

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how St. Croix Chiropractic Group may use and disclose your healthcare information and how you can obtain access to this information.

St. Croix Chiropractic Group is required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information. This information consists of all records related to your health, including demographic information, either created by St. Croix Chiropractic Group or received by St. Croix Chiropractic Group from other healthcare providers. We are required to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your protected health information. These legal duties and privacy practices are described in this Notice. St. Croix Chiropractic Group will abide by the terms of this Notice, or the Notice currently in effect at the time of the use or disclosure of your protected health information.

Use and Disclosures of Your Protected Health Information not Requiring Your Consent

St. Croix Chiropractic Group may use and disclose your protected health information, without your written consent or authorization for certain treatment, payment and healthcare operations. There are certain restrictions on uses and disclosures of treatment records, which include registration and all other records concerning individuals who are receiving, or who at any time have received services for mental illness, developmental disabilities, alcoholism, or drug dependence.

Treatments may include:

Providing, coordinating, or managing healthcare and related services by one or more healthcare providers.
Consultations between healthcare providers concerning patients.
Referrals to other providers for treatment.
Referrals to nursing homes, foster care homes, or home health agencies.

For example, St. Croix Chiropractic Group may determine that you require the services of a specialist. In referring you to another doctor, St. Croix Chiropractic Group may share or transfer your healthcare information to that doctor.

Payment activities may include:

Activities undertaken by St. Croix Chiropractic Group to obtain reimbursement for services provided to you.
Determining your eligibility for benefits or health insurance coverage.
Managing claims and contacting your insurance company regarding payment.
Collection activities to obtain payment for service provided to you.
Reviewing healthcare services and discussing with your insurance company the medical necessity for certain services or procedures, coverage under your health plan, appropriateness of care or justification of charges.
Obtaining pre-certification and pre-authorization of services to be provided to you.

For example, St. Croix Chiropractic Group will submit claims to your insurance company on your behalf. This claim identifies you, your diagnosis and the services provided to you.

Healthcare operation may include:

Contacting healthcare providers and patients with information about treatment alternatives.
Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities.
Conducting outcomes evaluation and development of clinical guidelines.
Protocol development case management or care coordination.
Conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions.

For example St. Croix Chiropractic Group may use your diagnosis, treatment, and outcome information to measure the quality of the services that we provide, or assess the effectiveness of your treatment when compared to patients in similar situations.

St. Croix Chiropractic Group may contact you, by telephone or mail, to provide appointment reminders. You must notify us if you do not wish to receive appointment reminders.

We may not disclose your protected health information to family members or friends who may be involved with your treatment or care without your written permission. Health information may be released without written permission to a parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child; the guardian of an incompetent adult; the healthcare agent designated in an incapacitated patient's healthcare power of attorney; or the personal representative or spouse of a deceased patient.

There are additional situations when St. Croix Chiropractic Group is permitted or required to use or disclose your protected health information without your consent or authorization. Examples include the following:

As permitted or required by law.

In certain circumstances we may be required to report individual health information to legal authorities, such as law enforcement officials, court officials or government agencies. For example, we may have to report abuse, neglect, domestic violence or certain physical injuries. We are required to report gunshot wounds or any other wound to law enforcement officials if there is reasonable cause to believe that the wound occurred as a result of a crime. Mental health records may be disclosed to law enforcement authorities due to the purpose of reporting an apparent crime on our premises.

For public health activities.

We may release healthcare records, with the exception of treatment records, to certain government agencies or public health authority authorized by law, upon receipt of written request from that agency. We may also disclose HIV test results to other providers or persons when there has been or will be risk of exposure.

For health oversight activities.

We may disclose healthcare records, including treatment records in response to written request by any federal or state governmental agency to perform legally authorized functions, such as management audits, financial audits, financial audits programs monitoring and evaluation, and facility or individual licensure or certification. HIV results may not be released to federal or state governmental agencies without written permission, except to the state epidemiologist for surveillance, investigation or to control communicable diseases.

Your Rights regarding your protected Health Information

You are permitted to request that restrictions be placed on certain uses or disclosures of your protected health information by St. Croix Chiropractic Group to carry out treatment, payment, or healthcare operations. You must request such a restriction in writing. We are not required to agree to your request, but if we do agree, we must adhere to the restriction, except when your protected health information is needed in an emergency treatment situation. In this event, information may be disclosed only to healthcare providers treating you. Also, a restriction would not apply when we are required by law to disclose certain healthcare information.

You have the right to review and/or obtain a copy of your healthcare records, with the exception of psychotherapy notes, or information compiled for use (or in anticipation for use) in a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding. St. Croix Chiropractic Group may deny an access under other circumstances, in which case you have the right to have such a denial reviewed. We may charge a reasonable fee for copying records.

You may request that St. Croix Chiropractic Group send protected health information, including billing information, to you by alternative locations. You may also request that St. Croix Chiropractic Group not send information to a particular address or location or contact you at a specific location, perhaps your place of employment. This request must be submitted in writing. We will accommodate reasonable requests by you.

You have the right to request that St. Croix Chiropractic Group amend portions of your healthcare records, as long as we maintain such information. You must submit this request in writing, and under certain circumstances the request may be denied.

You may request an accounting of the disclosures of your protected health information made by St. Croix Chiropractic Group for the six years prior to the date of the request beginning with disclosures made after April 14, 2003. We are not required, however, to record disclosures we make pursuant to a signed consent or authorization.

Any person or patient may file a complaint with St. Croix Chiropractic Group and/or the Secretary of Health and Human Services if they believe their privacy rights have been violated. To file a complaint regarding St. Croix Chiropractic Group, please contact the Privacy Officer at the following location:

Privacy Officer
600 Inwood Ave. N., Suite 240
Oakdale, MN 55128
(651) 735-1580

It is the policy of St. Croix Chiropractic Group that no retaliatory action will be made against any individual who submits or conveys a complaint of suspected or actual non-compliance of violation of the privacy standards.

This Notice of Privacy Practices is effective April 15, 2003

Signature

Date