicial and administrative proceedings;
- If it is about decedents;
- If it is for law enforcement purposes;
- If it is for public health activities;
- If it is for health oversight activities;
- If it is about victims of abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
- If it is for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes;
- If it is for certain limited research purposes;
- If it is to avert a serious threat to health or safety;
- If it is for specialized government functions;
- If it is for limited marketing activities.

**Additional disclosures to others without your written authorization.** The Plan may disclose your health information to a relative, a friend or any other person you identify, provided the information is directly relevant to that person's involvement with your health care or payment for that care. For example, the Plan may confirm whether or not a claim has been received and paid. You have the right to request that this kind of disclosure be limited or stopped by contacting the Plan's Privacy Official at 334.263.8405.

**Uses and Disclosures Requiring Your Written Authorization.** In all situations other than those described above, the Plan will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing your health information. If you have given the Plan an authorization, you may revoke it at any time, if the Plan has not already acted on it. If you have questions regarding authorizations, contact the Plan's Privacy Official at 334.263.8405.

## **YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS**

This section of the notice describes your rights with respect to your health information and a brief description of how you may exercise these rights.

**Notice of Breach.** You have a right to notice of a breach of unsecured PHI.

**Restrict Uses and Disclosures.** You have the right to request that the Plan restricts uses and disclosure of your health information for activities related to payment, health care operations and treatment. The Plan will consider, but may not agree to, such requests. (Exception: the Plan must grant a restriction on PHI disclosed to a health plan for payment or health care operations purposes if the PHI pertains solely to a health care item or service for which the health care provider involved has been paid out of pocket in full.) To make a request, you must complete a form available from the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405.

**Alternative Communication.** The Plan will accommodate reasonable requests to communicate with you at a certain location or in a certain way. For example, if you are covered as an adult dependent, you may want the Plan to send health information to a different address than that of the Employee. To make such a request, you must complete a form available from the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405.

**Copy of Health Information.** You have a right to obtain a copy of health information that is contained in a "designated record set" – records used in making enrollment, payment, claims adjudication, and other decisions. To request a copy, you must complete a form available from the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405. You may request your records in an electric format. The Plan may provide you with a summary of the health information if you agree in advance to the summary. You may also be asked to pay a fee of \$1.00 per page based on the Plan's copying, mailing, and other preparation costs.

**Amend Health Information.** You have the right to request an amendment to health information that is in a "designated record set." To make such a request, you must complete a form available from the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405. This form requires that you include the reason for the request. The Plan may deny your request to amend your health information if the Plan did not create the health information, if the information is not part of the Plan's records, if the information was not available for inspection or the information is accurate and complete.

**List of Certain Disclosures.** You have the right to receive a list of certain disclosures of your health information. To request a copy of the list, you must complete a form available from the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405. You may request a list of disclosures in an electric format. The Plan will provide you with one free accounting each year. For subsequent requests, you may be charged a reasonable fee.

**Right to A Copy of Privacy Notice.** You have the right to receive a paper copy of this notice upon request, even if you agreed to receive the notice electronically.

**Complaints.** You may complain to the Plan or the Secretary of HHS if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. To file a complaint with the Plan, contact the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

## **THE PLAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Plan is required by a federal law to keep your health information private, to give you notice of the Plan's legal duties and privacy practices, and to follow the terms of the notice currently in effect.

## **THIS NOTICE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

The terms of this notice and the Plan's privacy policies may be changed at any time. If changes are made, the new terms and policies will then apply to all health information maintained by the Plan. If any material changes are made, the Plan will distribute a new notice to participants and beneficiaries.

## **YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

If you have questions regarding this notice, please contact the Plan's Privacy Official at 334-263-8405.