

## PUGET SOUND BENEFITS TRUST

### NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

Pursuant to regulations issued by the federal government, the Trust is providing you this Notice about the possible uses and disclosures of your health information. Your health information is information that constitutes PHI as defined in the Privacy Rules of the Administrative Simplification provision of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). As required by law, the Trust has established a policy to guard against unnecessary disclosure of your health information. This Notice describes the circumstances under which and the purposes for which your health information may be used and disclosed and your rights in regard to such information.

#### PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

PHI generally means information that: (1) is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, employer, or health care clearing house; and (2) relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual, the provision of health care to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual; and (3) identifies the individual, or there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

#### USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION

Your health information may be used and disclosed without an authorization in the following situations:

**To Make or Obtain Payment:** The Trust may use or disclose your health information to make payment to or collect payment from third parties, such as other health plans or providers, for the care you receive, to determine benefit responsibility under the Plan, or to coordinate Plan coverage. For example, the Trust may use health information to pay your claims or share information regarding your coverage or health care treatment with other health plans to coordinate payment of benefits. The Trust may also share your protected health information with another entity to assist in the adjudication of reimbursement of your health claims.

**To Facilitate Treatment:** The Trust may disclose information to facilitate treatment which involves providing, coordinating or managing health care or related services. For example, the Trust may disclose the name of your treating Physician to another Physician so that the Physician may ask for your x-rays.

**To Conduct Health Care Operations:** The Trust may use or disclose health information for its own operations, to facilitate the administration of the Trust and as necessary to provide coverage and services to all of the Trust's Participants.

Health care operations include: making eligibility determinations; contacting health care providers; providing Participants with information about health-related issues or treatment alternatives; developing clinical guidelines and protocols; conducting case management; medical review and care coordination; handling claim appeals; reviewing health information to improve health or reduce health care costs; participating in drug or disease management activities; conducting underwriting; premium rating or related functions to create, renew or replace health insurance or health benefits; and performing the general administrative activities of the Trust (such as providing customer service, conducting compliance reviews and auditing, responding to legal matters and compliance inquiries, handling quality assessment and improvement activities, business planning and development including cost management and planning-related analyses and formulary development, and accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities). For example, the Trust may use your health information to conduct case management of ongoing care or to resolve a claim appeal you file.

**For Disclosure to the Plan Trustees:** The Trust may disclose your health information to the Board of Trustees (which is the Plan sponsor) and to necessary advisors which assist the Board of Trustees in performing Plan administration functions, such as handling claim appeals. The Trust also may provide Summary Health Information to the Board of Trustees so that it may solicit bids for services or evaluate its benefit plans.

Summary Health Information is information which summarizes Participants' claims information but from which names and other identifying information have been removed. The Trust may also disclose information about whether you are participating in the Trust or one of its available options.

**For Disclosure to You or Your Personal Representative:** When you request, the Trust is required to disclose to you or your personal representative your protected health information that contains medical records, billing records, and any other records used to make decisions regarding your health care benefits. Your personal representative is an individual designated by you in writing as your personal representative, attorney-in-fact. The Trust may request proof of this designation prior to the disclosure. Also, absent special circumstances, the Trust will send all mail from the Trust to the individual's address on file with the Trust Administration Office. You are responsible for ensuring that your address with the Trust Administration Office is current. Although mail is normally addressed to the individual to whom the mail pertains, the Trust cannot guarantee that other individuals with the same address will not intercept the mail. You have the right to request restrictions on where your mail is sent as set forth in the request restrictions section below.

**Disclosure Where Required By Law:** In addition, the Trust will disclose your health information where applicable law requires. This includes:

1. *In Connection With Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.* The Trust may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for authorized activities (including audits; civil; administrative or criminal investigations; inspections; licensure or disciplinary action); government benefit programs for which health information is relevant; or to government agencies authorized by law to receive reports of abuse, neglect or domestic violence as required by law. The Trust, however, may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and the investigation does not arise out of or is not directly related to your

receipt of health care or public benefits.

2. *When Legally Required and For Law Enforcement Purposes.* The Trust will disclose your protected health information when it is required to do so by any federal, state or local law. Additionally, as permitted or required by state law, the Trust may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain law enforcement purposes, such as identifying a suspect or to provide evidence of criminal conduct.
3. *To Conduct Public Health and Health Oversight Activities.* The Trust may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for authorized activities (including audits, civil administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary action), government benefit programs for which health information is relevant, or to government agencies authorized by law to receive reports of abuse, neglect or domestic violence as required by law. The Trust, however, may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and the investigation does not arise out of or is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits.
4. *In the Event of a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.* The Trust may, consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct, disclose your health information if the Trust, in good faith, believes that such disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or safety or to the health and safety of the public. For example, the Trust may disclose evidence of a threat to harm another person to the appropriate authority.
5. *For Specified Government Functions.* In certain circumstances, federal regulations require the Trust to use or disclose your health information to facilitate specified government functions related to the military and veterans, national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the President and others, and correctional institutions and inmates.
6. *For Workers' Compensation.* The Trust may release your health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws related to workers' compensation or similar programs.

#### **AUTHORIZATION TO USE OR DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION**

Other than as stated above, the Trust will not disclose your health information without your written authorization.

