

Carpenters Health and Welfare Trust Fund for California: Notice of Privacy Practices

Esta noticia es disponible en español si usted lo solicita. Por favor contacte el Funcionario de Privacidad (510-639-4301).

CARPENTERS HEALTH AND WELFARE TRUST FUND FOR CALIFORNIA

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.

In this notice, the name “Carpenters Health and Welfare Fund” and the terms “we,” “us,” and “our” encompass not only this health plan itself but also Business Associates acting on behalf of the plan or providing services to the plan. These Business Associates may include a third party administrator, a pharmacy benefits manager, and professionals such as attorneys, auditors, and consultants. It does not include the Board of Trustees, the Plan Sponsor, which will be specified where appropriate.

DUTIES OF CARPENTERS HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information. We must provide you with this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information. We are also required to abide by the terms of this Notice, which may be amended from time to time.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice at any time in the future and to make the new provisions effective for all health information that we maintain. We will promptly revise our Notice and distribute it to all Plan Participants whenever we make material changes to our privacy policies and procedures. Until then, we are required by law to comply with the current version of this Notice.

HOW CARPENTERS HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND MAY USE OR DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION

We are permitted by law to use or disclose your “health information” to conduct activities necessary for “payment” and “health care operations”. These are the main purposes for which we will use or disclose your health information. For each of these purposes we list below examples of these kinds of uses and disclosures. These are only examples and are not intended to be a complete list of all the ways we may use or disclose your health information.

Payment. We may use or disclose health information about you for purposes within the definition of “payment.” These include, but are not limited to, the following purposes and examples:

- **Determining your eligibility for plan benefits.** For example, we may use information obtained from your employer to determine whether you have satisfied the plan’s requirements for active eligibility.

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- **Obtaining contributions from you or your employer.** For example, we may send your employer a request for payment of contributions on your behalf, and we may send you information about premiums for COBRA continuation coverage.
- **Pre-certifying or pre-authorizing health care services.** For example, we may consider a request from you or your physician to verify coverage for a specific hospital admission or surgical procedure.
- **Determining and fulfilling the plan's responsibility for benefits.** For example, we may review health care claims to determine if specific services that were provided by your physician are covered by the plan.
- **Providing reimbursement for the treatment and services you received from health care providers.** For example, we may send your physician a payment with an explanation of how the amount of the payment was determined.
- **Subrogating health claim benefits for which a third party is liable.** For example, we may exchange information about an accidental injury with your attorney who is pursuing reimbursement from another party.
- **Coordinating benefits with other plans under which you have health coverage.** For example, we may disclose information about your plan benefits to another group health plan in which you participate.
- **Obtaining payment under a contract of reinsurance.** For example, if the total amount of your claims exceeds a certain amount we may disclose information about your claims to our stop loss insurance carrier.

Health Care Operations. We may use and disclose health information about you for purposes within the definition of "health care operations." These purposes include, but are not limited to:

- **Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities.** For example, a supervisor or quality specialist may review health care claims to determine the accuracy of a processor's work.
- **Case management and care coordination.** For example, a case manager may contact home health agencies to determine their ability to provide the specific services you need.
- **Contacting you regarding treatment alternatives or other benefits and services that may be of interest to you.** For example, a case manager may contact you to give you information about alternative treatments which are neither included nor excluded in the plan's documentation of benefits but which may nevertheless be available in your situation.
- **Contacting health care providers with information about treatment alternatives.** For example, a case manager may contact your physician to discuss moving you from an acute care facility to a more appropriate care setting.
- **Employee training.** For example, training of new claims processors may include processing of claims for health benefits under close supervision.

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- **Accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities.** For example, a company that provides professional services to the plan may disclose your health information to an auditor that is determining or verifying its compliance with standards for professional accreditation.
- **Securing or placing a contract for reinsurance of risk relating to claims for health care.** For example, your demographic information (such as age and sex) may be disclosed to carriers of stop loss insurance to obtain premium quotes.
- **Conducting or arranging for legal and auditing services.** For example, your health information may be disclosed to an auditor who is auditing the accuracy of claim adjudications.
- **Management activities relating to compliance with privacy regulations.** For example, the Privacy Officer may use your health information while investigating a complaint regarding a reported or suspected violation of your privacy.
- **Resolution of internal grievances.** For example, your health information may be used in the process of settling a dispute about whether or not a violation of our privacy policies and procedures actually occurred.

Disclosures to Plan Sponsor (Board of Trustees). In addition to the circumstances and examples described above, there are three types of health information about you that we may disclose to the Board of Trustees. The disclosures described below are included within the definitions of “payment” or “health care operations.”

- We may disclose to the Board of Trustees whether or not you have enrolled in, are participating in, or have disenrolled from this health plan.
- We may provide the Board of Trustees with “summary health information,” which includes claims totals without any personal identification except your ZIP code, for these two purposes:
 - To obtain health insurance premium bids from other health plans, or
 - To consider modifying, amending, or terminating the health plan.
- We may disclose your health information to the Board of Trustees for purposes of administering benefits under the plan. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:
 - Reviewing and making determinations regarding an appeal of a denial or reduction of benefits.
 - Evaluating situations involving suspected or actual fraudulent claims.
 - Monitoring benefit claims that may or do involve stop loss insurance.

