

Notice of Privacy Practices - Frequently Asked Questions

Why am I getting this Notice of Privacy Practices?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule requires the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) as a HIPAA covered entity to mail out this Notice to ***all Veterans enrolled for VA health care benefits or eligible to enroll for VA health care benefits regardless if you are receiving care from VA.***

Is there anything that I have to do with the Notice of Privacy Practices?

No, this is for informational purposes only.

I never got this before. Why am I getting it now?

By law, all Veterans eligible to enroll or enrolled for VA health care benefits must be notified every three years of their privacy rights, unless there are changes or updates to the Notice which requires more frequent mailings. You may have not been enrolled when the previous Notice was mailed out.

I don't go to the VA, why am I getting this?... and...Does this mean I am now eligible for VA benefits?

All Veterans eligible to enroll or enrolled for VA ***health care*** benefits receive this Notice whether you receive treatment at VA or not. ***Receipt of this Notice does not mean you are eligible for other VA benefits.***

What are Privacy "Practices"?

Privacy practices are the standards in which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) comply with the legal and ethical requirements regarding your health information.

What is this Notice of Privacy Practices all about?

This *Notice of Privacy Practices* defines for you what is meant by "health information." The Notice also informs you on how VHA may use or disclose your health information and discusses your Veteran privacy rights.

Why should I care about the information contained in the Notice of Privacy Practices?

The Notice provides information on how to exercise your privacy rights. Specifically, the notice informs you on how to obtain a copy of your VA medical record, request an accounting of any disclosures made from your medical record, request amendments (corrections) to information in your medical record and how to file a privacy-related complaint.

When does VA need my authorization prior to releasing my health information.

Examples: Requests from an attorney, employers, and family members not involved in your care. In most cases VHA is required to have your authorization unless the disclosure is required by law or some other legal authority exists.

Who else besides the VA/VHA, may have my health information?

The Notice provides information on who may have access to your health information depending on the purpose of the release. We recommend you review it carefully and contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you receive care if you have further questions. **(Note: The Call Center has the VHA Privacy Officer Roster link to look up who the Privacy Officer is at a facility).**

Does the Notice of Privacy Practices affect my eligibility for benefits?

No. The receipt of this Notice *does not in any way* affect your **eligibility or ineligibility** for VA benefits.

How do I obtain another copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices, or a copy in larger print?

You may obtain another copy of this Notice or a large print format from the facility, (e.g., the enrollment office or your facility's Privacy Officer) where you are receiving care. You can also print out this Notice at:

<https://www.va.gov/vhapublications/searchresults.cfm>

What does the effective date on the Notice of Privacy Practices mean?

The September 30, 2019 date on this *Notice of Privacy Practices* means that this is a revised/updated version of the *Notice of Privacy Practices* dated September 23, 2013.

I just don't understand this. Who can I call to get a "line by line" explanation of these Privacy Practices?

Contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you receive care, or you can write to the national VHA Privacy Office (10A7B), Office of Health Informatics, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20420 or via telephone at 1-877-461-5038.

I don't agree with any of this!

The NOPP is outlining your privacy rights *under the law*; however, if you have a specific question, you can contact your facility privacy officer. Do you need the name of the facility Privacy Officer? **(Note: The Call Center has the VHA Privacy Officer Roster link to look up who the Privacy Officer is at a facility).** Or, you can write to the national VHA Privacy Office (10A7B), Office of Health Informatics, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20420 or via telephone at 1-877-461-5038.

Who do I contact if I believe my Privacy rights have been violated?

Contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you are receiving health care. The Privacy Officer will begin a formal investigation into your complaint. Do you need the name of the facility Privacy Officer? **(Note: The Call Center has the VHA Privacy Officer Roster link to look up who the Privacy Officer is at a facility).**

I don't want anyone at VHA giving out my health information to anyone at any time!

Contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you receive care to request a restriction of your health information.

