

## **THE TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF TEXAS SUMMARY NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES**

**The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (“TRS”) administers TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare pursuant to Texas law. THIS DOCUMENT DESCRIBES HOW TRS MAY USE OR DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR OWN INFORMATION PURSUANT TO THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996 (“HIPAA”) PRIVACY RULE. PLEASE REVIEW THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY.**

### **Uses and disclosures of health information:**

TRS and/or a third-party administrator under contract with TRS may use health information about you on behalf of your health plan to authorize treatment, to pay for treatment, and for other allowable health care purposes. Health care providers submit claims for payment for treatment that may be covered by a group health plan. Part of payment includes ascertaining the medical necessity of the treatment and the details of the treatment or service to determine if the group health plan is obligated to pay. Information may be shared by paper mail, electronic mail, fax, or other methods.

By law, TRS may use or disclose identifiable health information about you without your authorization for several reasons. Subject to certain requirements, we may disclose health information without your authorization for public health purposes, for auditing purposes, for research studies, and for emergencies. TRS provides information when otherwise required by law, such as for law enforcement in specific circumstances. In any other situation, TRS will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing any identifiable health information about you. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose information, you can later revoke that authorization to stop any future uses and disclosures not otherwise allowed by law. TRS may change its policies at any time. When TRS makes a significant change in its policies, TRS will change its Notice of Privacy Practices (the “Notice”) and post the new Notice on the TRS website at [www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us). The Notice is also located in our benefits booklets for TRS-Care and TRS-ActiveCare. You can also request a copy of the Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, contact the TRS Privacy Officer. TRS has revised the Notice, effective September 1, 2011, for compliance with the Health Information for Economic and Clinical Health Act of 2009 (“HITECH”).

### **Individual rights:**

In most cases, you have the right to look at or get a copy of health information about you that TRS uses to make decisions about you. If you request copies, you may be charged the normal copy fees that reflect the actual costs of producing the copies, including such items as labor and materials. You also have the right to receive a list of instances when we have disclosed health information about you for reasons other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations, related administrative purposes, and when you explicitly authorized it. If you believe that information in your record is incorrect or if important information is missing, you have the right to request that TRS correct the existing information or add the missing information. You have the right to request that TRS restrict the use and disclosure of your health information above what is required by law. If TRS accepts your request for restricted use and disclosure, then TRS must abide by the request and may only reverse its position after you have been appropriately notified. You have the right to request TRS send information to you at an alternative address or by alternative means of communication with TRS. You are not required to explain why you want the alternative means of communication. You have a right to be notified of a disclosure of your unsecured protected health information if the disclosure poses a significant risk of identity theft, financial, reputational, or other harm to you (*i.e.*, a breach).

### **Complaints:**

If you are concerned that TRS has violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision TRS has made about access to your records, you may contact the TRS Privacy Officer. You also may send a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The TRS Privacy Officer can provide you with the appropriate address upon request.

### **Our Legal duty:**

TRS is required by law to protect the privacy of your information, provide this document about our information practices, follow the information practices that are described in this document.

### **Notice of Privacy Practices:**

For further details about your rights and the federal Privacy Rule, refer to the Notice. You can ask for a written copy of the Notice by contacting the Office of the Privacy Officer or by visiting TRS’s website at [www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us). If you have any questions or complaints, please contact the TRS Privacy Officer, by calling (512) 542-6400 or toll-free (800) 223-8778 or by writing to TRS Privacy Officer, Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701.