



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.

This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how protected health information (PHI) may be used or disclosed by your health plan to carry out payment, health care operations and for other purposes that are permitted by law. This Notice of Privacy Practices also explains your health plan's legal obligations concerning your PHI, and describes your rights to access, amend, and manage your PHI.

PHI is individually identifiable information, including demographic information, collected from your or created and received by a health care provider, a health plan, your employer, (when functioning on behalf of a group health plan), or a health care clearinghouse and that relates to: (i) your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition; (ii) the provision of health care to you; or (iii) the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to you.

This Notice of Privacy Practices has been drafted to be consistent with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. Any terms not defined in this Notice have the same meaning as they have in the HIPAA Privacy Rule. If you have any questions about this Notice or the policies and procedures described herein, please contact Mountain Health CO-OP Privacy Office at (406) 447-9510.

Effective Date:

This Notice of Privacy Practices is effective **January 1, 2020**.

The Plan's Responsibilities:

Mountain Health CO-OP (the CO-OP) is required by law to maintain the privacy of all medical information within its organization; provide this Notice of Privacy Practices to all Policyholders and Certificateholders Persons; inform Policyholders and Certificateholders of our legal obligations; and advise Policyholders and Certificateholders of additional rights concerning their medical information. The CO-OP must follow the privacy practices contained in this notice and continue to do so until this notice is changed or replaced.

The CO-OP reserves the right to change its privacy practices and terms of this notice at any time, provided applicable law permits the changes. Any changes made in these privacy practices will be effective for all medical information that is maintained including information created or received before the changes were made. All Policyholders and Certificateholders will be notified of any changes by receiving a new Notice of Privacy Practices.

The CO-OP collects and maintains oral, written and electronic information to administer our business and to provide products, services and information of importance to members. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural security safeguards in the handling and maintenance of your information in accordance with applicable state and federal standards, to protect against risks such as loss, destruction or misuse.

You may request a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time by contacting our Compliance Officer, Mountain Health CO-OP, PO Box 5358, Helena MT, 59604 or (406) 447-9510.



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Use and Disclosures of PHI:

The following is a description of how the CO-OP is most likely to use and/or disclose your PHI. The CO-OP has the right to use and disclose your PHI for all activities that are included within the definitions of “treatment”, “payment” and “healthcare operations” as set out in 45 CFR 164.501 (this provision is part of the HIPAA Privacy Rule). Not all of the activities listed in this Notice are included within these definitions. Please refer to 45 CFR 164.501 for a complete list. In order to administer your health benefits, the CO-OP may use or disclose your health information in various ways without your authorization, including:

Treatment: Your medical information may be disclosed to a doctor or hospital that requests it to provide treatment to you or for disease and case management programs.

Payment: Your medical information may be used or disclosed to pay claims for services which are covered under your health care coverage.

Health Care Operations: Your medical information may be used and disclosed to determine premiums, conduct quality assessment and improvement activities, to engage in care coordination or case management, to pursue Right of Recovery and Reimbursement/Subrogation, accreditation, conducting and arranging legal services, underwriting and rating, and for other administrative purposes.

Other Permissible Uses and Disclosures of PHI:

The following describes other possible ways in which the CO-OP may (and is permitted to) use and/or disclose your PHI.

Abuse or Neglect: The CO-OP may disclose your PHI to a government authority that is authorized by law to receive reports or abuse, neglect or domestic violence.

Required by Law: Your medical information may be used or disclosed as required by state or federal law. For example, we will use and disclose your Personal Health Information in responding to court and administrative orders and subpoenas, and to comply with workers’ compensation laws. We will disclose your PHI when required by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and state regulatory authorities.

Coroners, Medical Examiners, Funeral Directors, Organ Donation Organizations: The CO-OP may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner for purposes of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or for the coroner or medical examiner to perform other duties authorized by law. The CO-OP also may disclose, as authorized by law, information to funeral directors so that they may carry out their duties. Further, the CO-OP may disclose PHI to organizations that handle organ, eye, or tissue donation and transplantation.

