

# **Goochland County Department of Fire-Rescue**



## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

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.

Goochland County Fire-Rescue (“GCFR”) is required by law to maintain the privacy of certain confidential health care information, known as Protected Health Information or PHI, and to provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. GCFR is also required to abide by the terms of the version of this Notice currently in effect.

*Uses and Disclosures of PHI:* GCFR may use PHI for the purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations, in most cases without your written permission. Examples of our use of your PHI:

For treatment. This includes such things as obtaining verbal and written information about your medical condition and treatment from you as well as from others, such as doctors and nurses who give orders to allow us to provide treatment to you. We may give your PHI to other health care providers involved in your treatment, and may transfer your PHI via radio or telephone to the hospital or dispatch center.

For payment. This includes any activities we must undertake in order to get reimbursed for the services we provide to you, including such things as submitting bills to insurance companies, making medical necessity determinations, and collecting outstanding accounts. You have the right to pay in full out-of-pocket and request that our ambulance service not submit a claim to your insurance company.

For health care operations. This includes quality assurance activities, licensing, and training programs to ensure that our personnel meet our standards of care and follow established policies and procedures, as well as certain other management functions.

Reminders for Scheduled Transports and Information on Other Services. We may also contact you to provide you with a reminder of any scheduled appointments for non-emergency ambulance and medical transportation, or to provide information about other services we render.

Fundraising. We may contact you when we are in the process of raising funds for Goochland County Fire-Rescue. You may choose to “opt out” of receiving fundraising notices by contacting the Privacy Officer.

*Use and Disclosure of PHI without Your Authorization.* GCFR is permitted to use PHI *without* your written authorization, or opportunity to object, in certain situations, and unless prohibited by a more stringent state law, including:

- For the treatment, payment, or health care operations activities of another health care provider who treats you;
- As required by law, including reporting for public health purposes;
- To a family member, other relative, or close personal friend or other individual involved in your care if we obtain your verbal agreement to do so or if we give you an opportunity to object to such a disclosure and you do not raise an objection, and in certain other circumstances where we are unable to obtain your agreement and believe the disclosure is in your best interests;
- When authorization is required for psychotherapy notes;
- To report abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
- For health oversight activities including audits or government investigations, inspections, disciplinary proceedings, and other administrative or judicial actions undertaken by the government (or their contractors) by law to oversee the health care system;
- For judicial and administrative proceedings as required by a court or administrative order, or in some cases in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other legal process;
- For law enforcement activities in limited situations, such as when responding to a warrant;
- For military, national defense and security and other special government functions;
- To avert a serious threat to the health and safety of a person or the public at large;

- For workers' compensation purposes, and in compliance with workers' compensation laws;
- To coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors for identifying a deceased person, determining cause of death, or carrying on their duties as authorized by law;
- If you are an organ donor, we may release health information to organizations that handle organ procurement or organ, eye or tissue transplantation or to an organ donation bank, as necessary to facilitate organ donation and transplantation;
- For research projects, but this will be subject to strict oversight and approvals;
- We may also use or disclose health information about you in a way that does not personally identify you or reveal who you are.

Any other use or disclosure of PHI, other than those listed above will only be made with your written authorization. You may revoke your authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that we have already used or disclosed medical information in reliance on that authorization.

*Patient Rights:* As a patient, you have a number of rights with respect to your PHI, including:

*The right to access, copy, or inspect your PHI.* This means you may inspect and copy most of the medical information about you that we maintain. We will normally provide you with access to this information within 30 days of your request. In limited circumstances, we may deny you access to your medical information, and if you disagree with our decision, you may obtain a review of certain types of denials. We have available forms to request access to your PHI. We will provide a written response if we deny you access and let you know your review rights. You also have the right to receive confidential communications of your PHI. To assure your records are discussed and disclosed only to the proper person (you or your legally authorized representative), we normally require you to appear in person at our office to access or discuss your medical information. However, we will honor reasonable requests by you to receive communications about your medical information by alternative means or at alternative locations. If you wish to inspect and copy your medical information, you should contact our HIPAA Compliance Officer, whose address and phone number are listed below.

*The right to amend your PHI.* You have the right to ask us to amend written medical information that we may have about you if you think it is inaccurate or incomplete. We will generally amend your information within 60 days of your request and will notify you when we have amended the information. We are permitted by law to deny your request to amend your medical information only in certain circumstances, like when we believe the information you have asked us to amend is correct and complete. If you wish to request that we amend the medical information that we have about you, you should contact our HIPAA Compliance Officer.

*The right to request an accounting.* We are required to keep a record of certain disclosures of your medical information, and you may request an accounting of what that record contains. Disclosures that we are NOT required to keep a record of include:

- Information we have used or disclosed for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations,
- When we share your health information with our business associates, like our billing company or a medical facility from or to which we have transported you, or
- Information for which you have already given us written authorization to disclose.

We are required to keep this record of disclosures for the past six years, or back to the compliance date of January 1, 2013 for federal privacy regulations, whichever is later. If you wish to request an accounting of these disclosures, contact our HIPAA Compliance Officer.

*The right to request that we restrict the uses and disclosures of your PHI.* You have the right to request that we restrict how we use and disclose the medical information that we have about you. GCFR is not required to agree to any restrictions you request, but any restrictions agreed to by GCFR in writing are binding on GCFR.

*The right to be notified of a breach.* You have the right to be notified in the event that we (or one of our business associates) discover a breach of unsecured PHI.

*Internet, Electronic Mail, and the Right to Obtain Copy of Paper Notice on Request.* If we maintain a web site, we will prominently post a copy of this Notice on our web site. If you allow us, we will forward you this Notice by electronic mail instead of on paper and you may always request a paper copy of the Notice.

*Revisions to the Notice:* GCFR reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time, and the changes will be effective immediately and will apply to all protected health information that we maintain. Any material changes to the Notice will be promptly posted in our facilities and posted to our web site, if we maintain one. You can get a copy of the latest version of this Notice by contacting our HIPAA Compliance Officer.

*Your Legal Rights and Complaints:* You also have the right to complain to us, or to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint with us or to the government. Should you have any questions, comments, or complaints you may direct all inquiries to our HIPAA Compliance Officer.

*HIPAA Compliance Officer Contact Information:*

HIPAA Compliance Officer  
Goochland County Fire-Rescue  
PO Box 247  
Goochland, Virginia 23063  
(804) 556-5344

*Effective Date of the Notice:* January 1, 2013

Notice Revision Dates (as required by law):

September 23, 2013  
June 13, 2016  
March 13, 2023