

# STATEMENT OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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Kyle A. Smits DDS  
Paul K. Smits DDS, PS  
5647 California Ave SW  
Seattle, Washington 98136  
206-935-4611

Our office is dedicated to protect the privacy rights of our patients and the confidential information entrusted to us. The commitment of each employee to ensure that your health information is never compromised is a principal concept of our practice. We may, from time to time, amend our privacy policies and practices but will always inform you of any changes that might affect your rights.

## **Protecting Your Personal Healthcare Information**

We use and disclose the information we collect from you only as allowed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the state of Washington. This includes issues relating to your treatment, payment, and our health care operations. Your personal health information will not be given to anyone other than other providers, professionals or entities involved in your health care without your written consent. You, of course, may give written authorization for us to disclose your information to anyone you choose, for any purpose.

Our offices and electronic systems are secure from unauthorized access and our employees are trained to make certain that the confidentiality of your records is always protected. Our privacy policy and practices apply to all former, current, and future patients, so you can be confident that your protected health information will not be improperly disclosed or released.

## **Collecting Protected Health Information**

We will only request personal information needed to provide our standard of quality health care, implement payment activities, conduct normal health practice operations, and comply with the law. This may include your name, address, telephone number(s), Social Security Number, employment data, medical history, health records, etc. While most of the information will be collected from you, we may obtain information from third parties if it is deemed necessary. Regardless of the source, your personal information will always be protected to the full extent of the law.

## **Disclosure of your Protected Health Information**

As stated above, we may disclose information as required by law. We are obligated to provide information to law enforcement and governmental officials under certain circumstances. We will not use your information for marketing purposes without your written consent.

Unless you request otherwise, we may use or disclose health information to a family member, friend, personal representative, or other individual to the extent necessary to help with your health care or with payment for your health care. In the event of an emergency or your incapacity, we will use our professional judgment in disclosing only the protected health information necessary to facilitate needed care. You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information, including those related to disclosures to family members, other relatives, close friends, or any other person identified by you. We are, however, not required to agree to a requested restriction but if we agree to a restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it.

We may use and/or disclose your health information to communicate reminders about your appointments including voicemail messages, answering machines, email, and postcards using any address or phone you have given to us.

## **Patient Rights**

You have a right to request copies of your healthcare information; to request copies in a variety of formats; and to request a list of instances in which we, or our business associates, have disclosed your protected information for uses other than stated above. All such requests must be in writing. We may charge for your copies in an amount allowed by law. If you believe your rights have been violated, we urge you to notify us immediately. You can also notify the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

We thank you for being a patient at our office. Please let us know if you have any questions concerning your privacy rights and the protection of your personal health information.

Paul K. Smits DDS, PS  
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