Matters of Public Interest: Medical information may be released to appropriate authorities under reasonable assumption that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. Medical information may be released to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or to the health or safety of others. Medical information may be disclosed when necessary to assist law enforcement officials to capture an individual who has admitted



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to participation in a crime or has escaped from lawful custody. Medical information may be disclosed for purposes of child abuse reporting.

Health Oversight Activities: The CO-OP may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as: audits; investigations; inspections, licensure, or disciplinary actions; or civil, administrative, or criminal proceedings or actions. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee: (i) the health care system; (ii) government benefit programs; other government regulatory programs; and (iv) compliance with civil rights laws.

Court or Administrative Order: Medical information may be disclosed in response to a court or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process, under certain circumstances.

Military Authorities: Medical information of Armed Forces personnel may be disclosed to Military authorities under certain circumstances. Medical information may be disclosed to federal officials as required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities.

Research: Your medical information may be used or disclosed for research purposes provided that certain established measures to protect your privacy are in place.

Inmates: If you are an inmate of a correctional institution, the CO-OP may disclose your PHI to the correctional institution or to a law enforcement official for (i) the institution to provide health care to you; (ii) your health and safety and the health and safety of others; or (iii) the safety and security of the correctional institution.

Workers' Compensation: The CO-OP may disclose your PHI to comply with workers' compensation laws and other similar programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

Emergency Situations: The CO-OP may disclose your PHI in an emergency situation, or if you are incapacitated or not present, to a family member, close personal friend, authorized disaster relief agency, or any other person previously identified by you. The CO-OP will only disclose the PHI that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your case.

Fundraising Activities: The CO-OP may use or disclose your PHI for fundraising activities, such as raising money for a charitable foundation or similar entity to help finance its activities. If the CO-OP contacts you for fundraising activities, the CO-OP will give you the opt-out to stop receiving such communications in the future.

Group Health Plan Disclosures: The CO-OP may disclose your PHI to a sponsor of the group health plan, such as an employer or other entity that is providing a health care program to you. The CO-OP can disclose your PHI to that entity if that entity has contracted with us to administer your health care program on its behalf.

Authorizations: You may provide written authorization to use your medical information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. You may revoke this authorization in writing at any time, but this revocation will not affect any use or disclosure permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your medical information for any reason except those described in this notice.



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Personal Representatives: Your medical information may be disclosed to you or to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to assist with your health care or with payment for your health care but only if you agree we may do so or if they have the legal right to act for you, as described in the Individual Rights section of this notice.

Underwriting: No medical information will be received from you for underwriting, premium rating or other activities relating to the creation, renewal or replacement of health care coverage or benefits. Since no medical information is required for underwriting, no medical information can or will be provided to others.

Marketing: Your medical information may be used to contact you with information about health-related benefits, services or treatment alternatives that may be of interest to you. Your medical information may be disclosed to a business associate to assist us in these activities. Unless the information is provided to you by a general newsletter or in person or is for products or services of nominal value, you may opt-out of receiving further information by telling us.

Business Associates: From time to time we engage third parties to provide various services for us. Whenever an arrangement with such a third party involves the use or disclosure of your PHI, we will have a written contract with that third party designed to protect the privacy of your Health Information. For example, we may share your information with business associates who process claims or conduct disease management programs on our behalf. Such parties might include health care providers, Third Party Administrators, Pharmacy Benefit Managers and vendors that assist the CO-OP with insurance functions.

Uses and Disclosures of your PHI that Require Your Authorization:

Sale of PHI: The CO-OP will request your written authorization before it makes any disclosures that is deemed a sale of your PHI, meaning that the CO-OP is receiving compensation for disclosing the PHI in this manner.

Psychotherapy Notes: The CO-OP will request your written authorization to use or disclose any of your psychotherapy notes that the CO-OP may have on file with limited exception, such as for certain treatment, payment of health operation functions.

