

- To provide information learned while providing emergency treatment to an individual regarding criminal activity; or
- As necessary for a correctional institution or other entity having lawful custody of an individual to provide health care to the individual or for the health and safety of other inmates or its employees

11. For judicial or administrative proceedings

TCPH may disclose health information about you in response to an order or subpoena issued by a regular or administrative court.

12. As required by law

TCPH may use or disclose information about you when a law requires the use or disclosure.

13. Contractors

TCPH may disclose health information about you to a Tarrant County Public Health contractor if the contractor:

- Needs the information to provide the services for TCPH
- Agrees to protect the privacy of the information.

14. Research

TCPH may use or disclose health information about you for research if a research board approves the use. The board will ensure that your privacy is protected when your health information is used in research. Your health information may also be used:

- To allow a researcher to prepare for research, as long as the researcher agrees to keep information confidential; or
- After you die, for research that involves information about people who have died.

15. Other uses and disclosures

TCPH may use or disclose health information about you:

- To create health information that does not identify any specific individual;
- For purposes of lawful national security activities;
- To federal officials to protect the president and others;
- For security clearances and medical suitability determinations required by the U.S. government;
- To a prison or jail, if you are an inmate of that prison or jail, or to law enforcement personnel if you are in custody;
- To comply with workers' compensation laws or similar laws; and
- To tell or help in telling a family member or another person involved in your care about your location, general condition, or death.

Complaint Process

If you believe that TCPH has violated your rights, you have the right to file a complaint with the:

- TCPH by sending a *written* complaint to: Privacy Officer, 1101 S. Main St., Fort Worth, Texas 76104; or e-mail to: dfabio@tarrantcounty.com
- U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, or by telephone at (800)368-1019; or
- Texas Attorney General's Office by mail at P.O. Box 12548, Austin, Texas 78711, or by telephone at 1-888-963-7111.

For electronic copies of this notice log on to:

<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

For additional information about this notice, contact the TCPH Privacy Officer at the above address.



**Tarrant County
Public Health**

1101 S. Main St.
Fort Worth, TX 76104

817-321- 4700

<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

Safeguarding our community's health

**TARRANT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
HEALTH**



**NOTICE
OF
PRIVACY
PRACTICES**

Health Insurance Portability
and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

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

About the Notice: This notice tells you about your privacy rights, the duties of Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) to protect health information that identifies you, and how TCPH may use or disclose health information that identifies you without your written permission. This notice does not apply to health information that does not identify you or anyone else.

In this Privacy Notice, “health information” means the same as “medical information.”

Health information includes any information that relates to:

- 1) your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition;
- 2) providing health care to you; or
- 3) the past, present, or future payment for your health care.

Your Privacy Rights

The law gives you the right to:

- Look at or get a copy of the health information that TCPH has about you, in most situations. TCPH requires that your request for information be in writing;
- Ask TCPH to correct certain information, including certain health information, about you if you believe the information is wrong or incomplete. You must submit your request in writing to the program within the health department that has the information. If TCPH denies your request to change the information, you will have the written disagreement placed in your record;
- Ask for a list of times that TCPH has disclosed health information about you for reasons other than treatment, payment, health care operations, and certain other reasons as provided by law, except when you have authorized or asked TCPH to disclose the information. You must put this request in writing and must include the name of the health clinic or facility from which a list of disclosures is requested;
- Ask TCPH to limit the use or disclosure of health information about you to no more than the law requires. However, the law does not require TCPH to agree to your requests, limit uses and disclosures;
- Tell TCPH where and how to send messages that include health information about you, if you think sending the information to your usual address could put you in danger. This request must be in writing and be specific about where and how to contact you;

- Ask for and get a copy of this notice from TCPH; and
- Withdraw permission you have given TCPH to use or disclose health information that identifies you, unless TCPH has already taken action based on your permission. You must withdraw your permission in writing.

You may exercise any of the rights described above by contacting the TCPH facility that has information about you, or by contacting the TCPH Privacy Officer as described at the end of this notice.

