

Athens Spine Center PC

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Patient Privacy Rights

Patient Privacy Rights

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide information for management and workforce members about the privacy rights that patients have regarding the use and disclosure of their protected health information and to describe the process for filing a complaint should patients feel their rights have been violated.

Policy

General

Athens Spine Center's patients have the right to, and **Athens Spine Center** may not deny, the following:

Access to their own information, consistent with certain limitations;

Receive an accounting of disclosures **Athens Spine Center** has made of their protected health information (PHI) for up to six years prior to the date of requesting such accounting. Information may not be available prior to the effective date of this policy (April 14, 2003) and certain limitations do apply as outlined in *Rights of Clients to An Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information* this policy; and

Submit complaints if they believe or suspect that information about them has been improperly used or disclosed, or if they have concerns about the privacy policies of **Athens Spine Center**.

Patients may ask **Athens Spine Center** to take specific actions regarding the use and disclosure of their information and **Athens Spine Center** may either approve or deny the request. Specifically, patients have the right to request:

That **Athens Spine Center** restrict uses and disclosures of their individual information while carrying out treatment, payment activities, or health care operations;

To receive information from **Athens Spine Center** by alternative means, such as mail, e-mail, fax or telephone, or at alternative locations; and

That **Athens Spine Center** amend their information that is held by **Athens Spine Center**.

Relationship to Notice of Privacy Practices

Athens Spine Center will use the "Notice of Privacy Practices" to inform patients about how **Athens Spine Center** may use and/or disclose their information. The "Notice of Privacy Practices" also describes the actions a patient may take, or request **Athens Spine Center** to take, with regard to the use and/or disclosure their information.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent **Athens Spine Center** from changing its policies or the "Notice of Privacy Practices" at any time, provided that the changes in the policies or the "Notice of Privacy Practices" comply with state or federal law.

Decision-Making Authority Within Athens Spine Center

Prior to any decision, based on a patient's request for **Athens Spine Center** to amend a health or medical record, the **Athens Spine Center** shall review the request and any related documentation.

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Prior to any decision to amend any other information that is not a health or medical record, **Athens Spine Center** shall review the request and any related documentation.

Athens Spine Center may deny a patient access to his/her own health information on the grounds that access may result in risk or harm to the patient or to another person. However, prior to any decision to deny such access, **Athens Spine Center** shall review the request and any related documentation.

Decisions related to any other requests made to **Athens Spine Center** under this policy shall be handled in a manner consistent with federal and state rules and regulations and/or **Athens Spine Center** policies and procedures applicable to the treatment, program, service or activity.

Rights of Patients to Request Privacy Protection of Their Information

Patients have the right to request restrictions on the use and/or disclosure of their information.

Athens Spine Center applies confidentiality laws to protect the privacy of patient information. Even if those laws would permit **Athens Spine Center** to make a use or disclosure of information, a **Athens Spine Center** patient has the right to request a restriction on a use or disclosure of that information.

All requests will be submitted by completing a *"Restriction of Use and Disclosures Request Form."*

Athens Spine Center is not obligated to agree to a restriction and may deny the request or may agree to a restriction more limited than what the patient requested.

Exception: Certain programs can only use information that is authorized by the patient, such as alcohol and drug programs or vocational rehabilitation participants. For those program participants, **Athens Spine Center** will honor their requests for restriction by making sure that the authorization clearly identifies the authorized recipients of the information.

Rights of Patients to Request to Receive Information By Alternative Means or At Alternative Locations

Athens Spine Center must accommodate reasonable requests by patients to receive communications by alternative means, such as by mail, e-mail, fax or telephone; and

Athens Spine Center must accommodate reasonable requests by patients to receive communications at an alternative location.

In some cases, sensitive health information or health services must be handled with strict confidentiality under state law. For example, information about substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and certain sexually transmitted diseases, may be subject to specific handling. **Athens Spine Center** will comply with the more restrictive requirements.

Rights of Patients to Access Their Information

Patients have the right to access, inspect, and obtain a copy of information on their own cases in **Athens Spine Center** files or records, consistent with federal and state law.

All requests for access will be made having the patient complete *"Access to Records Request Form."*

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Patients may request access to their own information that is kept by **Athens Spine Center** by using a personal identifier (such as the patient's name or **Athens Spine Center** case number).

