

SHELTERING ARMS SENIOR SERVICES NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES



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

USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION

Sheltering Arms Senior Services (SASS) may use your health information, information that constitutes protected health information as defined in the Privacy Rule of the Administrative Simplification provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, for purposes of providing you services/care, obtaining payment for your services/care and conducting Agency operations. SASS has established policies to guard against unnecessary disclosure of your health information.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AND PURPOSES FOR WHICH YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED:

To Provide Services/Care. SASS may use your health information to coordinate care within the Agency and with others involved in your care, such as family members and other health care professionals who have agreed to assist SASS in coordinating care. For example, the Agency may disclose your personal health information for coordination of care purposes when information is needed to make a referral for services provided by other agencies, organizations or business, or to a utility company to facilitate payment on your behalf.

To Obtain Payment. SASS may include your health information in invoices to collect payment from third parties for the services you receive from the Agency. For example, SASS may use/disclose your personal health information for payment purposes when we disclose information to your insurance company, another agency, organization or business to facilitate reimbursement for services provided to you. When SASS discloses information for payment purposes we will work to disclose only that personal health information that is minimally necessary to ensure proper and timely payment.

To Conduct Agency Operations. SASS may use and disclose health information for its own operations in order to facilitate the function of the Agency and as necessary to provide quality care to all of the Agency 's clients. Agency operations includes such activities as:

- Quality assessment and improvement activities.
- Activities designed to improve health or reduce health care costs.
- Protocol development, case management and care coordination.
- Professional review and performance evaluation.
- Training programs including those in which students, interns or practitioners in health care learn under supervision.
- Training of non-health care professionals.
- Accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities.

**SHELTERING ARMS SENIOR SERVICES
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

- Review and auditing, including compliance reviews and programs.
- Business planning and development including cost management and planning related analyses and formulary development.
- Business management and general administrative activities.
- Fundraising for the benefit of the SASS.

For example SASS may use your health information to evaluate its staff performance, combine your health information with other Agency clients in evaluating how to more effectively serve all Agency clients, disclose your health information to Agency staff and contracted personnel for training purposes, use your health information to contact you as a reminder regarding a visit to you, or contact you as part of general fundraising and community information mailings (unless you tell us you do not want to be contacted).

For Fundraising Activities. SASS may use information about you including your name, address, phone number and the dates you received services in order to contact you to raise money for the Agency. If you do not want SASS to contact you, notify Office of Development, 713-558-6400 and indicate that you do not wish to be contacted.

For Appointment Reminders. SASS may use and disclose your health information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment.

For Service Alternatives. SASS may use and disclose your health information to tell you about or recommend possible service options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AND PURPOSES FOR WHICH YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION MAY ALSO BE USED AND DISCLOSED.

When Legally Required. SASS will disclose your health information when it is required to do so by any Federal, State or local law.

When There Are Risks to Public Health. SASS may disclose your health information for public activities and purposes in order to:

- Prevent or control disease, injury or disability, report disease, injury, vital events such as birth or death and the conduct of public health surveillance, investigations and interventions.
- Notify a person who has been exposed to a communicable disease or who may be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease.
- Notify an employer about an individual who is a member of the workforce as legally required.

**SHELTERING ARMS SENIOR SERVICES
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

To Report Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation Or Domestic Violence. SASS is allowed to notify government authorities if the Agency believes a client is the victim of abuse, neglect, exploitation or domestic violence. SASS will make this disclosure only when specifically required or authorized by law or when the client agrees to the disclosure.

To Conduct Health Oversight Activities. SASS may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for activities including audits, civil administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary action. SASS, however, may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and your health information is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits.

In Connection With Judicial And Administrative Proceedings. SASS may disclose your health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal as expressly authorized by such order or in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process, but only when SASS makes reasonable efforts to either notify you about the request or to obtain an order protecting your health information

For Law Enforcement Purposes. As permitted or required by State law, SASS may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain law enforcement purposes as follows:

- As required by law for reporting of certain types of wounds or other physical injuries pursuant to the court order, warrant, subpoena or summons or similar process.
- For the purpose of identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
- Under certain limited circumstances, when you are the victim of a crime.
- To a law enforcement official if SASS has a suspicion that your death was the result of criminal conduct including criminal conduct at the Agency.
- In an emergency in order to report a crime.

To Coroners And Medical Examiners. SASS may disclose your health information to coroners and medical examiners for purposes of determining your cause of death or for other duties, as authorized by law.