TCPH’s Duty to Protect Health Information that Identifies You

- TCPH is required by law to protect the privacy of your health information. This means that TCPH will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization except in the ways we tell you in this notice. TCPH will safeguard your health information and keep it private.
- TCPH will ask for your written authorization to use or disclose your health information in ways other than those stated in this notice. If you give such an authorization, you may revoke it at any time, but TCPH will not be liable for uses or disclosures made before you revoked your authorization.
- **If you receive direct health care from TCPH, TCPH is required to provide you with this notice of its legal duties and privacy practices, and ask you to sign a form saying that you received this notice.** Otherwise TCPH is required to provide this notice upon your request. If TCPH changes the contents of this notice, it will make the new notice available at all facilities within 30 days of the effective date of the changed notice. The new notice will apply to all health information maintained by TCPH, no matter when TCPH got or created the information.

How TCPH Uses and Discloses Health Information that Identifies You

1. Treatment

TCPH may use or disclose your health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care or related services. This includes providing care to you, consulting with another health care provider about you, and referring you to another health care provider. For example, TCPH can use or disclose your health information to refer you to a community program for services. TCPH may also contact you directly to remind you of an appointment or to discuss your health care. If you are **not** reached directly, a message may be left stating that you have an appointment, including only the date and time of the appointment. A message may also be left stating that you have medication ready at the pharmacy, but no medication names will be provided.

2. Payment

TCPH may use or disclose health information about you as necessary to pay or collect payment for your health care.

3. Health care operations

TCPH may use or disclose health information about you for health care operations. Health care operations include:

- Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities;
- Reviewing the competence, qualifications, and performance of health care professionals;
- Training health-care professionals and others;
- Conducting accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities;
- Carrying out activities related to the creation, renewal, or replacement of a contract for health benefits;
- Providing medical review, legal services, or auditing functions; and
- Engaging in business management or the general administrative activities of TCPH.

For example, TCPH may use or disclose your health information to make sure providers bill only for care you receive.

4. Family member, other relative, or close personal friend

TCPH may disclose health information about you to a family member, other relative or close personal friend if:

- The health information is related to that person’s involvement with your care or payment for your care; **and**
- You have given prior written consent.

5. Government programs providing public health benefits

TCPH may disclose health information about you as needed for the administration of a government benefit program.

6. Health oversight activities

TCPH may sometimes use or disclose health information about you for oversight activities. Health oversight activities include:

- Audits or inspections;
- Investigations of possible fraud;
- Investigations of whether someone licensed by TCPH is providing good care; and
- Other activities necessary for oversight of the health care system, government benefit programs, or to enforce civil rights laws.

7. Public health

TCPH may disclose health information about you to:

- A public health authority for purposes of preventing or controlling disease, investigation and follow-up, injury, or disability, or to report vital statistics;
- An official of a foreign government agency who is acting with the public health authority;
- A government agency allowed to receive reports of child abuse or neglect;

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to report problems with FDA-regulated medications, products, or activities;
- Disease Investigation Authority who may work to identify other individuals who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or who is at risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition; or
- A person or agency investigating work-related illness or injury or conducting workplace medical surveillance.

8. Victims of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence

If TCPH believes you are the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence, TCPH may sometimes disclose health information about you to a government agency that receives reports of abuse, neglect or domestic violence if:

- A law requires the disclosure;
- You agree to the disclosure;
- A law allows the disclosure and the disclosure is needed to prevent serious harm to you or someone else; or
- A law allows the disclosure, you are unable to agree or disagree, the information is needed for immediate action, and the information will not be used against you.

If TCPH makes a report under this section, TCPH will tell you or your representative about the report unless it believes that telling you would place you at risk of harm.

9. Serious threat to health or safety

TCPH may use or disclose health information about you if it believes the use or disclosure is needed:

- To prevent or lessen a serious and immediate threat to the health and safety of a person or the public;
- For law enforcement authorities to identify or catch an individual who has admitted to participating in a violent crime that resulted in serious physical harm to the victim, unless the information was learned while initiating or in the course of counseling or therapy; or
- For law enforcement authorities to catch an individual who has escaped from lawful custody.

10. For other law enforcement purposes

TCPH may disclose health information about you to a law enforcement official for the following law enforcement purposes:

- To comply with a grand jury subpoena, summons, investigation, or similar lawful process;
- To identify and locate a suspect, fugitive, witness, or missing person;
- In response to a request for information about an actual suspected crime victim;
- To alert a law enforcement official of a death that TCPH suspects is the result of a criminal conduct;
- To report evidence of a crime on TCPH’s property;