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Other Uses and Disclosures. The following categories describe other ways that Carpenters Health and Welfare Fund may use and disclose your health information. Each category is illustrated with one or more examples. Not every potential use or disclosure in each category will be listed, and those that are listed may never actually occur.

- **Involvement in Payment.** With your agreement, we may disclose your health information to a relative, friend, or other person designated by you as being involved in payment for your health care. For example, if we are discussing your health benefits with you, and you wish to include your spouse or child in the conversation, we may disclose information to that person during the course of the conversation.
- **Required by Law.** We will disclose your health information when required to do so by federal, state, or local law. For example, we may disclose your information to a representative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services who is conducting a privacy regulations compliance review.
- **Public Health.** As permitted by law, we may disclose your health information as described below:
 - **To an authorized public health authority**, for purposes of preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability;
 - **To a government entity** authorized to receive reports of child abuse or neglect;
 - **To a person under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration**, for activities related to the quality, safety, or effectiveness of FDA-regulated products.
- **Health Oversight Activities.** We may disclose your health information to health agencies during the course of audits, investigations, inspections, licensure and other proceedings related to oversight of the health care system or compliance with civil rights laws. However, this permission to disclose your health information does not apply to any investigation of you which is directly related to your health care.
- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.** We may disclose your health information in the course of any administrative or judicial proceeding:
 - In response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal, or
 - In response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process.

Specific circumstances may require us to make reasonable efforts to notify you about the request or to obtain a court order protecting your health information.

- **Law Enforcement.** We may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for various purposes, such as identifying or locating a suspect, fugitive, material witness or missing person.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors.** We may disclose your health information to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors. For example, this may be necessary to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death.
- **Organ and Tissue Donation.** We may disclose your health information to organizations involved in procuring, banking or transplanting organs and tissues, to facilitate such.

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**WHEN CARPENTERS HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND MAY NOT USE OR
DISCLOSE YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

Except as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices, we will not use or disclose your health information without written authorization from you. If you have authorized us to use or disclose your health information for another purpose, you may revoke your authorization in writing at any time. If you revoke your authorization, we will no longer be able to use or disclose health information about you for the reasons covered by your written authorization. However, we will be unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission. Requests to revoke a prior authorization must be submitted in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address provided on the following page.

Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. We are not required to agree to restrictions that you request. If you would like to make a request for restrictions, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below.

Right to Request Confidential Communications. You have the right to ask us to communicate with you using an alternative means or at an alternative location. Requests for confidential communications must be submitted in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below. We are not required to agree to your request unless disclosure of your health information could endanger you.

Right to Inspect and Copy. You have the right to inspect and copy health information about you that may be used to make decisions about your plan benefits. To inspect or copy such information, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge you a reasonable fee to cover expenses associated with your request.

Right to Request Amendment. If you believe that we possess health information about you that is incorrect or incomplete, you have a right to ask us to change it. To request an amendment of health records, you must make your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below. Your request must include a reason for the request. We are not required to change your health information. If your request is denied, we will provide you with information about our denial and how you can disagree with the denial.

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Right to Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to receive a list or “accounting” of disclosures of your health information made by us. However, we do not have to account for disclosures that were:

- made to you or were authorized by you, or
- for purposes of payment functions or health care operations.

Requests for an accounting of disclosures must be submitted in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below. Your request should specify a time period within the last six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. We will provide one free list per twelve-month period, but we may charge you for additional lists.

Right to Paper Copy. You have a right to receive a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. To obtain a paper copy of this Notice, send your written request to the Privacy Officer at the address shown below or you can download a copy at www.carpenterfunds.com.

Your Personal Representative

You may exercise your rights to your PHI by designating a personal representative. Your personal representative will be required to produce evidence of the 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. Under this Plan, proof of such authority will include a completed, signed and approved form. You may obtain this form by contacting the Privacy Officer or his or her designee at their address listed on the first page of this Notice. 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 Plan will recognize certain individuals as Personal Representatives **without** you having to complete a Personal Representative form. You may however request that the Plan **not** automatically honor the following individuals as your Personal Representative by completing a form to Revoke a Personal Representative available from the Privacy Officer or their designee.

- For example, the Plan will automatically consider a spouse to be the personal representative of a Plan Participant and vice versa. The recognition of your spouse as your personal representative (and vice versa) is for the use and disclosure of PHI under this Plan and is not intended to expand such designation beyond what is necessary for this Plan to comply with HIPAA privacy regulations. You should also review the Plan’s Policy and Procedure regarding Personal Representatives (available from the Privacy Officer) for a more complete description of the circumstances where the Plan will automatically consider an individual to be a personal representative.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY RIGHTS

If you would like to obtain a more detailed explanation of these rights, or if you would like to exercise one or more of these rights, contact:

HIPAA Privacy Officer
Carpenters Health and Welfare Trust Fund for California
P.O. Box 2280
Oakland, CA 94621-0181

Complaints. If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated by Carpenters Health and Welfare Trust Fund for California, or by anyone acting on our behalf, you may file a complaint. Complaints to us must be submitted in writing to the Privacy Officer at the above address. You may also file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services at:

200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

We will not retaliate against you in any way for filing a complaint.

Questions. If you have questions about any part of this Notice or if you want more information about the privacy practices at Carpenters Health and Welfare Fund, please contact the Privacy Officer at the above address.