

Virginia Spine Specialists, PLLC
NOTICE OF HIPAA PATIENT PRIVACY PRACTICES

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.

If you have any questions or comments about this notice please contact:

Virginia Spine Specialists, PLLC
8650 Sudley Road, Ste 315
Manassas, VA 20110

Our Privacy Officer is: Heather Parker, Practice Administrator, 855-774-6334

The following is the privacy policy (“Privacy Policy”) of **Virginia Spine Specialists, PLLC** (“Covered “Entity”) herein after described VSS, as described in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and regulations promulgated there under, commonly known as HIPAA. HIPAA requires Covered Entity by law to maintain the privacy of your personal health information and to provide you with notice of Covered Entity’s legal duties and privacy policies with respect to your personal health information. We are required by law to abide by the terms of this Privacy Notice.

Who Does this Notice Apply to?

Virginia Spine Specialists, PLLC (“VSS”), has published this Notice. It applies to everyone who works for Virginia Spine Specialists, PLLC, including our employees, contractors, and volunteers.

Why Do We Publish this Notice?

VSS understands that information about you and your health is sensitive and personal. We are required by law to maintain the privacy of information we gather and use about our patients, and provide them with notices of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to their information. We are also required to notify affected individuals of any breach of unsecured protected health information.

While we are committed to the privacy of our patients’ information, in order to serve them we need to gather, keep and use records of this information. We sometimes also need to share information with other parties. This Notice is intended to let you know how we use and disclose your information.

This Notice is also to let you know about certain legal rights you have with respect to the information we hold about you. You

have certain rights to review and obtain a copy of our records of information about you. You may also request that we amend these records, and may ask us to account for certain disclosures we may have made of information about you. Requests for amendments and requests for accountings must be made in writing and directed to the Privacy Officer.

When Is This Notice Effective?

We are required to comply with the terms of this Notice while it is in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice, and make the new terms effective for all information to which this Notice applies. This Notice will be in effect from **May 20, 2013** until the date we publish an amended Notice. If we do publish an amended Notice, we will notify you at your next visit. We will also publish the amended Notice in our offices, and will publish it on our web site if we maintain one.

What Information Does this Notice Cover?

This Notice covers all information in our written or electronic records which concerns you, your health care, and payment for your health care. It also covers information we may have shared with other organizations to

help us provide your care, get paid for providing care, or manage some of our administrative operations.

When Can We Use or Disclose Information About You?

- **Treatment.** We may use or disclose information about you for treatment purposes to doctors, nurses, technicians, medical students or other individuals who work in our practice who are involved in providing you with health care. We may also disclose information about you to organizations and individuals involved in your care who are outside of our practice, such as consulting physicians, laboratories, social workers, and so on.

For example, if we refer you to another physician or a hospital for specialty services, we will provide that physician or hospital with all clinical information, which might be necessary or helpful to help them provide you with the right care. Or, if we need to send a sample of your blood to a laboratory for analysis, we will provide the laboratory with the information they need to process your blood correctly.

These are only examples, and we may use or disclose information about you to

provide you proper treatment in many other ways.

- **Payment.** We may use or disclose information about you for payment purposes to our clerks and officers involved in billing and claims payment. We may also disclose such information to your health plan or other party financially responsible for your care, or to claims and billing services if necessary.

For example, if you are covered by a health plan we cannot get paid for the services we provide you unless we submit information in a claim. This might include detailed clinical information, depending on the kind of plan and claim. This is only an example, and there may be many other ways in which we may use or disclose information about you in connection with payment for your care.

- **Health care operations.** We may use or disclose information about you for operations in connection with our practice. These activities might include practice quality improvement, training of medical students, insurance underwriting, medical or legal review, and business planning or administration of our practice.

For example, we may wish to review the quality of care you receive, in order to help us deliver the best care we can. Or, we may audit our management practices so we can become more efficient. These are only examples, and we may use or disclose information about you for health care operations in many other ways.

We may also use and disclose information about you in the following situations, without your prior authorization:

- To a public health agency, for purposes such as controlling disease.
- In case of suspected child abuse, to the

appropriate governmental authority.

- In other cases of suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence, to the appropriate governmental authority, with your agreement or if required by law, or if you are incapacitated or it appears necessary to prevent serious harm to you or others.
- Unless you object, to friends or family members who are involved in your medical care.
- Unless you object, to notify, or to assist in notifying, a family member or friend of your location or condition.
- To health oversight authorities, for regulatory, licensing and other legal purposes.
- In litigation and legal proceedings, subject to certain requirements controlling the terms of the disclosure.
- To law enforcement agencies, subject to applicable legal requirements and limitations.
- We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers' compensation or other similar programs established by law.
- To Funeral Directors/Medical Examiners/Coroners in the event of your death.
- When required by Federal, State or Local law.
- For medical research purposes, subject to your authorization or approval by an institutional review board or privacy board.
- If you are in the United States military,

national security or intelligence, Foreign Service, to your authorized superiors or other authorized federal officials.

We may contact you for information to support your health care, including appointment reminders, information about alternative treatments, and health-related services, which may be of interest to you. We will routinely contact patients via telephone at home and/or work and, unless otherwise requested, may leave messages on the appropriate voice mail or answering service regarding appointments. *Please advise us if you do not wish to receive such communications*, and we will not use or disclose your information for such purposes. If you wish not to receive this kind of communication, you must advise the Privacy Officer in writing at the address given above.

Most uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes and most uses and disclosures of your information for marketing purposes will require your written authorization. Further, VSS would typically be required to obtain your written authorization in order to sell your information. Except for uses and disclosures described in this notice, we may not use or disclose information about you for any other purpose without your written authorization.

What Legal Rights Do You Have In Connection With Your Information?

- **Right to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right to inspect or obtain copies of your medical information. To inspect and copy medical information, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address set forth above. If you request a copy of the information, there will be a charge based on our costs.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access

to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed by another licensed health care professional. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

- Right to Amend. If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as we keep the information.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the Privacy Officer at the address set forth above. In addition, you must provide a reason that supports your request.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of the medical information kept by or for VSS;
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- Is accurate and complete.

You will be informed of the decision regarding any request for amendment of your medical information and, if we deny your request for amendment, we will provide you with information regarding your right to respond to that decision.

- Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an accounting of disclosures we have made

of your medical information. The accounting of disclosures typically would not list disclosures we made of medical information about you that were made for purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations and that were made in response to a specific authorization from you.

To request this list or accounting of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address set forth above. Your request must state a time period for which you want the accounting (which may not be longer than six years prior to the request).

- Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery you had.

We are not required to agree to a requested restriction, unless (i) you are requesting that we not disclose information to a health plan for payment or health care operations of the health plan, and (ii) the information pertains solely to an item or service for which you or someone other than the health plan has already paid in full. If we do agree to a requested restriction, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment. Additionally, even when we do not agree to a requested restriction, health information about you may only be disclosed to family or friends if, in the exercise of professional judgment, we believe it is in your best interest to have such information disclosed. However,

under such circumstances, where practical, you will be given the opportunity to object to any such disclosure.

To request restrictions, you must make your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address set forth above.

- Right to Request Confidential Communications. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the Privacy Officer at the address set forth above. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

- Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice. You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice.

- Complaints. If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with VSS or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To file a complaint with VSS, contact the Privacy Officer at the phone number or address set forth above. All complaints to the Department of Health and Human Services must be submitted in writing. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.