

**NOTICE OF PRIVACY
PRACTICES IN RELATION
TO YOUR HEALTH CARE
RECORD**

Purpose

The National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH), its employees, students, contractors and volunteers follow the privacy practices described in this ***“Notice of Privacy Practices in Relation to your Health Care Record”***. This Notice describes how the hospital may use and disclose your health information when you receive services and treatment at the NRH.

In the NRH, health care is provided by an Interdisciplinary Team led by a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine. The Interdisciplinary Team will share your relevant health information with external agencies necessary to carry out your treatment, payment or other health care activities related to the delivery of your care. This notice does not cover the privacy practices of your Consultant when you see him/her in a private capacity e.g. Medical Legal arrangement.

The NRH is committed to protecting your health information in a confidential manner.

Legal Responsibilities

The NRH is required by law to protect the privacy of your protected health care information and to give you notice of our legal duties and privacy practices concerning your protected health information.

- The NRH must abide by this Notice.
- The NRH must notify you if we are unable to agree to request from about the use and disclosure of your protected health information.
- The NRH must accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations (Address other than home address).
- The NRH will not use or disclose your health information without your

authorisation, except as described in this Notice.

Revisions of this Notice

The NRH may change this Notice at any time and make the new provisions effective for all protected health care information which the NRH maintains. Upon your request, we will provide you with a revised ***“Notice of Privacy Practices in Relation to your Health Care Record”***. by accessing our website, www.nrh.ie or by calling the Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330 to request a revised copy be mailed to you or by requesting one at the time of your next visit.

Understanding Your Health Care Record

Each time you visit the NRH, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record includes, but is not limited to, your demographic information (name, address, date of birth, gender, etc), symptoms, examination and test results, diagnoses, treatment and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health care record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment.
- Means of communication among the health professionals who contribute to your care.
- Legal document describing the care you received.
- Tool in educating health professionals.
- Source of data for medical research.
- Tool which the NRH uses to assess and continually work to improve NRH care.

Understanding what is in your health care record and how your health information is used helps you to:

- Ensure its accuracy.

- Better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information.
- Make more informed decisions when authorising disclosure to others.

Disclosure of Information

The NRH will use or disclose your health information for treatment, to obtain payment, and for health care activities.

The categories below describe the different ways that the hospital may use and disclose your health care information and examples for each category. These examples are not meant to describe every circumstance, but to give you an idea of the way in which the information will be used.

Examples of Uses and Disclosure for Treatment

The NRH will use and disclose your health care information to:

- Anyone involved in your treatment, including doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, pharmacists, radiologists, discharge planners, dietitians, laboratory technicians and any others who need access to health information in order to assist in your diagnosis and treatment.
- Anyone necessary to provide, coordinate or manage your health care treatment, including the coordination or management of your care with a provider outside the hospital such as Public Health Nurses, Community Care Services and Therapies.
- The doctor/s who referred you to the NRH or who will provide follow-up care to assist you with your continued care after you are discharged from NRH.

Examples of Uses and Disclosure for Payment

The NRH will use and disclose your relevant health information to:

- The Health Service Executive in order to obtain payment for the provision of equipment or prosthesis.
- Communicate with your Health Insurance Company to obtain approval for payment for equipment or prosthesis/orthosis, where appropriate.
- Communicate with your employer's health insurance company where appropriate (e.g. Gardai, Prison Service, ESB employees) to obtain payment when your treatment involves a work related injury.
- Communicate with your solicitor to claim reimbursement of treatment costs up to and including the settlement of the claim in relation to legal personal injury claims following road traffic accidents.

Examples of Uses and Disclosure for Health Care Activities

The NRH will use and disclose your health information to support the hospital rehabilitation process activities. These activities include:

- Conducting quality assessments and improvement activities in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the health care service we provide.
- Developing clinical guidelines.
- Evaluating clinical outcomes.
- Reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals.
- Evaluating doctor and employee performance.
- Conducting training programmes in which doctors, students, trainees or practitioners in other areas of health care learn under supervision to

improve their skills as health care providers.

- Participating in accreditation, certification, or credentialing activities.
- Conducting or arranging medical review, legal services and auditing functions.
- Sharing information with medical students who see patients at the NRH.
- Providing information to the Chaplain and Patient Advocate who may visit you while you are in the facility.
- Calling your name in a waiting area or over the overhead public address system.
- Contacting you by post or telephone to remind you of scheduled appointments, procedure or test.
- Notifying a family member, or any other person that is responsible for your care, of your location and general health condition.
- Planning for the organisations future operations.

Other Uses and Disclosure That May be Made Without Your Authorisation

The NRH may use and disclose your health information in the following situations without your authorisation. These situations include:

- To a third party for the purpose of payment/billing e.g. payment of medical equipment, prosthesis, or MRI scans. To protect your information the NRH requires the third party to safeguard your information.
- As required by law in the event of death the NRH may disclose health information to the coroner/medical examiner.
- As required by law the NRH may disclose your health information to public health officers to prevent or control disease or injury.
- As required by law the NRH may disclose health information to the HSE

to report suspicions/concerns or allegations of child abuse.

