

Southern California Drug Benefit Fund Privacy Notice

Effective April 14, 2003

Section 1: Purpose

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.

This Notice is required by law. The Southern California Drug Benefit Fund (the “Plan”) is required by law to take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of your personally identifiable health information and to inform you about:

1. The Plan’s uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI),
2. Your rights to privacy with respect to your PHI,
3. The Plan’s duties with respect to your PHI,
4. Your right to file a complaint with the Plan and with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and
5. The person or office you should contact for further information about the Plan’s privacy practices.

Section 2: Your Protected Health Information

Protected Health Information Defined

PHI includes all individually identifiable health information related to your past, present or future physical or mental health condition or to payment for health care. PHI includes information maintained by the Plan in oral, written, or electronic form.

When the Plan May Disclose Your PHI

Under the law, the Plan may disclose your PHI without your written authorization, or the opportunity to agree or object, in the following cases:

- ***To You or Your Personal Representative.*** If you or your personal representative request it, the Plan is required to give you or your personal representative access to certain PHI.
- ***As required by HHS.*** The Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services may require the disclosure of your PHI to investigate or determine the Plan’s compliance with the privacy regulations.

- ***For treatment, payment or health care operations.*** The Plan and its business associates will use PHI in order to carry out:
 - Treatment,
 - Payment, or
 - Health care operations.

Treatment is the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services. It also includes but is not limited to consultations and referrals between one or more of your providers.

For example, the Plan may disclose to a treating orthodontist the name of your treating dentist so that the orthodontist may ask for your dental x-rays from the treating dentist.

Payment includes actions to make coverage determinations and payment (including billing, claims management, subrogation, plan reimbursement, reviews for medical necessity and appropriateness of care and utilization review and preauthorizations).

For example, the Plan may tell a doctor whether you are eligible for coverage or what percentage of the bill will be paid by the Plan. If we contract with third parties to help us with payment operations, such as a physician that reviews medical claims, we will also disclose information to them. These third parties are known as “business associates.”

Health care operations includes quality assessment and improvement, reviewing competence or qualifications of health care professionals, underwriting, premium rating and other insurance activities relating to creating or renewing insurance contracts. It also includes disease management, case management, conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions including fraud and abuse compliance programs, business planning and development, business management and general administrative activities.

For example, the Plan may use information about your claims to refer you into a disease management program, a well-pregnancy program, project future benefit costs or audit the accuracy of its claims processing functions.

Disclosure to the Plan’s Trustees. The Plan will also disclose PHI to the Board of Trustees, which is also the Plan sponsor, for purposes related to treatment, payment, and health care operations, and has amended the Plan Documents to permit this use and disclosure as required by federal law. For example, we may disclose information to the Board of Trustees to allow them to decide an appeal or review a subrogation claim.

When the Disclosure of Your PHI Requires Your Written Authorization

Except as otherwise indicated in this notice, uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization subject to your right to revoke your authorization.

Use or Disclosure of Your PHI That Requires You Be Given an Opportunity to Agree or Disagree Before the Use or Release

Disclosure of your PHI to family members, other relatives, your close personal friends, and any other person you choose is allowed under federal law if:

- The information is directly relevant to the family or friend’s involvement with your care or payment for that care, and

- You have either agreed to the disclosure or have been given an opportunity to object and have not objected.

Use or Disclosure of Your PHI For Which Authorization or Opportunity to Object Is Not Required

The Plan is allowed under federal law to use and disclose your PHI without your written authorization under the following circumstances:

1. ***When required by applicable law.***
2. ***Public health purposes.*** To an authorized public health authority if required by law or for public health and safety purposes. PHI may also be used or disclosed if you have been exposed to a communicable disease or are at risk of spreading a disease or condition, if authorized by law.
3. ***Domestic violence or abuse situations.*** When authorized by law to report information about abuse, neglect or domestic violence to public authorities if a reasonable belief exists that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. In such case, the Plan will promptly inform you that such a disclosure has been or will be made unless that notice would cause a risk of serious harm.
4. ***Health oversight activities.*** To a health oversight agency for oversight activities authorized by law. These activities include civil, administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary actions (for example, to investigate complaints against health care providers) and other activities necessary for appropriate oversight of government benefit programs (for example, to the Department of Labor).
5. ***Legal proceedings.*** When required for judicial or administrative proceedings. For example, your PHI may be disclosed in response to a subpoena or discovery request that is accompanied by a court order.
6. ***Law enforcement health purposes.*** When required for law enforcement purposes (for example, to report certain types of wounds).
7. ***Law enforcement emergency purposes.*** For certain law enforcement purposes, including:
 - a. identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, and
 - b. disclosing information about an individual who is or is suspected to be a victim of a crime.
8. ***Determining cause of death and organ donation.*** When required to be given to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person, determine a cause of death or other authorized duties. We may also disclose PHI for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes.

9. **Funeral purposes.** When required to be given to funeral directors to carry out their duties with respect to the decedent.
10. **Research.** For research, subject to certain conditions.
11. **Health or safety threats.** When, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, the Plan in good faith believes the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public and the disclosure is to a person reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.
12. **Workers' compensation programs.** When authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.
13. **Specialized Government Functions.** The Plan may use and disclose PHI to the Armed Forces personnel for activities deemed necessary by appropriate military command authorities to allow for the proper execution of a military mission. In addition, the Plan may use and disclose PHI for lawful intelligence, counter-intelligence, and any other national security activity authorized by law, including the provision of protective services to the President of the United States.
14. **Incident to a Permitted Use or Disclosure.** The Plan may use and disclose PHI incident to any use or disclosure permitted or authorized by law.
15. **Limited Data Sets.** The Plan may use and disclose a limited data set that meets the technical requirements of 45 Code of Federal Regulations, section 164.514(e), if the Plan has entered into a data use agreement with the recipient of the limited data set.
16. **Fundraising.** The Plan may use and disclose certain types of PHI to a business or to an institutionally related foundation for the purpose of raising funds. The type of information that may be disclosed under this exception to the authorization requirement is (i) demographic information relating to an individual and (ii) dates of health care provided to an individual.
17. **Business Associates.** The Plan has many individuals and organizations that provide a variety of services to facilitate the delivery of health coverage and benefits. The Plan may use and disclose PHI to such "business associates" as is necessary to carry out the relevant function or service. All business associates will be required to protect the privacy of your health information in the same manner as the Plan.

Other Uses or Disclosures

The Plan may contact you to provide you information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Section 3: Your Individual Privacy Rights

You May Request Restrictions on PHI Uses and Disclosures

You may request the Plan to:

1. Restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations, or
2. Restrict uses and disclosures to family members, relatives, friends or other persons identified by you who are involved in your care.

The Plan, however, is not required to agree to your request.

Make such requests in writing to the contact individual listed in Section 6 below.

You May Request Confidential Communications

The Plan will accommodate an individual's reasonable request to receive communications of PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations where the request includes a statement that disclosure could endanger the individual.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your PHI.

Make such requests in writing to the contact individual listed in Section 6 below.

You May Inspect and Copy PHI

You have a right to inspect and obtain a copy of your PHI contained in a "designated record set," for as long as the Plan maintains the PHI.

The Plan must provide the requested information within 30 days if the information is maintained on site or within 60 days if the information is maintained offsite. A single 30-day extension is allowed if the Plan is unable to comply with the deadline.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request access to the PHI in your designated record set. A reasonable fee may be charged.

Requests for access to PHI must be made in writing to the contact individual listed in Section 6 below.

If access is denied, you or your personal representative will be provided with a written denial setting forth the basis for the denial, a description of how you may exercise your review rights and a description of how you may complain to Plan and HHS.

You Have the Right to Amend Your PHI

You have the right to request that the Plan amend your PHI or a record about you in a designated record set for as long as the PHI is maintained in the designated record set subject to certain exceptions. See the Plan's Right to Amend Policy for a list of exceptions.