Is there a Spanish version of the Notice?

No. (Note: The VA is not required by law to provide a Spanish version of this Notice.)

NON-NOPP QUESTIONS (Based on questions the Hotline received during the last mailing)

How do I apply for VA benefits?

To apply for VA health care benefits, including enrollment you must fill out an application for enrollment, VA Form 10-10EZ. You may obtain this form by one of the following means: Online - Apply online at VA's VETS.GOV website. By Telephone - Call toll-free number at 877-222-VETS (8387) option 1.

Who do I contact to get VA funeral benefits information?

You can apply online at Vets.gov, or call 202-632-8035, or a toll-free number at 877-222-VETS (8387) option 3.

Who do I notify when there is a change of address or that the Veteran is deceased?

Contact the Enrollment Office at the VA facility where you, or your spouse, receive care. You can also change your address and other contact information online by going to your profile at www.VA.gov.

I suspect identity theft because of someone having access to my VA health records. Who do I report this to?

You may contact the VA Identity Theft Help Line at 1-855-578-5492 during the normal hours of operation of 8:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M. (Eastern), Monday-Friday

For more information, go to: <https://www.va.gov/identitytheft>

Can the VA provide legal services for me?

No. But, if legal assistance is needed, the following websites may be of help.

[Pro Bono Resources for Veterans](#)

[Stateside Legal](#)

[VetLex](#)

Who do I contact about a medical bill I have received from the VA?

If you need assistance understanding your medical bill, call the VA Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238 option 2.

How do I get a copy of my military or DoD medical records?

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) maintains former active duty member health records. Their address is 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63138. Requests can also be made online at <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>

Note: Veterans who plan to file a claim for medical benefits with the VA do not need to request a copy of their military health record from the NPRC. After a claim is filed, the VA will obtain the original health record from the NPRC.

Where can I find out more about VA insurance?

Why were my disability benefits reduced?

I was denied disability benefits, what do I do now?

Contact the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) at 1-800-827-1000.

I don't like my current VA doctor. How do I change doctors?

Contact the Patient Advocate at the VHA health care facility where you receive care.

OTHER PRIVACY-RELATED QUESTIONS

How do I get a copy of my VA medical records?

You may complete VAF 10-5345a which is located at <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/vha-10-5345a-fill.pdf>

Submit the completed form to the Privacy Officer or the Release of Information department at the facility where you receive care.

How do I correct or amend a statement on my VA medical records?

Contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you receive care to request an amendment of your medical record. Do you need the name of the facility

Privacy Officer? (**Note: The Call Center has the VHA Privacy Officer Roster link to look up who the Privacy Officer is at a facility).**

How do I change my name on my VA medical records?

Contact the Privacy Officer at the VHA health care facility where you receive care. They will guide you on the process for submitting an amendment request. Do you need the name of the facility Privacy Officer? (**Note: The Call Center has the VHA Privacy Officer Roster link to look up who the Privacy Officer is at a facility).**

I want to file an Office for Civil Rights (OCR) complaint against the VHA.

Go to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights website for information to file a complaint.

<https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/complaint-process/index.html>

or email their office at OCRComplaint@va.gov

I do not want you using my SSN for identification purposes, what are my options?

The SSN is the primary identifier used for patients within the VHA electronic health record. Until that changes, the SSN must be used to safely identify patients. Currently there are no other options to use other than your SSN.

How do I know who the Privacy Officers is at the facility where I receive my care? (if a caller does not know their privacy officer, reference the list below and let them know who it is.)

A list of the VHA Privacy Officers can be found at [VHA Privacy Officers Roster](#)

<https://vaww.vha.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/HDI/vhaprivacy/Lists/Contacts/DataSheet.aspx>

I don't want to file a privacy complaint with my facility, I want to file a complaint with someone higher up. You can write to the national VHA Privacy Office (10A7B), Office of Health Informatics, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. 20420 or via telephone at 1-877-461-5038.

