



## BLUESTONE PEDIATRICS PLC

### NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

As required by the Privacy Regulations created as a result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA), **THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT PATIENTS OR BLUESTONE PEDIATRICS, PLC, MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED, AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION.**

PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY

#### A. OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY

Bluestone Pediatrics, PLC is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your protected health information (PHI). In conducting our business, we will create records regarding you and the treatment and service we provide to you. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you. We are also required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices that we maintain in our practice concerning your PHI. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at that time.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your PHI
- Your privacy rights in regard to your PHI
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your PHI

**The terms of this notice apply to all records containing your PHI that are created or retained by our practice. We reserve the right to revise or amend this Notice of Privacy Practices. Any revision or amendment to this notice will be effective for all of your records that our practice has created or maintained in the past, and for any of your records that we may create or maintain in the future. Our practice will post a copy of our current Notice in our office in a visible location at all times, and you may request a copy of our most current Notice at any time.**

#### B. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT IN WRITING:

Privacy Officer, Bluestone Pediatrics, PLC, 4059 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

#### C. WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. **Treatment** – Our practice may use your PHI to treat you. For example, we may ask you to have laboratory tests (such as blood or urine tests), and we may use the results to help us reach a diagnosis. We might use your PHI in order to right a prescription for you, or we might disclose your PHI to a pharmacy when we order a prescription for you. Many of the people who work for our practice – including, but not limited to, our doctors and nurses – may use or disclose your PHI in order to treat you or to assist others in your treatment. Additionally, we may disclose your PHI to others who may assist in your care, such as your spouse, children, or parents.
2. **Payment** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. For example, we may contact your health insurer to certify that you are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for, your treatment. We also may use and disclose your PHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Also, we may use your PHI to bill you directly for services and items.
3. **Health Care Operations** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to operate our business. As examples of the ways in which we may use and disclose your information for our operations, our practice may use your PHI to evaluate the quality of your care you received from us, or to conduct cost-management and business planning activities for our practice.

4. **Appointment Reminders** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment.
5. **Treatment Options** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.
6. **Health-Related Benefits and Services** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
7. **Release of Information to Family/Friends** – Our practice may release your PHI to a friend or family member that is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a babysitter take their child to the pediatrician’s office for treatment of a cold. In this example, the babysitter may have access to this child’s medical information, if you have provided us with a written authorization for treatment for the babysitter.
8. **Disclosure Required by Law** – Our practice will use and disclose your PHI when we are required to do so by federal, state, or local law.

#### **D. USE AND DISCLOSURE OF YOUR PHI IN CERTAIN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The following categories describe unique scenarios in which we may use or disclose your identifiable health information:

1. **Public Health Risks** – Our practice may disclose your PHI to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:
  - Maintaining vital records, such as births or deaths.
  - Reporting child abuse or neglect.
  - Preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.
  - Notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease. We will report to our local health department any confirmed diagnosis of any disease or outbreak of public health importance, as required by the Health Laws of Virginia Code Section 32.1-36 and the Virginia Board of Health Regulations for Disease Reporting and Control.
  - Notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition.
  - Reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices.
  - Notifying individuals if a product or device that you may be using has been recalled.
  - Notifying appropriate government agency(ies) and authority(ies) regarding potential abuse or neglect of an adult patient (including domestic violence). In accordance with Virginia Code Section 63.1-248.3, we will report to the county or city where a child resides and/or the Virginia State Department of Social Services, if in our professional capacity as licensed medical doctors, we have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child.
  - Notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.
2. **Health Oversight Activities** – Our practice may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include, for example, investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.
3. **Lawsuits and Similar Proceedings** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We may also disclose your PHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena, or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to obtain an order protecting the information the party has requested.
4. **Law Enforcement** – We may release PHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:
  - Regarding a crime in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain a person’s agreement
  - Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct.
  - Regarding criminal conduct at our offices.
  - In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process.
  - To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive, or missing person.

- In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identify or location of the perpetrator).
5. **Deceased Patients** – Our practice may release PHI to a medical examiner or coroner to identify a deceased individual or to identify the cause of death. If necessary, we also may release information in order for funeral directors to perform their jobs. In accordance with Commonwealth of Virginia Administrative Code 8.01-413.B, records or papers relating to a deceased patient, or a patient whose treating physician determines to be mentally incompetent to consent, or physically incapable of consenting, shall be provided to any of the following persons, or order of priority stated, upon the written request of such person, unless the hospital, nursing facility, physician, or other health care provider is not aware of any available person in a higher class: (i) the personal representative of a deceased patient; (ii) the legal guardian or committee of any incompetent or incapacitated patient; (iii) the spouse; (iv) an adult son or daughter; (v) either parent; (vi) an adult brother or sister; or (vii) any of the other relatives of the patient in the descending order of blood relationship.
  6. **Organ and Tissue Donation** – Our practice may release your PHI to organization that handle organ, eye, or tissue procurement or transplantation, including organ donation banks, as necessary to facilitate organ or tissue donation and transplantation if you are an organ donor.
  7. **Research** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI for research purposes in certain limited circumstances. We will obtain your written authorization to use your PHI for research purposes except when: (a) our use or disclosure was approved by an Institutional Review Board or a Privacy Board; (b) we obtain the oral or written agreement of a researcher that (i) the information being sought is necessary for the research study; (ii) the use or disclosure of your PHI is being used only for research and (iii) the researcher will not remove any of your PHI from our practice; or (c) the PHI sought by the researcher only relates to decedents and the researcher agrees either orally or in writing that the use or disclosure is necessary for the research and, if we request it, to provide us with proof of death prior to access to the PHI of the decedents.
  8. **Serious Threats to Health or Safety** – Our practice may use and disclose your PHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.
  9. **Military** – Our practice may disclose your PHI if you're a member of the U.S. or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.
  10. **National Security** – Our practice may disclose your PHI to federal officials for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We may also disclose your PHI to federal officials in order to protect the President, other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.
  11. **Inmates** – Our practice may disclose your PHI to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you; (b) for the safety and security of the institution; and/or (c) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.
  12. **Workers' Compensation** – Our practice may release your PHI for workers' compensation and similar programs.

