

# Allergy West

## **You're 18 now...what does HIPAA mean to you!**

A guide to understanding the privacy of your medical records.

### **What is HIPAA?**

Every time you go into a doctor's office or hospital you probably are asked to sign a HIPAA form. This is just a notice about how we protect your medical and health information.

We have our official privacy policy brochure that we will give you. It will explain how your medical information is used, to whom it may be given, and how you can get access to it.

Up until this point, your parents have had to sign this for you. But now you are 18 years old! In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are a legal adult and YOU are in charge of your own medical records. Sounds a bit scary, but it isn't.

We want you to understand your rights and responsibilities regarding your medical records. We hope this brochure answers your questions.

### **What Do I Need To Do?**

You will need to sign a new HIPAA Consent Form once you reach your 18th birthday. On this form you will need to tell us if your mom, dad, step-mom, step-dad or any other person can participate in your health care. You do not have to allow anyone else to participate in your health care.

Participating in your health care includes requesting referrals, getting lab or x-ray results, talking to your doctor or nurse practitioner, and seeing your records.

This is your personal decision to make. We want you to make the best choice for your health care needs.

## **What If I Don't Want to Sign the HIPAA Consent?**

That is your choice. However, our HIPAA form also contains the release that allows us to treat you. If you decide not to sign the form, then we are unable to perform any services, including testing for strep throat, writing a prescription for you, or billing your insurance.

Please ask to speak with a manager if you have any other questions about this form. We want you to make the best informed decisions as a young adult.

## **Can I Change My Mind?**

Of course! You can make changes, deletions or additions to your HIPAA Consent Form whenever you want. We just need you to come into the office and fill out a new one.

If you are away at school we can mail you a new one or fax it to you.

Your parents will not be able to sign a form for you, even if you have them listed on your HIPAA form.

Remember, you are in charge of your medical records.

**If you are going to be away at college and may need your mom or dad to fill a prescription for you or schedule you an appointment for when you are home, you might want to list your parents on your form.**

## **When can you give out my information without my permission?**

There are circumstances that require us to release your medical information without your consent.

If our providers feel you are in danger or may cause danger to yourself or others, we will contact your parents, guardians, or the local authority.

If we receive a court order or subpoena, we are obligated to release your medical information.

If you are being abused or neglected, we are required to report this to the appropriate agency.

If you have a communicable disease that puts the public at risk, we are responsible for reporting it to the local Department of Public Health.

## **I Am Still Under My Parents' Insurance...Is that a Problem?**

That's okay, but you should know that your parents can get information through the insurance company and through the bills you incur coming to our office. The only true way to keep everything CONFIDENTIAL is to pay for all services out-of-pocket at the time of service. This will include any lab tests or x-rays that are done as well.

We know that is not usually an option because it can be very expensive, but you need to know that your mom and dad have the right to access their insurance records, and can therefore see what services we provided to you that you paid for with your parents' insurance. However, on our end, we will comply with your request to keep information confidential from your parents by doing so we will not be able to bill your family health plan and you will have to be financially responsible to pay us for your services. If you have questions or want to further discuss your options regarding this matter, please just let us know and we would be happy to sit down with you.

If you come in for a visit, you will be responsible for paying the co-payment, co-insurance or deductible.

## **What About My Confidential Information?**

It doesn't matter if you allow your parents or guardians access to your medical file, the following information will remain confidential by us (but remember the insurance issue noted above):

- Birth control information
- Sexual activity
- Sexually related transmitted disease information, testing and results
- Gynecological Visits
- Any other sexually related information
- Mental Health issues (unless it is determined that you are a danger to yourself or others)
- Drug or Alcohol Use (unless it is determined that you are a danger to yourself or others)

Other information can be seen by the person or people you designate on your HIPAA consent form, but this highly confidential information is protected so only the doctor can see it. It's safe!

## **How Will You Contact Me?**

We need to have a current phone number to contact you. We can call your home number or cell phone. We especially need a cell number if you don't allow your parents to know your medical information or if we need to discuss confidential information with you. You can specify on your consent form the best way for us to reach you.

Remember, if you live at home and we mail anything to your home address, we have no control over your parents opening your mail. This is not always the best option for communication.

**Contact us if you have any questions: (978) 577-0437**