Other uses and disclosures of your PHI that are not described above will be made only with your written authorization. If you provide such authorization, you may revoke the authorization in writing and this revocation will be effective for future uses and disclosures, relating on the authorization.

Required Disclosures of your PHI:

The following describes disclosures that the CO-OP is required by law to make.

Disclosures to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: The CO-OP is required to disclose your PHI to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when the Secretary is investigating or determining the CO-OP's compliance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule.



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Disclosures to You: The CO-OP is required to disclose to you most of your PHI in a designated record set when you request access to this information. A designated record contains medical and billing records as well as other records that are used to make decisions about your health care benefits. The CO-OP also is required to provide, upon your request, an accounting of most disclosures of your PHI that are for reasons other than payment and health care operations and not disclosed through signed authorization. The CO-OP will disclose your PHI to an individual who has been designated by you as your personal representative and who has qualified for such designation in accordance with applicable state law. However, before the CO-OP will disclose PHI to such a person, you must submit a written notice of his/her designation, along with the documentation that supports his/her qualification (such as a power of attorney).

Even if you designate a personal representative, the HIPAA Privacy Rule permits the CO-OP to elect not to treat the person as your personal representative if the CO-OP has a reasonable belief that: (i) you have been, or may be subjected to domestic violence, abuse, or neglect by such person; (ii) treating such person as your personal representative could endanger you; or (iii) the CO-OP determines, in the exercise of its professional judgement, that it is not in your best interest to treat the person as your personal representative.

Your Rights:

Access: You have the right to receive or review copies of your medical information, with limited exceptions. You may at any time during the filing period, receive reasonable access to and copies of all documents, records, and other information upon request and free of charge. Documents may be viewed at the CO-OP office, 810 Hialeah Court, Helena, MT 59601 between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. You may also request that the CO-OP mail copies of all documentation including electronic delivery to an electronic mail address. Any request to obtain access to your medical information must be made in writing. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information above or you may send us a letter requesting access to the address located above. If your PHI is maintained in an electronic health record ("EHR"), you also have the right to request that an electronic copy be sent to you or to another individual or entity.

Accounting: You have the right to receive an accounting of the disclosures of your medical information made by our company or by a business associate of our company. This accounting will list each disclosure that was made of your medical information for any reason other than treatment, payment, health care operations and certain other activities since January 1, 2014; however, if disclosures for purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations were made through an EHR, you have the right to request an accounting for such disclosures made during the previous three years. This accounting will include the date the disclosure was made, the name of the person or entity the disclosure was made to, a description of the medical information disclosed, the reason for the disclosure, and certain other information. If you request an accounting more than once in a 12-month period, there may be a reasonable cost-based charge for responding to these additional requests. For a more detailed explanation of the fee structure, please contact our office using the information at the end of this notice.

Designation of Personal Representative: You have the right to designate a family member, friend or other person as your personal representative. Your medical information may be disclosed to your



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personal representative to the extent necessary to help with your health care or with payment for your health care. You may obtain a form to designate a personal representative by using the contact information at the end of this notice.

Restriction on Disclosures: You have the right to request restrictions on our use or disclosure of your medical information. Generally, we are not required to agree to these additional requests. If you paid out-of-pocket for a specific item or service, you have the right to request that medical information with respect to that item or service not be disclosed to a health plan for purposes of payment or health care operations and we are required to honor that request. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we communicate about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care. Any agreement to restrictions on the use and disclosure of your medical information must be in writing and signed by a person authorized to make such an agreement on behalf of the company; such restrictions shall not apply to disclosures made prior to granting the request for restrictions. The company will not be bound unless the agreement is so memorialized in writing.

Confidential Communications: You have the right to request confidential communications about your medical information by alternative means or alternative locations. You must inform the company that confidential communication by alternative means or to an alternative location is required to avoid endangering you. You must make your request in writing and you must state that the information could endanger you if it is not communicated by the alternative means or to the alternative location requested. The company must accommodate the request if it is reasonable, specifies the alternative means or location, and continues to permit us to collect premium and pay claims under your health plan.