#### **E. WHEN WE WILL NOT PROVIDE DISCLOSURE**

In accordance with Virginia Code 54.1-2969, we will not provide disclosure to the parent or guardian of minor child's PHI, without the written consent of the minor child, in the following circumstances:

1. Medical or health services needed to determine the presence of or to treat venereal disease or any infectious or contagious disease with the State Board of Health requires to be reported.
2. Medical or health services required in case of birth control, pregnancy or family planning except for the purpose of sexual sterilization.
3. Medical or health services needed in the case of outpatient care, treatment, or rehabilitation for substance abuse as defined in 37.1-203.
4. Medical or health services needed in the case of outpatient care, treatment, or rehabilitation for mental illness or emotional disturbance.

5. Except for the purposes of sexual sterilization, any minor who is or has been married shall be deemed an adult for the purpose of giving consent to surgical or medical treatment.

## F. YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI

You have the rights regarding the PHI that we maintain about you:

1. **Confidential Communications** – You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request to our Privacy Officer specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate **reasonable** requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.
2. **Requesting Restrictions** – You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your PHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment of your care, such as family member and friends. **We are not required to agree with your request;** however, if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies, or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI, you must make your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:
  - the information you wish restricted;
  - whether you are requesting to limit our practice’s use, disclosure or both;
  - to whom you want the limits to apply; and
  - the effective start and end of dates of the restriction
3. **Inspection of Copies** – You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the PHI that may be used to make decisions about you, including patient medical records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer at Bluestone Pediatrics, PLC, 4059 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801, in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your PHI. Our practice may charge a fee for the cost of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain circumstances; however, you may request a review of our denial.
4. **Psychotherapy Notes** – Most use and disclosures of psychotherapy notes will require the patient’s authorization. It is not a requirement, however, to describe how these notes are recorded or stored.
5. **Amendment** – You may ask us to amend your health information if you believe it is incorrect or incomplete, and you may request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to our Privacy Officer. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason support your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the PHI kept by or for the practice; (c) not part of the PHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; and (d) note created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.
6. **Accounting of Disclosures** – All of our patients have the right to request an “accounting of disclosures”. An “accounting of disclosures” is a list of certain non-routine disclosures our practice has made of your PHI for non-treatment or operations purposes. Use of your PHI as part of the routine patient care in our practice is not required to be documented. For example, the doctor shares information with the nurse; or the billing department using your information to file your insurance claim. In order to obtain an “accounting of disclosures” you must submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer. All requests for an “accounting of disclosures” must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosures and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first list you request within a 12-month period is free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists with the same 12-month period. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

7. **Disclosures** – (a) Most disclosures of PHI that constitute the sale of PHI will require the patients authorization; (b) most uses and disclosures for marketing purposes, including subsidized treatment communications, will require the patients authorization; (c) other uses and disclosures not otherwise described in this document will be made only with authorization for the patient.
8. **Right to Provide and Authorization for Other Uses and Disclosures** – Our practice will obtain written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your PHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your PHI for the reasons described in the authorization. Please note: we are required to retain records for your care.
9. **Notification** – Patients will receive notification of any breach of his/her unsecured PHI.
10. **Fundraising** – Patients may be contacted for fundraising purposes; however, the patient has the right to opt-out of such fundraising communication with each solicitation.
11. **Right to File a Complaint** – If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our practice or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. **You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.** Your complaint must be filed in writing within 180 days of the first day a complainant learns (or the day he or she should have known) that the violation occurred. The official complaint must name the practice alleged to be in violation of the statute and describe the events that have caused the complaining party to believe a violation occurred. To submit your written complaint to the DHHS, address it to: Office for Civil Rights, DHHS, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201. To submit your written complaint directly to us, please address it to: Privacy Officer, Bluestone Pediatrics, 4059 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.
12. **Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice** – You are entitled to receive a paper copy of privacy notices. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this notice, contact our Privacy Officer at Bluestone Pediatrics, PLC, 4059 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Again, if you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please contact our Privacy Officer at Bluestone Pediatrics, PLC, 4059 Quarles Court, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Effective date of this notice is December 1, 2003