

PLUMAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES
EFFECTIVE APRIL 14, 2003

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

The County understands your health information is personal and private and commits to safeguarding it to the extent reasonably possible. The County creates records of health care and other health information, to provide quality care and comply with legal requirements. This notice describes how the County will handle your health information in accordance with federal law. The law requires the County to keep your health information private and to give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices. The law also requires the County to follow the terms of this notice. The County reserves the right to change practices and make new provisions for all health information received and maintained. You may request an updated copy of this notice at any time.

Use and Disclosure - General

State and federal laws control the use and sharing, or disclosure, of health information. Generally, except as otherwise specified, the County may use and disclose health information:

- 1. For treatment:** Doctors, nurses, therapists, counselors and other personnel may record and share information for diagnosis, consultations, planning, treatment, case management, care coordination and referrals.
- 2. For payment:** To obtain payment for healthcare or determine eligibility, the County may contact insurance companies or third parties. Information on or accompanying the bills or disclosed during contacts may contain your health information.
- 3. For health care operations:** The County may use information in your health record for reasons including quality assessment and improvement activities, resolution of internal grievances, investigations, inspections, audits, protocol development, and business planning
- 4. For health plan administration:** As administrator of certain health plans, such as Medicare and Medi-Cal, the County may disclose limited information to plan sponsors. The law only allows using such information for purposes such as plan eligibility and enrollment, benefits administration, and payment of health care expenses. The law specifically prohibits use for employment-related actions or decisions.

Use and Disclosure Requiring Authorization

In the following situations, the County may use and disclose health information only with your permission, as required by state and federal law:

1. From mental health records.
2. From substance abuse treatment records.

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Use and Disclosure Requiring an Opportunity for You to Agree or Object

In the following situations, the County may use and disclose health information only if it informs you in advance and provides an opportunity to agree or object, as required by state and federal law.

1. To individuals assisting with your treatment or payment.
2. To assist with disaster relief to notify your family about you.

Use and Disclosure NOT Requiring Authorization or an Opportunity to Agree or Object

In the following situations, the County may be required to use and disclose health information without your permission and without providing you the opportunity to agree or object:

1. As allowed by law;
2. For public health activities such as reporting births, deaths, reactions to medications, etc;
3. For mandated reporting of suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence;
4. For health oversight activities such as monitoring health care providers, government programs and agencies;
5. To the minimum extent necessary in response to warrants, court orders, subpoenas or other lawful processes;
6. To law enforcement, correctional institutions and other law enforcement custodial situations;
7. To coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors;
8. For organ donation once you are deceased;
9. For research purposes, limited data sets may be distributed in compliance with strict conditions;
10. To avoid serious threats to the health and safety of you or others;
11. On military personnel for activities necessary to assure proper execution of a military mission;
12. To determine your eligibility for or entitlement to veterans' benefits or government health programs;
13. To authorized federal officials for the conduct of national security activities; and
14. To the minimum extent necessary, for Workers' Compensation or similar programs.

The County will not disclose your health information for marketing, fundraising or other reasons not listed above without your prior written permission, and you may withdraw that permission in writing at any time. If you do so, the County will no longer use or disclose health information about you for the reasons you permitted. The County is unable to detract disclosures already made with your permission, and must retain records of care already provided.

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Rights and Responsibilities

The County recognizes and commits to safeguarding the following rights regarding your private health information:

1. **The right to request limits and restrictions on uses and disclosures.** The law does not require the County to agree to your request. If the County agrees, it will comply except to provide emergency treatment. Requests must be in writing and state: the information you want to limit; whether to limit use, disclosure, or both; and to whom the limits apply.
2. **The right to confidential communications.** You have the right to ask the County to communicate with you in a certain way, or at a certain location.
3. **The right to inspect and copy your records.** You have the right to see and get copies of your health information. Requests must be in writing, and the County may charge you a fee for the costs of fulfilling your request. The County may deny requests to inspect or copy psychotherapy notes, mental health records, or materials for legal proceedings. You may ask for a review of a denial by another health care professional chosen by the County. The County will comply with the results of that review.
4. **The right to amend health records.** If information the County has about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask to amend it. Requests must be in writing, and provide a reason supporting your request. The County may deny your request if it is not in writing, or does not include a reason supporting it. The County may also deny requests if the information:
 - Was not created by the County
 - Is not health information kept by the County
 - Is not information you are permitted to inspect and copy
 - Is accurate and complete.
5. **The right to an accounting of certain disclosures.** When the County discloses your health information for reasons other than treatment, payment or health care operations, you have the right to request a list of whom the information was shared with, when, for what reasons and what information was shared. Your request must be in writing, must state a time period that may be no longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The County may charge a fee for the costs of fulfilling your request.
6. **The right to request and receive a paper copy of this notice of privacy practices.**
7. **The right to file complaints without fear of retaliation.** The County cannot penalize you for filing a complaint. If you believe the County violated your privacy rights, you may file a complaint with a department privacy officer, the County privacy office, or with the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

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Confidentiality and Security

The County restricts access to personal health information about you to those employees who have a specific business in utilizing your data. Employees are trained in the importance of maintaining confidentiality and privacy. The County maintains physical, electronic and procedural safeguards that comply with federal regulations. To protect your privacy, all contracts and agreements the County has with other individuals and organizations contain required confidentiality clauses that prohibit them from disclosing the health information we provide to them.

Contacts

If you have any questions or complaints regarding this Notice of Privacy Practices, you may contact us or file a complaint with:

Plumas County Mental Health

Departmental Privacy Officer
270 County Hospital Road Suite 227
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-6307

Plumas County Administrative Office

County Privacy Officer
520 Main Street Room 309
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-6315

**Plumas County Alcohol and Drug
Department**

Departmental Privacy Officer
270 County Hospital Road Suite 128
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-6316

Plumas County Public Health Agency

Departmental Privacy Officer
270 County Hospital Road Suite 206
Quincy, Ca 95971
530-283-6337

**Plumas County Human Resources
Department**

Departmental Privacy Officer
520 Main Street Room 115
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-6020

Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Office for Civil Rights
Attention: Regional Manager
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 322
San Francisco, CA 94102
800-368-1019