If **Athens Spine Center** maintains information about the patient in a record that includes information about other people, the patient is only authorized to see information about him or herself, with the following exceptions:

- A. If a person identified in the file is a minor child of the patient, and the patient is authorized under State law to have access to the minor's information or to act on behalf of the minor for making decisions about the minor's care, the patient may also obtain information about the minor.
- B. If the person requesting information is recognized under State law as a guardian or legal custodian of the patient and is authorized by State law to have access to the patient's information or to act on behalf of the patient for making decisions about the patient's services or care, **Athens Spine Center** will release information to the requestor.
- C. Any other exceptions or restrictions as may be required under State law.

Athens Spine Center may deny patients access to his/her own health information if federal law prohibits the disclosure. Under federal law, patients have the right to access, inspect, and obtain a copy of health information on their own cases in **Athens Spine Center** files or records except for:

- A. Psychotherapy notes;
- B. Information compiled for use in civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings;
- C. Information that is subject to the Federal Clinical Labs Improvement Amendments of 1988, or exempt pursuant to 42 CFR 493.3(a)(2);
- D. Information that, in good faith, **Athens Spine Center** believes can cause harm to the patient, participant or to any other person;
- E. Documents protected by attorney work-product privilege; and
- F. Information where release is prohibited by State or Federal Laws.

Before **Athens Spine Center** denies a patient access to their information because there is a good faith belief that its disclosure could cause harm to the patient or to another person, **Athens Spine Center** must make a review of this denial available to the patient. If the patient wishes to have this denial reviewed, the review must be done by a licensed health care professional other than **Athens Spine Center** as selected by **Athens Spine Center**.

Rights of Patients to Request Amendments to Their Information

Patients have the right to request that **Athens Spine Center** amend their information in **Athens Spine Center's** files.

All requests for amendments will be made by having the patient complete an "Amendment of Health Record Request Form."

Athens Spine Center is not obligated to agree to an amendment and may deny the requests or limit its agreement to amend.

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Rights of Patients to An Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information

Patients have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of protected health information (PHI) that **Athens Spine Center** has made for any period of time, not to exceed six years, preceding the date of requesting the accounting.

The accounting will only include health information NOT previously authorized by the patient for use or disclosure, and will not include information collected, used or disclosed for treatment, payment or health care operations for that patient.

All requests for an accounting of disclosures will be made by having the patient complete an *“Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health information Form.”*

This right does not apply to disclosures made prior to the effective date of this policy, which is April 14, 2003.

Rights of Patients to File Complaints Regarding Disclosure of Information

Patients have a right to submit a complaint if they believe that **Athens Spine Center** has improperly used or disclosed their protected information, or if they have concerns about the privacy policies of **Athens Spine Center** or concerns about **Athens Spine Center's** compliance with such policies.

Complaints may be filed with any of the following:

- A. The Department of Human Services in the State of **Athens Spine Center**.
- B. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights.

Requesting Restrictions of Uses and Disclosures

Patients may request that **Athens Spine Center** restrict use and/or disclosure of their information for:

- A. Carrying out treatment, payment, or health care operations;
- B. Disclosure of health information to a relative or other person who is involved in the patient's care;

All requests for restrictions will be made by having the patient complete *“Restriction of Use and Disclosures Request Form.”*

Athens Spine Center is not required to agree to a restriction requested by the patient.

Athens Spine Center will not agree to restrict uses or disclosures of information if the restriction would adversely affect the quality of the patient's care or services.

Athens Spine Center cannot agree to a restriction that would limit or prevent **Athens Spine Center** from making or obtaining payment for services.

Emergency treatment should be provided even with an agreed upon restriction with exceptions as noted below.

Exception: For Alcohol and Drug or Vocational Rehabilitation participants, Federal regulations (42 CFR Part 2 and 34 CFR) prohibit **Athens Spine Center** from denying patient requests for restrictions on uses and disclosures of their information regarding treatment or rehabilitation.

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Athens Spine Center will document the patient's request, and the reasons for granting or denying the request in the patient's hard copy or electronic **Athens Spine Center** case record file.

Prior to any use of disclosure of patient information, **Athens Spine Center** staff must confirm that such use or disclosure has not been granted a restriction by reviewing the patient's case file. If **Athens Spine Center** agrees to a patient's request for restriction, **Athens Spine Center** will not use or disclose information that violates the restriction.

