

NEW YORK CITY DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS BENEFIT FUNDS

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**TO: ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEW YORK CITY DISTRICT COUNCIL OF
CARPENTERS WELFARE FUND**

DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2022

RE: NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Section 1: Purpose of This Notice and Effective Date

**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.**

Effective date. The initial effective date of this Notice was April 14, 2003. This Notice has been revised effective as of September 23, 2013 and October 1, 2022.

This Notice is required by law. The New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund (the "Plan") is required by law to take reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of your personally identifiable health information and to inform you about:

1. The Plan's uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information (PHI),
2. Your rights to privacy with respect to your PHI,
3. The Plan's duties with respect to your PHI,
4. Your right to file a complaint with the Plan and with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and
5. The person or office you should contact for further information about the Plan's privacy practices.

Section 2: Your Protected Health Information

Protected Health Information (PHI) Defined

The term "Protected Health Information" (PHI) includes all information related to your past or present health condition that individually identifies you or could reasonably be used to identify you and is transferred to another entity or maintained by the Plan in oral, written, electronic or any other form.

When the Plan May Disclose Your PHI

Under the law, the Plan may disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization, or the opportunity to agree or object, in the following cases:

At your request. If you request it, the Plan is required to give you access to certain PHI in order to allow you to inspect and/or copy it.

As required by HHS. The Secretary of the HHS may require the disclosure of your PHI to investigate or determine the Plan's compliance with the privacy regulations.

For treatment, payment or health care operations. The Plan and its business associates will use PHI without your consent, authorization or opportunity to agree or object in order to carry out:

- a. Treatment,
- b. Payment, or
- c. Health care operations.

Treatment is the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services. It also includes but is not limited to consultations and referrals between one or more of your providers.

For example, the Plan may disclose to a treating orthodontist the name of your treating dentist so that the orthodontist may ask for your dental x-rays from the treating dentist.

Payment includes but is not limited to actions to make coverage determinations and payment including billing, claims management, subrogation, plan reimbursement, reviews for medical necessity and appropriateness of care, utilization review and pre-authorizations.

For example, the Plan may tell a doctor whether you are eligible for coverage or what percentage of the bill will be paid by the Plan. If the Plan contracts with third parties to help it with payment operations, such as a physician that reviews medical claims, the Plan will also disclose information to them. These third parties are known as "business associates."

Health care operations includes but is not limited to quality assessment and improvement, reviewing competence or qualifications of health care professionals, underwriting, premium rating and other insurance activities relating to creating or renewing insurance contracts. It also includes disease management, case management, conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions including fraud and abuse compliance programs, business planning and development, business management and general administrative activities.

For example, the Plan may use information about your claims to refer you into a disease management program, a well-pregnancy program, project future benefit costs or audit the accuracy of its claims processing functions.

Disclosure to the Plan's Trustees. The Plan will also disclose PHI to the Plan Administrator of the New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund for purposes related to treatment, payment, and health care operations, and the Plan has amended the Plan Documents to permit this use and disclosure as required by federal law.

When the Disclosure of Your PHI Requires Your Written Authorization

Although the Plan does not routinely obtain psychotherapy notes, it must generally obtain your written authorization before the Plan will use or disclose psychotherapy notes about you.

Psychotherapy notes are separately filed notes about your conversations with your mental health professional during a counseling session. They do not include summary information about your mental health treatment. The Plan is not likely to have access to or maintain these types of notes.

Marketing Purposes. If the Plan uses or discloses your PHI for marketing purposes (a communication that encourages you to purchase or use a product or service) and if the Plan receives direct or indirect financial remuneration (payment) from the entity whose product or service is being marketed, the Plan must generally obtain your written authorization before the Plan will use or disclose your PHI for marketing. The Plan is not likely to engage in marketing.

Payment or other benefit. The Plan must generally obtain your written authorization before receiving direct or indirect remuneration (payment or other benefit) in exchange for receipt of your PHI. The Plan is not likely to exchange your PHI for remuneration.

Use or Disclosure of Your PHI That Requires You Be Given an Opportunity to Agree or Disagree Before the Use or Release

Disclosure of your PHI to family members, other relatives, your close personal friends, and any other person you choose without your written consent or authorization is allowed under federal law if:

1. The information is directly relevant to the individual's involvement with your care or payment for that care, and
2. You have either agreed to the disclosure or have been given an opportunity to object and have not objected.

Please contact the Fund's Privacy/Security Officer if you wish to limit access to your PHI by any of the persons described above.