Generally, you will need to submit an Authorization if you wish the Trust to disclose your health information to someone other than yourself. Authorization forms are available from the Privacy Contact Person listed below.

If you have authorized the Trust to use or disclose your health information, you may revoke that Authorization in writing at any time. The revocation should be in writing, include a copy of or reference to your Authorization and be sent to the Privacy Contact Person listed below.

Special rules apply about disclosure of psychotherapy notes. Your written Authorization generally will be required before the Trust will use or disclose psychotherapy notes. Psychotherapy notes are a mental health professionals separately filed notes which document or analyze the contents of

a counseling session. Psychotherapy notes do not include summary information about your mental health treatment or information about medications, session stop and start times, the diagnosis and other basic information. The Trust may use and disclose psychotherapy notes when needed to defend against litigation filed by you or as necessary to conduct Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations.

Additionally, your written authorization will be required for any disclosure of your health information that involves marketing, the sale of your health information, or any disclosure involving direct or indirect remuneration to the Trust.

## **YOUR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

You have the following rights regarding your health information that the Trust maintains:

**Right to Request Restrictions:** You may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. You have the right to request a limit on the Trust's disclosure of your health information to someone involved in payment for your care. However, the Trust is not required to agree to your request unless the disclosure at issue is to another health plan for the purpose of carrying out payment or health care operations and your health care provider has been paid by you out-of-pocket and in full.

**Right to Inspect and Copy Your Health Information:** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information. This right, however, does not extend to psychotherapy notes or information compiled for civil, criminal or administrative proceeding. The Trust may deny your request in certain situations subject to your right to request review of the denial. A request to inspect and copy records containing your health information must be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person listed below. If you request a copy of your health information, the Trust may charge a reasonable fee for copying, assembling costs and postage, if applicable, associated with your request. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the fee for a copy of your health information in electronic format shall not be greater than the Trust's labor costs in responding to the request.

**Right to Receive Confidential Communications:** You have the right to request that the Trust communicate with you in a certain way if you feel the disclosure of your health information through regular procedures could endanger you. For example, you may ask that the Trust only communicate with you at a certain telephone number or by e-mail. If you wish to receive confidential communications, please make your request in writing to the Privacy Contact Person listed below. The Trust will attempt to honor reasonable requests for confidential communications.

**Right to Amend the Your Health Information:** If you believe that your health information records are inaccurate or incomplete, you may request that the Trust amend the records. That request may be made as long as the information is maintained by the Trust. A request for an amendment of records must be made in writing to the Trust's Privacy Contact Person listed below. The Trust may deny the request if it does not include a reasonable reason to support the amendment. The request also may be denied if your health information records were not created by the Trust, if the health information you are requesting to amend is not part of the Trust's records, if the health information you wish to amend falls within an exception to the health information you

are permitted to inspect and copy, or if the Trust determines the records containing your health information are accurate and complete.

**Right to an Accounting:** You have the right to request a list of disclosures of your health information made by the Trust. The request must be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person. The request should specify the time period for which you are requesting the information. No accounting will be given of disclosures made: to you or any one authorized by you; for Treatment, Payment or Health Care Operations; disclosures made before April 14, 2003; disclosures for periods of time going back more than six years; or in other limited situations. The Trust will provide the first accounting you request during any 12-month period without charge. Subsequent accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable cost-based fee. The Trust will inform you in advance of the fee, if applicable.

**Right to Opt Out of Fundraising Communications.** If the Trust participates in fundraising, you have the right to opt-out of all fundraising communications.

**Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice:** You have a right to request and receive a paper copy of this Notice at any time, even if you have received this Notice previously or agreed to receive the Notice electronically. To obtain a paper copy, please contact the Privacy Contact Person listed below. You will be able to obtain a copy of the current version of the Trust's Notice at its website, [www.psbenefitstrust.com](http://www.psbenefitstrust.com). If this Notice is modified you will be mailed a new copy.

**Privacy Contact Person/Privacy Official:** To exercise any of these rights related to your health information you should contact the Privacy Contact Person listed below. The Trust has also designated a Privacy Official to oversee its compliance with the Privacy Rules who is also listed below.

Privacy Contact Person  
Assistant Claims Manager  
c/o Welfare & Pension Administration Service, Inc.  
P.O. Box 34203  
Seattle, WA 98124-1203  
Toll Free: (800) 331-6158  
Fax: (206) 441-9110

Privacy Official  
Heidi Campbell  
c/o Welfare & Pension Administration Service, Inc.  
P.O. Box 34203  
Seattle, WA 98124-1203  
Toll Free: (800) 331-6158  
Fax: (206) 441-9110

## **DUTIES OF THE TRUST**

The Trust is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information as set forth in this Notice, to provide to you this Notice of its duties and privacy practices, and to notify you following a breach of unsecured protected health information. The Trust is required to abide by the terms of this Notice, which may be amended from time to time. The Trust reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice and to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information that it maintains. If the Trust changes its policies and procedures, the Trust will revise the Notice and will provide a copy of the revised Notice to you within 60 days of the change. You have the right to express complaints to the Trust and to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated. Any complaints to the Trust should be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person identified above. The Trust encourages you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your health information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint.

The Trust is prohibited by law from using or disclosing genetic health information for underwriting purposes.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Notice was originally effective **April 14, 2003**, as amended September 19, 2013.

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