Exception: If the patient needs emergency treatment and the restricted information is needed to provide emergency treatment, **Athens Spine Center** may use or disclose such information to the extent needed to provide the emergency treatment. However, once the emergency situation subsides **Athens Spine Center** must not to redisclose the information.

Athens Spine Center may terminate its agreement to a restriction if:

- A. The patient agrees to or requests termination of the restriction in writing;
- B. The patient orally agrees to, or requests termination of the restriction. **Athens Spine Center** will document the oral agreement or request in the patient's **Athens Spine Center** case record file; or
- C. **Athens Spine Center** informs the patient in writing that **Athens Spine Center** is terminating its agreement to the restriction. Information created or received while the restriction was in effect shall remain subject to the restriction.

Requesting Alternative Means or Locations

The patient must specify the preferred alternative means or location.

Requests for alternative means or alternative locations for information may be made orally or in writing.

If a patient makes a request orally, **Athens Spine Center** will document the request and ask for the patient's signature.

If a patient makes a request by telephone or electronically, **Athens Spine Center** will document the request and verify the identity of the requestor.

Prior to any information being sent to the patient, **Athens Spine Center** staff must confirm if the patient has requested an alternate location or by alternate means, and if **Athens Spine Center** has granted that request, by reviewing the patient's case file.

Athens Spine Center may terminate its agreement to an alternative location or method of communication if:

- A. The patient agrees to or requests termination of the alternative location or method of communication in writing or orally. **Athens Spine Center** will document the oral agreement or request in the patient's **Athens Spine Center** case record file.
- B. **Athens Spine Center** informs the patient that **Athens Spine Center** is terminating its agreement to the alternative location or method of communication because the alternative location or method of communication is not effective. **Athens Spine Center** may terminate its agreement to communicate at the alternate location or by the alternative means if:
 1. **Athens Spine Center** is unable to contact the patient at the location or in the manner requested; or
 2. If the patient fails to respond to payment requests if applicable.

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Requesting Access to Information

Athens Spine Center will assure that patients may access their information that **Athens Spine Center** uses in whole or part to make decisions about them, subject to certain limitations as outlined in *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* of this Policy.

Patients may request to access, inspect and obtain information about themselves, subject to limitations as outlined in this policy.

All requests for access will be made by having the patient complete an “*Access to Records Request Form.*”

Athens Spine Center may deny a patient access to their information if:

- A. It is excepted under *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* of this Policy, or
- B. Was obtained from someone other than a health care provider under a promise of confidentiality, and access would reveal the source of the information.

Athens Spine Center may deny a patient access to their information, provided that **Athens Spine Center** gives the patient a right to have the denial reviewed, in the following circumstances:

- A. **Athens Spine Center** has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that the information requested may endanger the life or physical safety of the patient or another person; or
- B. The protected information makes reference to another person, and **Athens Spine Center** has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that the information requested may cause substantial harm to the patient or another person; or
- C. The request for access is made by the patient’s personal representative, **Athens Spine Center** has determined, in the exercise of professional judgment, that allowing the personal representative to access the information may cause substantial harm to the patient or to another person.

If **Athens Spine Center** denies access the patient has the right to have the decision reviewed by a licensed health care professional not directly involved in **Athens Spine Center’s** original denial decision. **Athens Spine Center** will then proceed based on the decision from this review.

Athens Spine Center must promptly refer a request for review to the designated reviewer.

The reviewer must determine, within a reasonable time, whether or not to approve or deny the patient’s request for access, in accordance with this policy.

Athens Spine Center must then:

- A. Promptly notify the patient in writing of the reviewer’s determination; and
- B. Take action to carry out the reviewer’s determination.

Athens Spine Center must act on a patient’s request for access no later than 30 days after receiving the request.

In cases where the information is not maintained or accessible to **Athens Spine Center** on-site, **Athens Spine Center** must act on the patient’s request no later than 60 days after receiving the request.

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If **Athens Spine Center** is unable to act within these 30-day or 60-day limits, **Athens Spine Center** may extend this limitation by up to an additional 30 days, subject to the following:

- A. **Athens Spine Center** must notify the patient in writing of the reasons for the delay and the date by which **Athens Spine Center** will act on the request.
- B. **Athens Spine Center** will use only one such 30-day extension to act on a request for access.

