



St. Louis County Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective Date: April 14, 2003

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.

St. Louis County provides many types of services, such as health and social services. St. Louis County staff must collect information about you to provide these services. St. Louis County knows that information we collect about you and your health is private. St. Louis County is required to protect this information by Federal and State law. We call this information 'protected health information (PHI).'

The Notice of Privacy Practices will tell you how St. Louis County may use or disclose information about you. Not all situations will be described. St. Louis County is required to give you a notice of our privacy practices for the information we collect and keep about you. St. Louis County is required to follow the terms of the notice currently in effect.

St. Louis County May Use and Disclose Information Without Your Authorization

- **For Treatment.** St. Louis County may use or disclose information with health care providers who are involved in your health care. For example, information may be shared to create and carry out a plan for your treatment.
- **For Payment.** St. Louis County may use or disclose information to get payment or to pay for the health care services you receive. For example, St. Louis County may provide PHI to bill your health plan for health care provided to you.
- **For Health Care Operations.** St. Louis County may use or disclose information in order to manage its programs and activities. St. Louis County may use PHI to review the quality of services you receive.
- **Appointments and Other Health Information.** St. Louis County may send you reminders for medical care or checkups. St. Louis County may send you information about health services that may be of interest to you.
- **For Public Health Activities.** St. Louis County keeps and updates vital records, such as births and deaths, and tracks some diseases.
- **For Health Oversight Activities.** St. Louis County may use or disclose information to

inspect or investigate health care providers.

- **As Required by Law and For Law Enforcement.** St. Louis County will use and disclose information when required or permitted by federal or state law or by a court order.
- **For Abuse Reports and Investigations.** St. Louis County is required by law to receive and investigate reports of abuse.
- **For Government Programs.** St. Louis County may use and disclose information for public benefits under other government programs. For example, St. Louis County may disclose information for the determination of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.
- **To Avoid Harm.** St. Louis County may disclose PHI to law enforcement in order to avoid a serious threat to the health and safety of a person or the public.
- **For Research.** St. Louis County uses information for studies and to develop reports. These reports do not identify specific people.
- **Disclosures to Family, Friends and Others.** St. Louis County may disclose information to your family or other persons who are involved in your medical care. You have the right to object to the sharing of this information.
- **Other Uses and Disclosures Require Your Written Authorization.** For other situations, St. Louis County will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing information. You may cancel this authorization at any time in writing. St. Louis County cannot take back any uses or disclosures already made with your authorization.
- **Other Laws Protect PHI.** Many St. Louis County programs have other laws for the use and disclosure of information about you. For example, you must give your written authorization for St. Louis County to use and disclose your mental health and chemical dependency treatment records.

Your PHI Privacy Rights

Records of Public Health information maintained by St. Louis County are governed by other State and Federal laws and are not subject to the rights described below.

- **Right to See and Get Copies of Your Records.** In most cases, you have the right to look at or get copies of your records. You must make the request in writing. You may be charged a fee for the cost of copying your records.
- **Right to Request a Correction or Update of Your Records.** You may ask St. Louis County to change or add missing information to your records if you think there is a

mistake. You must make the request in writing, and provide a reason for your request.

- **Right to Get a List of Disclosures.** You have the right to ask St. Louis County for a list of disclosures made after April 14, 2003. You must make the request in writing. This list will not include the times that information was disclosed for treatment, payment, or health care operations. The list will not include information provided directly to you or your family, or information that was sent with your authorization.
- **Right to Request Limits on Uses or Disclosures of PHI.** You have the right to ask that St. Louis County limit how your information is used or disclosed. You must make the request in writing and tell St. Louis County what information you want to limit and to whom you want the limits to apply. St. Louis County is not required to agree to the restriction. You can request that the restrictions be terminated in writing or verbally.
- **Right to Revoke Permission.** If you are asked to sign an authorization to use or disclose information, you can cancel that authorization at any time. You must make the request in writing. This will not affect information that has already been shared.
- **Right to Choose How We Communicate With You.** You have the right to ask that St. Louis County share information with you in a certain way or in a certain place. For example, you may ask St. Louis County to send information to your work address instead of your home address. You must make this request in writing. You do not have to explain the basis for your request.
- **Right to File a Complaint.** You have the right to file a complaint if you do not agree with how St. Louis County has used or disclosed information about you.
- **Right to Get a Paper Copy of This Notice.** You have the right to ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time.

How to Contact St. Louis County to Review, Correct, or Limit Your Protected Health Information (PHI)

You may ask to:

- Look at or copy your records
- Limit how information about you is used or disclosed
- Cancel your authorization
- Correct or change your records
- Have a list of the times St. Louis County disclosed information about you

St. Louis County may deny your request to look at, copy or change your records. If St. Louis County denies your request, St. Louis County will send you a letter that tells you why your request is being denied and how you can ask for a review of the denial. You will also receive information about how to file a complaint with the Minnesota Department of Human Services or with Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

How to File a Complaint or Report a Problem

You may contact any of the people listed below if you want to file a complaint or to report a problem with how St. Louis County has used or disclosed information about you. Your benefits will not be affected by any complaints you make. St. Louis County cannot retaliate against you for filing a complaint, cooperating in an investigation, or refusing to agree to something that you believe to be unlawful.

St. Louis County

Data Privacy Officer
100 North Fifth Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55802

Minnesota Department of Human Services

Office for Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action & Civil Rights
444 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-3812

Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Army Corps of Engineers Center
190 Est 5th Street, Suite 700
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101