Use or Disclosure of Your PHI for Which Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object Is Not Required

The Plan is allowed under federal law to use and disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization under the following circumstances:

1. **When required by law.**
2. **Public health purposes.** To an authorized public health authority if required by law or for public health and safety purposes. PHI may also be used or disclosed if you have been exposed to a communicable disease or are at risk of spreading a disease or condition, if authorized by law.
3. **Domestic violence or abuse situations.** When authorized or required by law to report information about abuse, neglect or domestic violence to public authorities if a reasonable belief exists that you may be a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence. In such case, the Plan will promptly inform you that such a disclosure has been or will be made unless that notice would cause a risk of serious harm. For the purpose of reporting child abuse or neglect, it is not necessary to inform the minor that such a disclosure has been or will be made. Disclosure may generally be made to the minor's parents or other representatives, although there may be circumstances under federal or state law when the parents or other representatives may not be given access to the minor's PHI.
4. **Health oversight activities.** To a health oversight agency for oversight activities authorized by law. These activities include civil, administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary actions (for example, to investigate complaints against health care providers) and other activities necessary for appropriate oversight of government benefit programs (for example, to the Department of Labor).
5. **Court proceedings.** When required for judicial or administrative proceedings. For example, your PHI may be disclosed in response to a subpoena or discovery request, provided that certain conditions are met, including that: (a) the requesting party must give the Plan satisfactory assurances that a good faith attempt has been made to provide you with written notice, and (b) the notice provided sufficient information about the proceeding to permit you to raise an objection, and (c) no objections were raised or were resolved in favor of disclosure by the court or tribunal.
6. **Law enforcement health purposes.** When required for law enforcement purposes (for example, to report certain types of wounds).
7. **Law enforcement emergency purposes.** For certain law enforcement purposes, including:
 - a. identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person, and
 - b. disclosing information about an individual who is or is suspected to be a victim of a crime.
8. **Determining cause of death and organ donation.** When required to be given to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person, determine a cause of death or other authorized duties. The Plan may also disclose PHI for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation purposes.
9. **Funeral purposes.** When required to be given to funeral directors to carry out their duties with respect to the decedent.
10. **Research.** For research, subject to certain conditions.

- 11. Health or safety threats.** When, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, the Plan in good faith believes the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public and the disclosure is to a person reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.
- 12. Workers' compensation programs.** When authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Other Uses or Disclosures

The Plan may contact you to provide you information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

The Plan may disclose protected health information to the Plan Administrator of the Plan for reasons regarding the administration of the Plan. The "Plan Administrator" of this Plan is the Board of Trustees of the New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund.

Any other Plan uses and disclosures not described in Section 2 of this Notice will be made only if you provide the Plan with written authorization, subject to your right to revoke your authorization.

Section 3: Your Individual Privacy Rights

Breach Notification

If a breach of your unsecured PHI occurs, the Plan will notify you.

You May Request Restrictions on PHI Uses and Disclosures

You may request the Plan to:

- 1.** Restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI to carry out treatment, payment or health care operations, or
- 2.** Restrict uses and disclosures to family members, relatives, friends or other persons identified by you who are involved in your care.

The Plan, however, is not required to agree to your request.

You should make all requests to the Privacy/Security Officer at:

Privacy/Security Officer
New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund
395 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

You May Request Confidential Communications

The Plan will accommodate an individual's reasonable request to receive communications of PHI **by alternative means or at alternative locations** where the request includes a statement that disclosure could endanger the individual.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your PHI. You should make such requests to the Privacy/Security Officer at the above address.

You May Inspect and Copy PHI

You have a right to inspect and obtain a copy of your PHI (in hardcopy or electronic form) contained in a "designated record set," for as long as the Plan maintains the PHI. You may request your hardcopy or electronic information in a format that is convenient for you and the Plan will honor that request to the extent possible. You also may request a summary of your PHI.

The Plan must provide the requested information within 30 days. A single 30-day extension is allowed if the Plan is unable to comply with the deadline, and if the Plan provides you with a notice of the reason for the delay and the expected date by which the requested information will be provided.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request access to the PHI in your designated record set. A reasonable cost-based fee for creating or copying the PHI, or preparing a summary of your PHI may be charged. Requests for access to PHI should be made to the Privacy/Security Officer at the address above.

If access is denied, you or your personal representative will be provided with a written denial setting forth the basis for the denial, a description of how you may exercise your review rights and a description of how you may complain to the Plan and HHS.

Designated Record Set: Includes your medical records and billing records that are maintained by or for a covered health care provider. Records include enrollment, payment, billing, claims adjudication and case or medical management record systems maintained by or for a health plan or other information used in whole or in part by or for the covered entity to make decisions about you. Information used for quality control or peer review analyses and not used to make decisions about you is not included.

You Have the Right to Amend Your PHI

You have the right to request that the Plan amend your PHI or a record about you in a designated record set for as long as the PHI is maintained in the designated record set subject to certain exceptions. *See* the Plan's Right to Amend Policy in the Plan's HIPAA Policies and Procedures document for a list of exceptions.

The Plan has 60 days after receiving your request to act on it. The Plan is allowed a single 30-day extension if the Plan is unable to comply with the 60-day deadline. If the Plan denied your request in whole or part, the Plan must provide you with a written denial that explains the basis for the decision. You or your personal representative may then submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial and have that statement included with any future disclosures of that PHI.

You should make your request to amend the PHI to the Privacy/Security Office at the address found above.

You or your personal representative will be required to complete a form to request amendment of the PHI.