For Research Purposes. SASS may, under very select circumstances, use your health information for research. Before SASS discloses any of your health information for such research purposes, the project will be subject to an extensive approval process.

For Educational Purposes. SASS may disclose your health information when providing tours to its Adult Day Care Centers, a dementia specific facility, or when educating the community about needs of the elderly. The minimal necessary information will be disclosed.

In the Event of A Serious Threat To Health Or Safety. SASS may, consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct, disclose your health information if the Agency, in good faith, believes that such disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or safety or to the health and safety of the public.

For Specified Government Functions. In certain circumstances, the Federal regulations authorize SASS to use or disclose your health information to facilitate specified government functions relating to military and veterans, national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, medical suitability determinations and inmates and law enforcement custody.

For Worker's Compensation. SASS may release your health information for worker's compensation or similar programs.

AUTHORIZATION TO USE OR DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION

Other than is stated above, SASS will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. If you or your representative authorizes SASS to use or disclose your health information, you may revoke that authorization in writing at any time.

YOUR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

You have the following rights regarding your health information that SASS maintains:

- **Right to request restrictions.** You may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. You have the right to request a limit on SASS disclosure of your health information to someone who is involved in your care or the payment of your service. However, SASS is not required to agree to your request. If you wish to make a request for restrictions, please contact the Privacy Official at 713-558-6400.
- **Right to receive confidential communications.** You have the right to request that SASS communicate with you in a certain way. For example, you may ask that SASS only conduct communications pertaining to your health information with you privately with no other family members present. If you wish to receive confidential communications, please contact the Privacy Official, 713-558-6400. SASS will not request that you provide any reasons for your request and will attempt to honor your reasonable requests for confidential communications.
- **Right to inspect and copy your health information.** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information, including billing records. A request to inspect and copy records containing your health information may be made to the Privacy Official, 713-558-6400. If you request a copy of your health information, SASS may charge a reasonable fee for copying and assembling costs associated with your request.
- **Right to amend health care information.** You or your personal representatives have the right to request that SASS amend your records, if you believe that your health information is incorrect or incomplete. That request may be made as long as the information is maintained by SASS. A request for an amendment of records must be made in writing to the Privacy Official, 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, TX 77025. SASS may deny the request if it is not in writing or does not include a reason for the amendment. The request also may be denied if your health information records were not created by SASS, if the records you are requesting are not part of the SASS records, if the health information you wish to amend is not part of the health

information you or your personal representative are permitted to inspect and copy, or if, in the opinion of SASS the records containing your health information are accurate and complete.

- **Right to an accounting.** You or your representative have the right to request an accounting of disclosures of your health information made by SASS for certain reasons, including reasons related to public purposes authorized by law and certain research. The request for an accounting must be made in writing to the Privacy Official, 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, TX 77025. The request should specify the time period for the accounting starting on or after April 14, 2003. Accounting requests may not be made for periods of time in excess of six (6) years. SASS would provide the first accounting you request during any 12-month period without charge. Subsequent accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable cost-based fee.
- **Right to a paper copy of this notice.** You or your personal representatives have a right to a separate paper copy of this Notice at any time even if you or your representative have received this Notice previously. To obtain a separate paper copy, please contact the Privacy Official, 713-558-6400. The client or a client's personal representative may also obtain a copy of the current version of SASS Notice of Privacy Practices at its website, www.shelteringarms.org.

DUTIES OF THE AGENCY

SASS is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide to you and your personal representative this Notice of its duties and privacy practices. SASS is required to abide by the terms of this Notice as may be amended from time to time. SASS reserves the right to change the terms of its Notice and to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information that it maintains. If SASS changes its Notice, SASS will provide a copy of the revised Notice to you or your appointed personal representative. You or your personal representatives have the right to express complaints to SASS and to the Office of Civil Rights, Region VI, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services located at 1301 Young Street, Suite 1169, Dallas, TX 75202; Voice Phone: 214-767-4056; FAX: 214-767-0432; TDD: 214-767-8940 if you or your personal representatives believe that your privacy rights have been violated. Any complaints to SASS should be made in writing to the Privacy Official, 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, TX 77025. SASS encourages you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint.

CONTACT PERSON

SASS has designated the Privacy Official as its contact person for all issues regarding patient privacy and your rights under the Federal privacy standards. You may contact this person at 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, TX 77025 or 713-558-6400.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Notice is effective April 14, 2003.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT
Privacy Official, 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, TX or 713-558-6400.**