

# Disclosures to Families & Loved Ones

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Revised:

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## Purpose:

This office honors the important role that families, friends, and other loved ones play in supporting our patients' health care and treatment. At the same time, we are committed to protecting our patients' privacy as well as complying with both state and federal law. Accordingly, disclosure to other people, even family, must remain a decision that rests with the patient. To the extent that is possible, we will follow the alternatives addressed in this policy.

## Policy:

- This practice will comply with any patient's request for us to share their personal health information with family member(s) and other designated person(s). We will comply with their request as long as: 1) the oral request is noted in the patient's record (e.g. "at patient's request will share information with John Doe"), 2) the patient is competent to make this decision, and 3) the patient has not revoked that request. Note that revocations or limitations must also be documented in the patient's record.
- Patients who arrive at this office with others will be asked privately if they would like those persons present while they are being seen and/or treated.
- Patients who are undergoing procedures requiring anesthesia will be asked if they would like information shared with anyone prior to their awakening.
- If the individual cannot express his/her request for sharing information, because of incapacity or an emergency circumstance, our physician(s) will exercise their professional judgment and determine whether the disclosure is in the best interest of the individual. If so, we will disclose only the protected health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement with the individual's health care.
- Patient family members, neighbors, etc. that come to this office to pick up prescriptions, equipment, directions, or other items associated with a patient's care will be permitted to do so if it is reasonable to infer they are involved with our patient's care.
- Notification of appropriate third parties also may occur without a patient's request or approval, to the extent this office is involved with disaster relief services, or acting in the role of notifying a family member, a personal representative of the individual, or another person responsible for the care of the individual of the individual's location, general condition, or death.