

The Centers for Advanced ENT Care – North Bay ENT & Audiology Division

Notice of Privacy Practices

The Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability ACT (HIPAA), initiated in 1996 was touted as the most significant legislation affecting the health care industry since the creation of the Medicare and Medicaid programs in 1965. HIPAA regulations focused on incorporating the Notice of Privacy Practices into routine business procedures. With the onset of electronic communication and electronic health records, HIPAA was updated in 2009 with the enactment of Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act of the American Recovery and Reimbursement Act (HITECH).

On January 17, 2013, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued its final rule modifications related to HITECH. The legislation is known as the Omnibus Final Rule and focuses on greater accountability of covered entities and their business associates for ensuring the security of patient's personal health information.

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.

Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates are committed to your personal well being. Protecting the privacy and security of the information you share with us is included in that commitment. While we do not sell, fundraise or trade any information to third parties, we do share information with entities such as your insurance company and quality review organizations as part of our routine and necessary business operations. We do this with the utmost care and sensibility.

This notice is being provided to explain how your personal healthcare information is used, and your rights to review, amend and/or request limitations on the disclosure of this information.

I. Definitions:

- A. **Disclosure** means the release, transfer, provision of access to, or divulging in any other manner of information outside the entity holding the information.
- B. **Healthcare** means care or service related to the health of an individual. Healthcare includes, but is not limited to, diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitative care and the sale or dispensing of a drug, equipment, or other item in accordance with a prescription.
- C. **Protected Health Information** means any individually identifiable health information, whether oral, electronic, or recorded in any form, that is created and relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health, condition or care of an individual.

II. Your Rights to Privacy and Disclosure

You have the right to request restriction of uses and disclosures of your Protected Health Information as outlined below. However, there are some instances where Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates are not required to agree to a requested restriction.

- A. At the time you initially receive service at Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates; you may request that Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates restrict the use or disclosure of your Protected Health Information to carry out treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. To request a restriction of your information, contact our Medical Records Department and say that you want to restrict the release of all or part of your information.
- B. You can request to receive confidential communications concerning your health information. To receive your information confidentially, contact our Billing Department and direct them to how and where you wish to receive your information.
- C. You can inspect and obtain a copy of your protected health information/medical record, unless otherwise protected by law. Contact our Billing Department to make a request.
- D. You can obtain a copy of this notice at any time. You will receive one at the time of service if requested.
- E. You can amend your protected health information by contacting our Billing Department. We cannot destroy or otherwise remove the original information, but you may add/amend information in your record pursuant to Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates' policy.
- F. You can request an accounting of our disclosures of your protected health information, unless protected by law, by contacting our Billing Department.
- G. You have the right as the individual to be notified following a breach of unsecured Protected Health Information.

- H. You have the right to restrict certain disclosures of Protected Health Information to a health plan where the individual pays out of pocket in full for the health care item or service.
- I. Other uses and disclosures not otherwise described in the Notice of Privacy Practices will be made only with authorization from the individual.

III. Permitted Disclosures:

Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates may not use or disclose protected health information, except as permitted or required by law. The following are permitted uses and disclosure under current laws. We can release information to the following unless otherwise restricted by law:

- A. to the patient and/or the personal representative of the patient to whom the information pertains
- B. to Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates business associates or other healthcare providers, to carry out treatment, payment, or healthcare operations purposes
- C. to anyone in compliance with an authorization completed by the patient or patient’s representative, such as that from a healthcare provider regarding psychotherapy notes
- D. to others as permitted by and in compliance with some other law or regulation such as those that require us to make certain reports to health oversight agencies, like Maryland’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Individually identifiable health information is frequently shared with the following types of entities for purposes related to the function and operation of a healthcare facility or physician practice:

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| * Consulting physicians | * Health insurance companies |
| * Managed care organizations | * Home Health Care |
| * Health benefit managers | * State/Federal agencies |
| * Clinical laboratories | * Contracted Business Associates |

This information is released for the purposes of ensuring continuity of care, billing, to conduct quality assessment and improvement activities, and reviewing the competence or qualifications of healthcare professionals.

We may also use information to contact you and provide appointment reminders and information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services. We may contact you to request funds for Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates’ programs and services.

The Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) established federal guidelines that require Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates to maintain the privacy of your protected health information. It also requires Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates to provide you with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. Further, Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates are required to abide by the terms of this Notice and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. In the event we make changes to this Notice, we will make the changes apparent in the new document, post the changes in a prominent place within our facilities and include them on our website (www.drsgehrisjordanday.com). We will not individually notify every past patient, but will attempt to abide by the requirements of the Notice in effect at the time of your healthcare.

IV. Questions or Complaints:

Should you have any questions about this Notice, please contact our Privacy Officer at (410) 879-9100, extension 210. You may lodge a complaint/grievance relevant to any portion of the Notice provisions. It will be reviewed under the terms and parameters of our grievance process. At no time will you be subject to retaliation for filing a complaint. You may also forward your complaint to the Secretary of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.

V. Effective date:

HIPAA provisions set forth in this Notice took effect on April 14, 2003.
 HITECH provisions set forth in this Notice took effect on February 17, 2009.
 HIPAA Omnibus Final Rule provisions set forth in this Notice took effect on January 17, 2013.

This Notice is provided to you on behalf of Drs. Gehris, Jordan and Associates and their medical staff.