- The NRH may disclose information to the HSE/Health care provider where there are reasonable grounds for concerns/suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that disclosure is required to prevent threat to life or health.
- As required, the NRH may disclose health information to the State Claims Agency, Irish Medicines Board, National Blood Centre to report adverse events, product defects or problems.
- If you are involved in a legal claim the NRH may disclose your health information to the courts in a response to a subpoena or discovery order.
- The NRH may disclose your health information to the Gardai for law enforcement purposes or in response to a valid court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar order.
- To the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

Uses and Disclosures to Which You Have an Opportunity to Object

Unless you notify the NRH in writing that you object, the NRH may use or disclose health care information about you in the following circumstances:

- The NRH will include your name, location in the hospital (ward name) in the facility directory. This information will be provided to Nursing Administration, Switchboard Operator, Chaplain and Patient Advocate.
- The NRH may disclose to a member of your family, a relative, a close friend or any other person you identify as your emergency contact, your health information that relates to that person's involvement in your care or payment

related to your care. The NRH may use or disclose your health information to notify or assist in notifying a family member, personal representative or another person responsible for your care, about your location, general condition or death.

- The NRH may use or disclose your health information when you are unable to agree or object to the use or disclosure because of your incapacity or an emergency treatment circumstance, if such disclosure is consistent with a prior expressed preference and if we determine such disclosure is in your best interest. When it becomes practical to do so, we must provide you with an opportunity to object to the uses or disclosures of your health information as described above.
- To object to these uses or disclosures please contact the Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330.

Uses and Disclosures that Require Your Written Authorisation

Except as described above, the NRH will not use or disclose your health information unless you give written authorisation to the NRH to do so.

Your Individual Rights

Right of Access: You have the right to access, inspect and to obtain a copy of your health care record under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003 and the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003, for as long as we hold your health care record. However, the hospital will endeavour to release your record where possible, without recourse to the Freedom of Information Acts or the Data Protection Acts.

- The request must be made in writing. The NRH will act upon your request no later than 28 days after receipt of

the request. The NRH may need to extend the time and in such circumstances will provide you with written information on the reason for the delay and the date by which we will complete your request.

- In certain circumstances the NRH may deny your request to inspect or copy your health care record. In such circumstances you have right of appeal to the Freedom of Information Officer.
- All requests for access to health care information should be made in writing to the Risk Management Officer, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue, Co. Dublin.
- For further information about access to your healthcare record please contact the Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330.

Right to Request Restrictions: You have the right to request a restriction on certain uses or disclosures of your health care information for the purposes of treatment, payment or other health care activity. This means that you may request limits on the health care information disclosed about you to family members, friends or other individuals identified by you who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice.

- Your request must be in writing and state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.
- The NRH is not required to agree to your request. If the NRH agrees, the NRH will comply with the requested restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment.
- To find out how to request a restriction, call our Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330.

Confidential Communication: You have a right to request to receive confidential communication of your health care information from the NRH by alternative means or at alternative locations for example you may ask the NRH only to contact you by post at a specific address.

- Your request must be in writing and the NRH will accommodate reasonable requests.
- To find out how to request confidential communication, call our Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330.

Right to Amend: If you believe that the health information the NRH has about you is incorrect or incomplete you may request that the information be amended.

- Your request must be in writing and must explain the reason for the requested amendment.
- The NRH will act on your request for an amendment no later than 28 days after receipt of such a request.
- This request may on occasion be denied. In this event, you have the right to appeal to our Freedom of Information Officer.
- To find out how to request an amendment, call our Risk Management Officer at 01 2355330.

Right to a Copy of this Notice: You have a right to receive, upon request, a written copy of this Notice.

- You may obtain a copy of this notice at the NRH website www.nrh.ie.
- To obtain a paper copy of this Notice, visit the Admissions Office on the first floor beside reception.

For More Information

Please contact the Risk Management Officer at 01 23553330 to get more information about your privacy rights as described in this Notice.

To Report a Problem

If you believe your privacy rights have been infringed, you may file a complaint in writing with the Patients Services Manager, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Complaint information should include:

- Name of the complainant.
- Name of the person/patient/client affected if different from the name of the complainant.
- Name of the facility involved.
- Description of the facts of the complaint, including how person/patient/client was affected.
- Names or descriptions of the perpetrator(s).
- When the complaint or situation occurred and whether it was an isolated incident or an ongoing situation (include the date, time, time between different events).
- Where the event took place (on what ward/patient room/department).
- How the incident occurred and the sequence of events that took place.
- Whether a patient/client or the family of a patient/client were involved.
- The names or description of those who witnessed the complaint situation.
- Names of staff or other patient/client involved (also include others involved including volunteers or visitors).