If **Athens Spine Center** grants the patient's request, in whole or in part, **Athens Spine Center** must inform the patient of the access decision and provide the requested access.

If **Athens Spine Center** maintains the same information in more than one format (such as electronically and in a hard-copy file) or at more than one location, **Athens Spine Center** need only provide the requested protected information once.

Athens Spine Center must provide the requested information in a form or format requested by the patient, if readily producible in that form or format. If not readily producible, **Athens Spine Center** will provide the information in a readable hard-copy format or such other format as agreed to by **Athens Spine Center** and the patient.

If **Athens Spine Center** does not maintain, in whole or in part, the requested information, and knows where the information is maintained, **Athens Spine Center** will inform the patient of where to request access.

Athens Spine Center may provide the patient with a summary of the requested information, in lieu of providing access, or may provide an explanation of the information if access had been provided, if:

- A. The patient agrees in advance; and
- B. The patient agrees in advance to any fees **Athens Spine Center** may impose, and as allowed by law and/or described below.

Athens Spine Center must arrange with the patient for providing the requested access in a time and place convenient for the patient and **Athens Spine Center**. This may include mailing the information to the patient if the patient so requests or agrees.

Fees

A patient (or legal guardian or custodian) may request a copy of their information at no cost once every 12 months. If the patient requests a copy of the requested information, or a written summary or explanation, more frequently than once every 12 months, then **Athens Spine Center** may impose a reasonable, cost-based fee, limited to covering the following:

- A. Copying the requested information, including the costs of supplies and of the labor of copying;
- B. Postage, when the patient has requested or agreed to having the information mailed; and
- C. Preparing an explanation or summary of the requested information, if agreed to in advance by the patient, per *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* in this policy.

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If **Athens Spine Center** denies access, in whole or in part, to the requested information, **Athens Spine Center** must:

- A. Give the patient access to any other requested patient information, after excluding the information to which access is denied;
- B. Provide the patient with a timely written denial. The denial must:
 - 1. Be sent or provided within the time limits specified in *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* in this policy.
 - 2. State the basis for the denial, in plain language;
 - 3. If the reason for the denial is due to danger to the patient or another, explain the patient's review rights as specified in *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* in this policy including an explanation of how the patient may exercise these rights; and
 - 4. Provide a description of how the patient may file a complaint with **Athens Spine Center**, and if the information denied is protected health information, with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)-Office of Civil Rights, pursuant to *Rights of Patients to File Complaints Regarding Disclosure of Information* in this policy.

If **Athens Spine Center** does not maintain the requested protected information, and knows where such information is maintained (such as by a medical provider, insurer, other public agency, private business, or other non-**Athens Spine Center** entity), **Athens Spine Center** must inform the patient of where to direct the request for access.

Requesting Amendments of Information

All requests for amendments will be made by having the patient complete an "Amendment of Health Record Request Form."

Athens Spine Center will honor requests for alternative methods of making this request if reasonable accommodations are needed.

Athens Spine Center must act on the patient's request no later than 60 days of receiving the request. If **Athens Spine Center** is unable to act on the request within 60 days, **Athens Spine Center** may extend this time limit by up to an additional 30 days, subject to the following:

- A. **Athens Spine Center** must notify the patient in writing of the reasons for the delay and the date by which **Athens Spine Center** will act on the receipt; and
- B. **Athens Spine Center** will use only one such 30-day extension.

If **Athens Spine Center** grants the request, in whole or in part, **Athens Spine Center** must:

- A. Make the appropriate amendment to the protected information or records, and document the amendment in the patient's file or record;
- B. Provide timely notice to the patient that the amendment has been accepted, pursuant to the time limitations in *Rights of Clients to Access Their Information* of this policy;
- C. Seek the patient's agreement to notify other relevant persons or entities, with whom **Athens Spine Center** has shared or needs to share the amended information, of the amendment; and

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- D. Make reasonable efforts to inform, and to provide the amendment within a reasonable time to:
1. Persons named by the patient as having received protected information and who thus need the amendment; and
 2. Persons, including business associates of **Athens Spine Center**, that **Athens Spine Center** knows have the protected information that is the subject of the amendment and that may have relied, or could foreseeably rely, on the information to the patient's detriment.

