

The HIPAA law states that each healthcare facility is required to maintain privacy of PHI and to distribute a copy of their Notice of Privacy Practices to each patient. Each patient must sign their acknowledgment that they received this information. At the Student Health Services clinic, this acknowledgement is on the Encounter Form or within the Electronic Health Record when signing in.

The Notice of Privacy Practices informs you, the patient, of how your personal health information may be used or released to others. It also describes your rights and how to use them. Should a breach of unsecured PHI occur, all individuals affected by this breach will be notified per HIPAA. Finally, the Notice of Privacy Practices explains how to file a privacy-related complaint.

Student Health Service's Notice of Privacy Practices is distributed to each patient and can be obtained, in person, at the reception desk. Student Health Services is very concerned about protecting your privacy and we are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information and to provide you with a copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices. George Mason Student Health Services is required to abide by the terms set forth in this privacy notice but we reserve the right to change the terms and to make the new privacy notice in a prominent location within our offices and provide you with a copy of the revised notice.

Complaints

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with Student Health Services or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

You may complain at any time to our Privacy Officer or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. Any complaint should be made in writing. We encourage you to voice any concerns you have regarding our privacy practices and we will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Contact Person:

The contact person for George Mason University Student Health Services to whom you may direct any privacy questions, submit special requests or file a complaint is our Privacy Officer. They may be contacted by calling 703-993-2831 or writing to the Privacy Officer of George Mason University Student Health Services at 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 MSN 2D3.

To file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health & Human Services, contact them at 200 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., 20201.

Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective April 14, 2003

If you have any questions or requests, please contact
Privacy Officer
George Mason University Student Health Services
4400 University Drive
SUB 1 Room 2300
703-993-2831

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE VIEW IT CAREFULLY.

Uses and disclosures of Health Information:

The George Mason University Student Health Services may use and disclose the health information we have collected about you in order to provide you treatment, obtain payment for providing your care and to conduct health care operations. Your health information will be used and disclosed for other purposes only after we have obtained your written permission unless it is required under federal or state law. George Mason Student Health Services has established the following privacy practices to guard against unnecessary uses and disclosures of your health information.

HIPAA is the common name for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which is a federal law that was passed in 1996. The primary goals of HIPAA are to improve the continuity of health insurance coverage for employees, to decrease the expense of health coverage through standardization of electronic transactions and to protect the privacy and confidentiality of personally identifiable health information.

The Privacy Regulations section of HIPAA is what will primarily pertain to George Mason students. The Privacy Regulations set forth the following with regard to your visit to Student Health Services, and it does not apply to student and employment records excluded from HIPAA.

The Privacy Regulations:

- Give you more control over your health information.
- Set boundaries on the use and release of your health records.
- Establish appropriate safeguards that health care providers and others must achieve to protect the privacy of your health information.
- Create a balance when public responsibility requires disclosure.

When Health Information can be used or disclosed without prior authorization:

1. Required Uses and Disclosures

George Mason Student Health Services is required to disclose your health information when you request to view the health information we have collected about you. The Secretary of Health and Human Services may request your health information for the purpose of determining our compliance with these privacy practices.

2. To provide treatment

Student Health Services may use your health information to provide your medical care. This may include sharing your health information with other health care providers to whom you might be referred. We may also share your health information with other health care providers to coordinate your care; this might include, but is not limited to, pharmacists, suppliers of medical equipment or family members you have designated to receive such information.

3. To obtain payment

Student Health Services may use and /or disclose your health information when submitting claims to your insurance companies or other third parties in order to receive payment for the health care we provide.

4. For health care operations

We may also use and /or disclose your health information when conducting our own business operations and when this is necessary to provide quality care for our patients. Such health care operations may include, but is not limited to, quality assessments and improvement activities, activities designed to improve quality of care, professional review and performance evaluations, business planning or development and administrative activities.

5. When legally required

Student Health Services will disclose your health information when required to do so by any Federal, State, or local law.

6. When there are risks to the Public Health

Student Health Services may also disclose your health information.

7. To report abuse or domestic violence

Student Health Services may also report your health information to government or legal authorities if we believe, in good faith, that abuse or domestic violence has occurred. This disclosure of your health information will occur only if required by law to do so or after you have agreed to the disclosure.

8. To conduct health oversight activities

We may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for the purpose of audits, inspections, licensure actions or criminal investigations. We may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and your health information is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits.

9. For judicial and administrative proceeding

Student Health Services may disclose your health information in response to a court order or an authorized administrative tribunal. We will make reasonable efforts to notify you of such a request

10. For law enforcement activities

We may disclose your health information to law enforcement officials as required by law for reporting of certain wounds (such as stab wounds), to help identify or locate a suspect, witness, or missing person or if you are the victim of a crime or there is an emergency to report a crime.

11. To coroners, funeral directors or organ procurement organizations

Student Health Services may also disclose your health information to a coroner or medical examiner to determine a cause of death or for other duties; to funeral directors to help carry out their duties; and to organ procurement organizations for the purpose of facilitating donation and transplantation.

12. In the event of a serious threat

Student Health Services may also disclose your personal health information if we believe in good faith that such disclosure is necessary due to a serious threat to your health or safety.

13. For specialized government functions

We may also disclose your health information for specialized government functions such as relating to national security, protecting the President and others, medical suitability determinations, inmates and law enforcement custody.

14. For workman's compensation

Student Health Services may disclose your health information for workman's compensation or other similar programs.

Certain uses and disclosures of your Protected Health Information (PHI) require your authorization. This is particularly true for Psychotherapy notes. Marketing and any sale of PHI will not be done without your prior authorization. You may also opt out of any fundraising. Other uses and disclosures not described in this notice will be made only with the individual's written authority. The HIPAA law provides patients with six new rights about your personal health information and health records:

- The right to get a copy of the Student Health Services Notice of Privacy Practices
- The right to inspect and copy your health records.
- The right to request restrictions on your health record. However, Student Health Services is not required to agree to the requested restriction.
- The right to receive confidential information at a second address or fax
- The right to ask your doctor to amend your health records
- The right to an accounting of disclosures of your records.
- Right to revoke any authorization. This must be done in writing and given to the Privacy Officer.