



to give your health plan information about your treatment in order for your health plan to pay for such treatment. We also may tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment. In the event a bill is overdue we may need to give Health Information to a collection agency as necessary to help collect the bill or may disclose an outstanding debt to credit reporting agencies.

For Health Care Operations

We may use and disclose Health Information for health care operations purposes. These uses and disclosures are necessary to make sure that all of our patients receive quality care and for our operation and management purposes. For example, we may use Health Information to review the treatment and services you receive to check on the performance of our staff in caring for you. We also may disclose information to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students, and other personnel for educational and learning purposes. The entities and individuals covered by this Notice also may share information with each other for purposes of our joint health care operations.

Appointment Reminders/Treatment Alternatives/Health-Related Benefits and Services

We may use and disclose Health Information to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care, or to contact you to tell you about possible treatment options or alternatives or health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Fundraising Activities

We may use your demographic information to contact you in an effort to raise money for Columbia. Any fundraising letter you receive from us will provide you with instructions on how to opt out of any future fundraising letters. We will not use your diagnosis to fundraise unless you authorize us to do so in writing.

Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care

We may release Health Information to a person who is involved in your medical care or helps pay for your care, such as a family member or friend. We also may notify your family about your location or general condition or disclose such information to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort.

Research

Under certain circumstances, we may use and disclose Health Information for research purposes. For example, a research project may involve comparing the health and recovery of all patients who received one medication to those who received another, for the same condition. Before we use or disclose Health Information for research, however, the project will go through a special approval process. This process evaluates a proposed research project and its use of Health Information to balance the benefits of research with the need for privacy of Health Information. Even without special approval, we may permit researchers to look at records to help them identify patients who may be included in their research project or for similar purposes, so long as they do not remove or take a copy of any Health Information.

As Required by Law

We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by international, federal, state or local law.

To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety

We may use and disclose Health Information when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person. Any disclosure, however, will be to someone who may be able to help prevent the threat.

Business Associates

We may disclose Health Information to our business associates that perform functions on our behalf or provide us with services if the information is necessary for such functions or services. For example, we may use another company to