

## **Patient Instructions for Accessing Medical Records and Filing Complaints**

### **1. How to Request Your Medical Records**

Under federal and Texas law, you have the right to request copies of your medical records.

#### **Step 1 – Submit a Written Request**

Contact the provider’s Medical Records Department, Health Information Management (HIM) Department, or front office and request a “Medical Records Release Form” or “Authorization for Release of Information.”

Include:

- Your full name
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Dates of treatment (if known)
- Specific records requested
- Where records should be sent
- Your signature and date

#### **Step 2 – Provide Identification**

You may be asked to provide:

- A government-issued photo ID
- Proof of guardianship or legal authority, if requesting records for another person

#### **Step 3 – Choose Delivery Method**

You may request records:

- By paper copy
- Electronically (email, portal, CD, USB)
- By fax to another provider

#### **Step 4 – Pay Any Applicable Fees**

Reasonable copying or processing fees may apply as permitted by law.

#### **Step 5 – Receive Your Records**

Providers are generally required to respond within the timeframes required by HIPAA and Texas law.

If you do not receive your records, contact the provider again and document all communication.

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### **2. How to Contact the Licensing or Disciplinary Authority**

If you have concerns about a healthcare provider’s conduct, privacy practices, billing, or refusal to release records, you may contact the appropriate licensing or regulatory agency.

#### **Common Texas Regulatory Agencies:**

##### **Texas Medical Board**

Regulates physicians, physician assistants, and acupuncturists.

[Texas Medical Board](#)

Complaint Information:

[File a Complaint – Texas Medical Board](#)

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### **Texas Board of Nursing**

Regulates nurses and nursing practice.

[Texas Board of Nursing](#)

Complaint Information:

[File a Complaint – Texas Board of Nursing](#)

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### **Texas Department of State Health Services**

Regulates certain healthcare facilities and services.

[Texas Department of State Health Services](#)

Complaint Information:

[Health Facility Complaint Information](#)

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### **Texas Department of Insurance**

Regulates health insurance companies and certain billing matters.

[Texas Department of Insurance](#)

Complaint Information:

[File an Insurance Complaint](#)

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## **3. How to File a Consumer Complaint**

If you believe your medical privacy rights have been violated or your records were improperly withheld, you may file a complaint.

### **Step 1 – Gather Information**

Collect:

- Dates of service
- Provider or facility name
- Copies of requests or correspondence
- Billing statements or records
- Description of the issue

### **Step 2 – Contact the Provider First**

Attempt to resolve the issue directly with:

- Office manager

- Privacy officer
- Compliance department
- Medical records department

Document all communications.

### **Step 3 – File a Complaint With the Appropriate Agency**

Submit your complaint online, by mail, or by phone through the appropriate licensing or regulatory agency listed above.

You may also file a federal HIPAA privacy complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – HIPAA Complaints](#)

### **Step 4 – Provide Supporting Documents**

Include copies of:

- Medical records requests
- Denial letters
- Emails or letters
- Billing records
- Any other supporting evidence

### **Step 5 – Cooperate With the Investigation**

The agency may:

- Contact you for additional information
- Request documentation
- Notify you of the outcome

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Texas Health and Safety Code Section 181.103 requires information regarding privacy rights, complaint processes, and applicable regulatory agencies to be made available to consumers.