Amendment: You have the right to request that the company amend your medical information. Your request must be in writing and it must explain why the information should be amended. The company may deny your request if the medical information you seek to amend was not created by our company or for certain other reasons. If your request is denied, the company will provide a written explanation of the denial. You may respond with a statement of disagreement to be appended to the information you wanted amended. If the company accepts your request to amend the information, the company will make reasonable efforts to inform others, including the people you name, of the amendment and to include the changes in any future disclosures of that information.

Right to Inspect and Copy: You have the right to inspect and copy PHI that is contained in a “designated record set”. Generally, a designated record set contains medical and billing records as well as other records that are used to make decisions about your health care benefits. However, you may not inspect psychotherapy notes or certain other information that may be contained in a designated record set. To inspect and copy your PHI, you must submit a request to the CO-OP privacy official using the contact information found at the bottom of this Notice. The CO-OP may deny your request to inspect or copy in certain limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. To request a review, you must contact the CO-OP Privacy Office. A licensed health care professional chosen by us will review your request and the denial. The person performing the review will not be the same one who denied your initial request. Under certain conditions, the denial will not be reviewable.

Breach Notification: You have the right to receive notice of a breach. We are required to notify you by first class mail or by e-mail (if you have indicated a preference to receive information by e-mail), of any breaches



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of Unsecured Protected Health Information as soon as possible, but in any event, no later than 60 days following the discovery of the breach. "Unsecured Protected Health Information" is information that is not secured through the use of a technology or methodology identified by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to render the Personal Health Information unusable, unreadable, and undecipherable to unauthorized users.

The notice is required to include the following information:

A brief description of the breach, including the date of the breach and the date of its discovery, if known; a description of the type of Unsecured Personal Health Information involved in the breach; steps you should take to protect yourself from potential harm resulting from the breach; a brief description of the actions we are taking to investigate the breach, mitigate losses, and protect against further breaches; and contact information, including a toll-free telephone number, e-mail address, Web site, or postal address to permit you to ask questions or obtain additional information.

In the event the breach involves 10 or more patients whose contact information is out of date, we will post a notice of the breach on the home page of our website or in a major print or broadcast media. If the breach involves more than 500 individuals in the state or jurisdiction, we will send notices to prominent media outlets. If the breach involves more than 500 individuals, we are required to immediately notify the Secretary of Health and Human Services. We also are required to submit an annual report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services of a breach that involves less than 500 individuals during the year, and we will maintain a written log of breaches involving less than 500 patients.

Right to a Copy of this Notice: You have the right to request a copy of this Notice at any time by contacting the CO-OP Privacy Office. If you receive this Notice on the CO-OP website or by electronic mail, you are entitled to request a paper copy.

Potential Impact of State Law:

The HIPAA Privacy Rule regulations generally do not "preempt" (or take precedence over) state privacy or other applicable laws that provide individuals greater privacy protections. As a result, the extent state law applies, the privacy laws of state, or other federal laws, rather than the HIPAA Privacy Rule regulations, might impose a privacy standard under which the CO-OP will be required to operate. For example, where such laws have been enacted, the CO-OP will follow more stringent state privacy laws that relate to uses and disclosures of PHI concerning HIV or AIDS, mental health, substance abuse/chemical dependency, genetic testing, reproductive rights, etc.

Complaints, Questions and Concerns:

If you want more information concerning our privacy practices, or you have questions or concerns, please contact our Privacy Office. If you are concerned that: (1) the company has violated your privacy rights; (2) you disagree with a decision made about access to your medical information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your medical information; (3) to request that the company communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information below. You may also submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The address to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will be provided upon request.



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The CO-OP supports your right to protect the privacy of your medical information. There will be no retaliation in any way if you choose to file a complaint with Mountain Health Cooperative or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Privacy Office

Mountain Health CO-OP

P.O. Box 5358, Helena, MT 59604

(406) 447-9510

E-mail: info@mhc.coop