

HIPAA & YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS

We strongly believe in doing everything we possibly can to safeguard the privacy and security of your health information and records, and follow the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Passed into law in 1996, HIPAA sets federal standards for the privacy and security of patient information for all healthcare providers, plans, insurance companies and anyone they do business with. HIPAA gives you additional rights regarding control and use of your health information, meaning you have more access and control than ever.

Control of Your Health Information

All healthcare providers are now required to give you a written explanation of how they use and disclose your personal health information before they provide services. This way, you can decide if a provider is doing everything they should to protect your privacy rights before you choose them as your caregiver.

We must, by law, post a Notice of Privacy Practices, which outlines how we secure the privacy of patient information, in a place where you can easily see it. This notice is now posted in our conference room and in the Client & PCA Handbook.

We must also get your signature for non-routine uses and disclosures of your information. A non-routine use is any situation not directly related to treatment, payment or operations. For example, if your child is going to summer camp and the camp needs a medical history, you will need to authorize us to release it before we can send the information. You have the right to say no, and you don't have to tell why. Authorizations of non-routine information are one-time-only, case by case, for the use defined by you.

Access to Your Health Information

We provide you a copy of your Plan of Care shortly after the A+ Qualified Professional opens you to services with A+ Home Care, and again after each annual visit. You can get additional copies of your medical records simply by asking for them. We are required to provide you a copy of your records within 60 days of your request. There may be a cost for this service.

You can also amend your medical records. We provide you with the opportunity to make amendments on the quarterly assessment form we send you and again annually at the face-to-face visit with our Qualified Professional. We also encourage you to call our Qualified Professional any time there are changes to your care so that we can update your records. You cannot change the existing record, but you can add notes or comment on any procedures, treatments, payments or operations. A+ then has the right to respond to your amendment. This way, you can be sure your records reflect your side of the story about treatment and payment issues.

Patient Recourse If Privacy Protections are Violated

Every healthcare provider must also inform you of grievance procedures. If your privacy is violated, report the incident to the President/CEO or Vice President immediately. You also have the right to report any violation to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, 200 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20201. If you decide to file a grievance either with the Department of Health and Human Services or A+ Home Care we are not allowed to discriminate or retaliate against you in any way.

There are also clear limits for all healthcare providers regarding how they disclose medical information. Here are some of the key aspects of these boundaries:

Providers must ensure that health information is not used for non-health purposes. Health information (covered by the privacy rules) generally may not be used for purposes not related to health care – such as disclosures to employers to make personnel decisions, or to financial institutions – without your explicit authorization.

There are clear, strong protections against using health information for marketing. The privacy rules set new definitions, restrictions and limits on the use of patient information for certain marketing purposes. Providers must get your specific authorization before sending you any materials other than those related to treatment.

Use only the minimum amount of information necessary. In general, uses or disclosures of information will be limited to the minimum necessary. This does not apply to disclosure of records for treatment purposes, because physicians, specialists and other providers may need access to the full record to provide quality care.

Exceptions

There are situations where healthcare providers may not have to follow these privacy rules. They include: emergency circumstances; identification of a body or the cause of death; public health needs; judicial and administrative proceedings; limited law enforcement activities; and activities related to national defense and security.

We understand your right to have your medical information kept confidential. Our compliance with the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act is one example of our advocacy and leadership on issues of client's rights and privacy of information. We encourage you to ask questions and look forward to working together to improve the quality of your homecare experience.

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

A+ Home Care uses and discloses your social security number, medical assistance number and insurance information for billing purposes only. A+ Home Care uses the PHN's assessment and our Qualified Professional's assessment only to devise a Plan of Care to provide personal care services to the client. The client or responsible party is responsible for disclosing the care plan to their PCAs and training their PCAs to provide the cares as stated in the care plan.

A+ Home Care has a Confidentiality of Client Information policy, signed by every A+ employee, which states that all information concerning patient medical records, medical reports, and financial status is strictly confidential. Any employee who is found disclosing patient information with any unauthorized personnel is liable for disciplinary action, which may include termination.

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