

# Notice of Privacy Practices

Effective Date: April 1, 2012

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and about how you can get access to this information. Please review carefully.

## Responsibilities of North Carolina Division of Public Health, State Laboratory of Public Health

The North Carolina Division of Public Health, State Laboratory of Public Health is required to protect the privacy of your health information that may identify you. This health information induces health care services that are provided to you, payment for those health care services, or other health care operations provided on your behalf.

This agency is required by law to inform you of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information through this Notice of Privacy Practices. This Notice describes the ways we may share your past, present and future health information, ensuring that we use and/or disclose this information only as we have described in this Notice. We do, however, reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice, and to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information that we maintain. Any changes to this Notice will be posted on our agency web site at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>. Copies of any revised Notices will be available to you upon request.

If at any time, you have questions or concerns about the information in this Notice or about our agency's privacy policies, procedures and practices, you may contact our agency Privacy Official. Please see contact information later in this Notice. The North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health is authorized under North Carolina

General Statute 130, Article 3 (N.C.G.S. 130A-88), to "make examinations, and provide consultation and technical assistance as the public health may require." It is the only public health reference laboratory in North Carolina. Specimens for laboratory testing and analysis are received from local health departments, health clinics, doctor's offices, hospitals, other laboratories, and other health care providers to aid in the diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of individual, community, or environmental health problems.

## Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) for Payment, Treatment and Health Care Operations:

1. **The NC State Laboratory of Public Health is an indirect provider of health care; as such, laboratory test results, are returned to the authorized person who ordered the tests. Authorized submitters and authorized health care providers may use these results for the treatment and follow-up care of the individual.**
2. The NC State Laboratory of Public Health may submit (PHI, such as name, address, birth date, social security number and/or Medicaid number, and laboratory services performed to the Medicaid office for payment of laboratory testing performed for an individual.
3. N.C. State Laboratory of Public Health may use PHI in the following health care operations:
  - a) Review and evaluate the skills, qualifications and performance of laboratory staff by review of laboratory records.
  - b) Provide training programs for students, trainees, and professional staff.
  - c) Provide required documentation to certifying and licensing agencies.

## Use and Disclosure of PHI Where Authorization is Not required:

Disclosures may be made by the N.C. State laboratory of Public Health without patient authorization for the following:

- 1) Required by law
- 2) Required for public health activities (example: reporting positive test results for communicable diseases)
- 3) Court orders
- 4) Related to specialized government activities, such as national security.

Copies of laboratory test results may be furnished to the Division of Public Health program sections for follow-up or tracking of communicable diseases or conditions according to applicable laws and public health program rules (North Carolina Administrative Code, 15A NCAC 20A 0105.).

Specimens submitted to the NC State Laboratory of public health care require additional analysis and confirmation may be sent to the Centers for disease Control and Prevention (for example, for monitoring of influenza).

## Your Rights Regarding Your Health Information.

You have the following rights regarding your health information as created and maintained by this agency:

1. You have a right to request and receive a copy of this privacy notice.
2. Requests to view laboratory records must be made to your health care provider, for example, your local health department or physician. The North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health is an indirect treatment provider; patients are not referred to this facility for specimen collection. Under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments, 42 CFR 493 (reference: 493.1291(f) Standard: Test Report); "Test results must be released only to authorized persons and, if applicable, the individual responsible for using the test results and the laboratory that initially requested the test." Under North Carolina Administrative Code (10A NCAC 42A. 0105, "individuals will be given the results of analysis made on specimens ....only upon written request of the authorized sender." Any requests made directly to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health will be referred to the 'DPH Privacy Official with instructions to contact the individual's health care provider.
3. You have the right to request and receive a written list of certain disclosures of your health information, made after April 14, 2003. You may ask for disclosures we made up to six years before your request. This listing will include the date of the disclosure, the name (and address, if available) of the person or organization receiving the information, a brief description of the information disclosed and the purpose of the disclosure. All requests for an accounting of disclosure must be made in writing. Please contact the NC Division of Public Health as described below to receive a form to request an accounting of disclosures from the NC State Laboratory.