Prior to any decision to amend a health or medical record, the request and any related documentation shall be reviewed by **Athens Spine Center**.

Prior to any decision to amend any other information that is not a health or medical record, **Athens Spine Center** shall review the request and any related documentation.

Athens Spine Center may deny the patient's request for amendment if:

- A. **Athens Spine Center** finds the information to be accurate and complete;
- B. The information was not created by **Athens Spine Center**, unless the patient provides a reasonable basis to believe that the originator of such information is no longer available to act on the requested amendment;
- C. The information is not part of **Athens Spine Center** records; or
- D. If it would not be available for inspection or access by the patient, as specified above in *Rights of Patients to Access Their Information*.

If **Athens Spine Center** denies the requested amendment, in whole or in part, **Athens Spine Center** must:

- A. Provide the patient with a timely written denial. The denial must:
 1. Be sent or provided within the time limits as specified in this policy above;
 2. State the basis for the denial, in plain language;
 3. Explain the patient's right to submit a written statement disagreeing with the denial and how to file such a statement. If the patient does so:
 - A. **Athens Spine Center** will enter the written statement into the patient's **Athens Spine Center** case file;
 - B. **Athens Spine Center** may also enter a **Athens Spine Center** written rebuttal of the patient's written statement into the patient's **Athens Spine Center** case record. **Athens Spine Center** will send or provide a copy of any such written rebuttal to the patient;
 - C. **Athens Spine Center** will include a copy of that statement, and of the written rebuttal by **Athens Spine Center** if any, with any future disclosures of the relevant information; and
 - D. Explain that if the patient does not submit a written statement of disagreement, the patient may ask that if **Athens Spine Center** makes any future disclosures of the relevant information, **Athens Spine Center** will also include a copy of the patient's original request for amendment and a copy of the **Athens Spine Center** written denial; and
 - E. Provide information on how the patient may file a complaint with **Athens Spine Center**, or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Civil Rights, subject to provisions in the *Complaints* section in this policy.

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Requesting an Accounting of Disclosures

When a patient requests an accounting of disclosures that **Athens Spine Center** has made of their protected health information, **Athens Spine Center** must provide that patient with a written accounting of such disclosures made during the six- year period (or lesser time period if specified by the requesting patient) preceding the date of the patient's request.

All requests for an accounting of disclosures will be made by having the patient complete an "Accounting of Disclosures Request."

Examples of disclosures of protected health information (PHI) that are required to be listed in an accounting (assuming that the disclosure is permitted by other confidentiality laws applicable to the individual's information and the purpose for which it was collected or maintained) include:

1. Abuse Report: PHI about an individual provided by **Athens Spine Center** staff pursuant to mandatory abuse reporting laws to an entity authorized by law to receive the abuse report.
2. Audit Review: PHI provided by **Athens Spine Center** staff from an individual's record in relation to an audit or review (whether financial or quality of care or other audit or review) of a provider or contractor.
3. Health and Safety: PHI about an individual provided by **Athens Spine Center** staff to avert a serious threat to health or safety of a person.
4. Licensee/Provider: PHI provided by **Athens Spine Center** from an individual's records in relation to licensing or regulation or certification of a provider or licensee or entity involved in the care or services of the individual.
5. Legal Proceeding: PHI about an individual that is ordered to be disclosed pursuant to a court order in a court case or other legal proceeding. A copy of the court order must be included with the accounting.
6. Law Enforcement Official/Court Order: PHI about an individual provided to a law enforcement official pursuant to a court order. A copy of the court order must be included with the accounting.
7. Law Enforcement Official/Deceased: PHI provided to law enforcement officials or medical examiner about a person who has died for the purpose of identifying the deceased person, determining cause of death, or as otherwise authorized by law.
8. Law Enforcement Official/Warrant: PHI provided to a law enforcement official in relation to a fleeing felon or for whom a warrant for their arrest has been issued and the law enforcement official has made proper request for the information, to the extent otherwise permitted by law.
9. Media: PHI provided to the media (TV, newspaper, etc.) that is not within the scope of an authorization by the individual.
10. Public Health Official: PHI about an individual provided by **Athens Spine Center** staff (other than staff employed for public health functions) to a public health official, such as the reporting of disease, injury, or the conduct of a public health study or investigation.
11. Public Record: PHI about an individual that is disclosed pursuant to a Public Record request without the individual's authorization.

