

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system, the Health Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) of 1988 included a series of "administrative simplification" provisions that required the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to adopt national standards for electronic health care transactions. By ensuring consistency throughout the industry, these national standards will make it easier for health plans, doctors, hospitals and other health care providers to process claims and other transactions electronically. The law also requires the adoption of security and privacy standards in order to protect personal health information. HHS is issuing the following major regulations:

- Electronic healthcare transactions;
- Health information policy;
- Security requirements;
- Unique identifier for providers
- Unique identifier for health plans; and
- Enforcement procedures.

Although the HIPPA law also called for unique health identifier for individuals, HHS and Congress have indefinitely postponed any effort to develop such a standard.

Today, health plans, hospitals, pharmacies, doctors and other related health care entities use a wide array of systems to process and track health care bills and other information. Hospitals and doctor's offices treat patients with many different types of health insurance and must spend time and money ensuring that each claim contains the format, codes and other details required by each insurer. Similarly, health plans spend time and money to ensure their systems can handle transactions from various health care providers.

HIPPA includes a wide array of provisions designed to make health insurance more affordable and accessible. With support from health plans, hospitals and other health care businesses, Congress included provisions in HIPPA to require HHS to adopt national standards to certain electronic health care transactions, codes, identifiers and security. HIPPA also set a three-year deadline for Congress to enact comprehensive privacy legislation to protect medical records and other personal health information. When Congress did not enact such legislation by August 1999, HIPPA required HHS to issue health privacy regulations.

Security and privacy standards can promote higher quality care by assuring consumers that their personal health information will be protected from inappropriate uses and disclosures.

In addition, uniform national standards will save billions of dollars each year for health care businesses by lowering the costs of developing and maintaining software and reducing the time and expense needed to handle health care transactions.

By signing this authorization form you agree to have your protected health information used and possibly shared with your other doctors for your treatment and reimbursement from my health insurance.

Print Name

Signature

Date