You Have the Right to Receive an Accounting of the Plan's PHI Disclosures

At your request, the Plan will also provide you with an accounting of certain disclosures by the Plan of your PHI. The Plan does not have to provide you with an accounting of disclosures related to treatment, payment, or health care operations, or disclosures made to you or authorized by you in writing. *See* the Plan's Accounting for Disclosure Policy in the Plan's HIPAA Policies and Procedures document for the complete list of disclosures for which an accounting is not required.

The Plan has 60 days to provide the accounting. The Plan is allowed an additional 30 days if the Plan gives you a written statement of the reasons for the delay and the date by which the accounting will be provided.

If you request more than one accounting within a 12-month period, the Plan will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for each subsequent accounting.

You Have the Right to Receive a Paper Copy of This Notice Upon Request

To obtain a paper copy of this Notice, contact the Privacy/Security Officer at the address found above. This right applies even if you have agreed to receive the Notice electronically.

Your Personal Representative

You may exercise your rights through a personal representative. Your personal representative will be required to produce evidence of authority to act on your behalf before the personal representative will be given access to your PHI or be allowed to take any action for you. Proof of such authority may take one of the following forms:

- A power of attorney for health care purposes, notarized by a notary public,
- A court order of appointment of the person as the conservator or guardian of the individual,
- An Appointment of Personal Representative form that is completed and signed by you, or
- The status of the personal representative as the parent of a minor child.

The Plan retains discretion to deny access to your PHI to a personal representative to provide protection to those vulnerable people who depend on others to exercise their rights under these rules and who may be subject to abuse or neglect. This also applies to personal representatives of minors.

You May Request Restrictions on PHI Uses and Disclosures. Please refer to the beginning of Section 3 of this Notice for additional information.

You should also review the Plan's Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Personal Representatives for a more complete description of the circumstances where the Plan will automatically consider an individual to be a personal representative. This information can be found in the Plan's HIPAA Policies and Procedures document.

Section 4: The Plan's Duties

Maintaining Your Privacy

The Plan is required by law to maintain the privacy of your PHI and to provide you and your eligible dependents with notice of the Plan's legal duties and privacy practices. In addition, the Plan may not (and does not) use your Genetic Information that is PHI for underwriting purposes.

This Notice is effective October 1, 2022 and the Plan is required to comply with the terms of this Notice. However, the Plan reserves the right to change its privacy practices and to apply the changes to any PHI received or maintained by the Plan prior to that date. If a privacy practice is changed, a revised version of this Notice will be provided to you and to all past and present participants and beneficiaries for whom the Plan still maintains PHI. All notices will be mailed to the participant's address on record.

If material changes are made to this Notice, they will be posted on the Plan's website by no later than the effective date of the revision and thereafter sent in the Plan's next annual mailing.

Material Changes are changes to:

- The uses or disclosures of PHI,
- Your individual rights,
- The duties of the Plan, or
- Other privacy practices stated in this Notice.

Disclosing Only the Minimum Necessary Protected Health Information

When using or disclosing PHI or when requesting PHI from another covered entity, the Plan will make reasonable efforts not to use, disclose or request more than the minimum amount of PHI necessary to accomplish the intended purpose of the use, disclosure or request, taking into consideration practical and technological limitations.

However, the minimum necessary standard will not apply in the following situations:

- Disclosures to or requests by a health care provider for treatment,
- Uses or disclosures made to you,
- Disclosures made to the Secretary of the HHS pursuant to its enforcement activities under HIPAA,
- Uses or disclosures required by law, and
- Uses or disclosures required for the Plan's compliance with legal regulations.

This Notice does not apply to information that has been de-identified. De-identified information is information that:

- Does not identify you, and
- With respect to which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify you.

Disclosures to the Plan Administrator (Board of Trustees)

As described in the Plan document, the Plan may share PHI with the Plan Sponsor (the Board of Trustees) for limited administrative purposes, such as information compiled in connection with determining claims and appeals, performing quality assurance functions and auditing and monitoring the Plan. The Plan shares the minimum information necessary to accomplish these functions.

In addition, the Plan may use or disclose "summary health information" to the Plan Administrator for obtaining premium bids or modifying, amending or terminating the Plan. Summary information summarizes the claims history, claims expenses or type of claims experienced by individuals for whom the Plan has provided health benefits under a group health plan. Identifying information will be deleted from summary health information, in accordance with HIPAA.

Section 5: Your Right to File a Complaint with the Plan or the HHS Secretary

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Plan in care of:

NYCDCC Welfare Fund
Notice of Privacy Practices
October 1, 2022

Privacy/Security Officer
New York City District Council of Carpenters Welfare Fund
395 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the HHS. Filing instructions are available at:
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/index.html>

The Plan may not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Section 6: If You Need More Information

If you have any questions regarding this Notice or the subjects addressed in it, you may contact the Privacy/Security Officer.

Section 7: Conclusion

PHI use and disclosure by the Plan is regulated by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, known as HIPAA. You may find these rules at 45 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 160 and 164. This Notice attempts to summarize the regulations. The regulations will supersede this notice if there is any discrepancy between the information in this Notice and the regulations.