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12. Research: PHI about an individual provided by **Athens Spine Center** staff for purposes of research conducted without authorization, using a waiver of authorization approved by an IRB – a copy of the research protocol should be kept with the accounting, along with the other information required under the HIPAA privacy rule, 45 CFR § 164.528(b)(4).

Disclosures that are not required to be tracked and accounted for are those that are:

- A. Authorized by the patient;
- B. Made prior to the original effective date of this policy, which is April 14, 2003;
- C. Made to carry out treatment, payment, and health care operations;
- D. Made to the patient;
- E. Made to persons involved in the patient's health care;
- F. Made as part of a limited data set in accordance with the *"Policy For De-Identification of PHI"*.
- G. For national security or intelligence purposes; or
- H. Made to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials having lawful custody of an inmate.

The accounting must include, for each disclosure:

- A. The date of the disclosure;
- B. The name, and address if known, of the person or entity who received the disclosed information;
- C. A brief description of the information disclosed; and
- D. A brief statement of the purpose of the disclosure that reasonably informs the patient of the basis for the disclosure, or, in lieu of such statement, a copy of the patient's written request for a disclosure, if any.

If, during the time period covered by the accounting, **Athens Spine Center** has made multiple disclosures to the same person or entity for the same purpose, or as a result of a single written authorization by the patient; **Athens Spine Center** may provide:

- A. Although **Athens Spine Center** must provide a written accounting for disclosures made over a six year period, only the first disclosure made during the time period is necessary (**Athens Spine Center** need not list the same identical information for each subsequent disclosure to the same person or entity) if **Athens Spine Center** adds;
- B. The frequency or number of disclosures made to the same person or entity; and
- C. The last date of the disclosure made during the requested time period.

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Athens Spine Center must act on the patient's request for an accounting no later than 60 days after receiving the request, subject to the following:

- A. If unable to provide the accounting within 60 days after receiving the request, **Athens Spine Center** may extend this requirement by another 30 days. **Athens Spine Center** must provide the patient with a written statement of the reasons for the delay within the original 60-day limit, and inform the patient of the date by which **Athens Spine Center** will provide the accounting.
- B. **Athens Spine Center** will use only one such 30-day extension.

Fees

Athens Spine Center must provide the first requested accounting in any 12-month period without charge. **Athens Spine Center** may charge the patient a reasonable cost-based fee for each additional accounting requested by the patient within the 12-month period following the first request, provided that **Athens Spine Center**:

- A. Informs the patient of the fee before proceeding with any such additional request; and
- B. Allows the patient an opportunity to withdraw or modify the request in order to avoid or reduce the fee.

Athens Spine Center must document, and retain in the patient's **Athens Spine Center** case record file, the information required to be included in an accounting of disclosures, as listed under *Rights of Clients to An Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information* in this policy, and send a copy of the written accounting provided to the patient.

Athens Spine Center will temporarily suspend a patient's right to receive an accounting of disclosures that **Athens Spine Center** has made to a health oversight agency or to a law enforcement official, for a length of time specified by such agency or official, if:

- A. The agency or official provides a written statement to **Athens Spine Center** that such an accounting would be reasonably likely to impede their activities.
- B. However, if such agency or official makes an **oral** request, **Athens Spine Center** will:
 - 1. Document the oral request, including the identity of the agency or official making the request;
 - 2. Temporarily suspend the patient's right to an accounting of disclosures pursuant to the request; and
 - 3. Limit the temporary suspension to no longer than 30 days from the date of the oral request, unless the agency or official submits a written request specifying a longer time period.

Filing a Complaint

Patients may file complaints with **Athens Spine Center's** Privacy Officer, and/or with the **Athens Spine Center's** State Department of Human Services and/or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - the Office for Civil Rights. **Athens Spine Center** must give patients the specific person or office and address of where to submit complaints.

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Contact Information For Georgia Department of Human Resources

Constituent Services
2 Peachtree Street NW Suite 29-213
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-656-4937 Suite 29-426

Contact Information For the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights

Medical Privacy, Complaint Division
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201
Toll free Phone: 877-696-6775
Phone: 866-627-7748
TTY: 886-788-4989
Email: www.hhs.gov/ocr