



Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) is required to provide you a HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices as well as a State Notice of Privacy Practices. The HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices describes how BCBSTX can use or disclose your protected health information and your rights to that information under federal law. The State Notice of Privacy Practices describes how BCBSTX can use or disclose your nonpublic personal financial information and your rights to that information under state law. Please take a few minutes and review these notices. You are encouraged to go to the Blue Access for MembersSM (BAMSM) portal at bcbstx.com to sign up to receive these notices electronically. Our contact information can be found at the end of these notices.

HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – Effective 9/23/13

YOUR RIGHTS. When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.

This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

Get a copy of your health and claims records

- You can ask to see or get a copy of your health and claims records and other health information we have about you. Ask us how to do this by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- We will provide a copy or a summary of your health and claims records usually within 30 days of the request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.

Ask us to correct health and claims records

- You can ask us to correct your health and claims records if you think they are incorrect or incomplete. Ask us how to do this by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- We may say “no” to your request. We’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way or to send mail to a different address. Ask us how to do this by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- We will consider all reasonable requests and must say “yes” if you tell us you would be in danger if we do not.

Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us **not** to share or use certain health information for treatment, payment or our operations. Ask how to do this by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.

Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) for six years prior to your request date of when we shared your information, who we shared it with and why. Ask us how to do this by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- We will include all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and our operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). We will provide one accounting a year for free, but we may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

Get a copy of this Notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. To request a copy of this notice, use the contact information at the end of this notice and we will send you one promptly.

Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices for you.
- We confirm this information before we release them any of your information.



File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- You can complain if you feel we have violated your privacy rights by using the contact information at the end of this notice.
- You can also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by calling 1-877-696-6775; or by visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/ or by sending a letter to them at: 200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20201.
- We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

YOUR CHOICES. For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share.

If you have a clear preference on how you want us to share your information in the situations described below, tell us and we will follow your instructions. Use the contact information at the end of this notice.

In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in payment for your care
- Share information in a disaster or relief situation
- Contact you for fundraising efforts

If there is a reason you can't tell us who we can share information with, we may share it if we believe it is in your best interest to do so. We may also share information to lessen a serious or imminent threat to health or safety.

We never share your information in these situations unless you give us written permission

- Marketing purposes
- Sale of your information

OUR USES AND DISCLOSURES. How do we use or share your health information?

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways.

Help manage the health care treatment you receive

- We can use your health information and share it with professionals who are treating you.
Example: A doctor sends us information about your diagnosis and treatment plan so we can arrange additional services.

Run our organization

- We can use and disclose your information to run our organization and contact you when necessary.
Example: We use health information to develop better services for you.

We can't use any genetic information to decide whether we will give you coverage except for long-term care plans.

Pay for your health Services

- We can use and disclose your health information since we pay for your health services.
Example: We share information about you with your dental plan to coordinate payment for your dental work.

Administer your plan

- We may disclose your health information to your health plan sponsor for plan administration purposes.
Example: If your company contracts with us to provide a health plan, we may provide them certain statistics to explain the premiums we charge.

How else can we use or share your health information?

We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways, usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes. For more information go to:
www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html

Help with public health and safety issues

- We can share your health information for certain situations such as:
 - Preventing disease
 - Helping with product recalls
 - Reporting adverse reactions to medications
 - Reporting suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence
 - Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone's health or safety

Do research

- We can use or share your information for health research.

Comply with the law

- We will share information about you when state or federal law requires it, including the Department of Health and Human Services if they want to determine that we are complying with federal privacy laws.

Respond to organ/tissue donation requests and work with certain professionals

- We can share health information about you with an organ procurement organization.
- We can share information with a medical examiner, coroner or funeral director.

Address workers compensation, law enforcement, and Other government requests

- We can use or share health information about you:
 - For workers compensation claims
 - For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
 - With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
 - For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services or with prisons regarding inmates.

Respond to lawsuits And legal actions

- We can share health information about you in response to an administrative or court order, or in response to a subpoena.

Certain health information

- State law may provide additional protection on some specific medical conditions or health information. For example, these laws may prohibit us from disclosing or using information related to HIV/AIDS, mental health, alcohol or substance abuse and genetic information without your authorization. In these situations, we will follow the requirements of the state law.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. When it comes to your information, we have certain responsibilities.

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that compromises the privacy or security of your information.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing.

You may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

Additional information about your Privacy Rights can be found @ <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/>

STATE NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – Effective 9/23/13

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) collects nonpublic personal information about you from your insurance application, healthcare claims, payment information and consumer reporting agencies. BCBSTX:

- **Will not** disclose this information, even if your customer relationship with us ends, to any non-affiliated third parties except with your consent or as permitted by law.
- **Will** restrict access to this information to only those employees who perform functions necessary to administer our business and provide services to our customers.
- **Will** maintain security and privacy practices that include physical, technical and administrative safeguards to protect this information from unauthorized access.
- **Will** only use this information to administer your insurance plan, process your claims, ensure proper billing, provide you with customer service and comply with the law.

BCBSTX is able to share this information with certain third parties who either perform functions or services on our behalf or when required by law. These are some examples of third parties that we can share your information with:

- Company affiliates
- Business partners that provide services on our behalf (claims management, marketing, clinical support)
- Insurance brokers or agents, financial services firms, stop-loss carriers
- Regulatory agencies, other governmental entities and law enforcement agencies
- Your Employer Group Health Plan

You have a right to ask us what nonpublic financial information that we have about you and to request access to it.

CHANGES TO THESE NOTICES

We have the right to change the terms of these notices, and the changes we make will apply to all information we have about you. The new notices will be available upon request or from our website. We will also mail a copy of the new notices to you as required by law.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THESE NOTICES

If you would like general information about your privacy rights or would like a copy of these notices, go to: www.bcbstx.com/legal-and-privacy/privacy-notice-and-forms.

If you have specific questions about your rights or these notices, contact us in one of the following ways:

- Call us by using the toll-free number located on the back of your member identification card.
 - Call us at 1-877-361-7594.
 - Write us at: Privacy Office Executive Director
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
P.O. Box 804836
Chicago, IL 60680-4110
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Health care coverage is important for everyone.

We provide free communication aids and services for anyone with a disability or who needs language assistance. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, health status or disability.

To receive language or communication assistance free of charge, please call us at 855-710-6984.

If you believe we have failed to provide a service, or think we have discriminated in another way, contact us to file a grievance.

Office of Civil Rights Coordinator
300 E. Randolph St.
35th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Phone: 855-664-7270 (voicemail)
TTY/TDD: 855-661-6965
Fax: 855-661-6960
Email: CivilRightsCoordinator@hcsc.net

You may file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, at:

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F, HHH Building 1019
Washington, DC 20201

Phone: 800-368-1019
TTY/TDD: 800-537-7697
Complaint Portal: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>
Complaint Forms: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>