The Plan has 60 days after receiving your request to act on it. The Plan is allowed a single 30-day extension if the Plan is unable to comply with the 60-day deadline. If the Plan denied your request in whole or part, the Plan must provide you with a written denial that explains the basis for the decision. You or your personal representative may then submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial and have that statement included with any future disclosures of that PHI.

You must make your request to amend PHI in writing to the contact individual listed in Section 6 below.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request amendment of the PHI.

You have the right to receive an accounting of the Plan's PHI disclosures

At your request, the Plan will also provide you with an accounting of certain disclosures by the Plan of your PHI. We do not have to provide you with an accounting of disclosures related to treatment, payment, or health care operations, or disclosures made to you or authorized by you in writing. See the Plan's Accounting for Disclosure Policy for the complete list of disclosures for which an accounting is not required.

The Plan has 60 days to provide the accounting. The Plan is allowed an additional 30 days if the Plan gives you a written statement of the reasons for the delay and the date by which the accounting will be provided.

If you request more than one accounting within a 12-month period, the Plan will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for each subsequent accounting.

You Have the Right to Receive a Paper Copy of This Notice Upon Request

To obtain a paper copy of this Notice, contact the individual listed in Section 6 below.

Section 4: The Plan's Duties

Maintaining Your Privacy

The Plan is required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you and your eligible dependents with notice of its legal duties and privacy practices.

This notice is effective beginning on April 14, 2003 and the Plan is required to comply with the terms of this notice. However, the Plan reserves the right to change its privacy practices and to apply the changes to any PHI received or maintained by the Plan prior to that date. If a privacy practice is changed, a revised version of this notice will be provided to you and to all past and present participants and beneficiaries for whom the Plan still maintains PHI.

Any revised version of this notice will be distributed to you within 60 days after the effective date of any material change to:

- The uses or disclosures of PHI,
- Your individual rights,
- The duties of the Plan, or
- Other privacy practices stated in this notice.

Disclosing Only the Minimum Necessary Protected Health Information

When using or disclosing PHI or when requesting PHI from another covered entity, the Plan will make reasonable efforts not to use, disclose or request more than the minimum amount of PHI

necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of the use, disclosure or request, taking into consideration practical and technological limitations.

However, the minimum necessary standard will not apply in the following situations:

- Disclosures to or requests by a health care provider for treatment,
- Uses or disclosures made to you,
- Uses or disclosures made pursuant to your written authorization,
- Disclosures made to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to its enforcement activities under HIPAA,
- Uses or disclosures required by law, and
- Uses or disclosures required for the Plan's compliance with the HIPAA privacy regulations.

This notice does not apply to information that has been de-identified. De-identified information is information that:

- Does not identify you, and
- With respect to which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify you.

In addition, the Plan may use or disclose "summary health information" to the Plan Sponsor for obtaining premium bids or modifying, amending or terminating the group health Plan. Summary information summarizes the claims history, claims expenses or type of claims experienced by individuals for whom a Plan Sponsor has provided health benefits under a group health plan. Identifying information will be deleted from summary health information, in accordance with HIPAA.

Section 5: Your Right to File a Complaint with the Plan or the HHS Secretary

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Plan in writing to the contact individual listed in Section 6 below.

You may also file a complaint with:

Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Plan will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Section 6: If You Need More Information

If you have any questions regarding this notice or the subjects addressed in it, you may contact the following officer at the Fund Office:

Marian Murphy, Privacy Officer
Southern California Drug Benefit Fund
P.O. Box 27920
Los Angeles, California 90027
Telephone Number: (323) 666-8910, extension 201
Fax Number: (323) 663-9495

Section 7: Conclusion

Use and disclosure of PHI by the Plan is regulated by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, known as HIPAA. You may find these rules at 45 *Code of Federal Regulations* Parts 160 and 164. This notice attempts to summarize the regulations. The regulations will supersede this notice if there is any discrepancy between the information in this notice and the regulations.