Notice of Privacy Practices

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

Originally effective: April 1, 2022 Revised effective date: November 1, 2026

This Notice applies to Lonestar Rheumatology, PLLC, its providers and employees (the "Practice"). We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information ("medical information"), give you this Notice of our legal duties and privacy practices, notify you following a breach of unsecured medical information, and follow the Notice currently in effect.

How we may use and disclose your medical information

- **Treatment:** to provide and coordinate your care, including sharing with other physicians and providers (for example, a specialist we refer you to).
- **Payment:** to bill and collect from you, your insurer, or a third party, including obtaining prior authorization (for example, sending a claim with service codes to your plan).
- **Health care operations:** to run the Practice and improve care, including quality assurance, utilization review, credentialing and peer review, and business management.
- **Appointment reminders, treatment alternatives & health-related services:** including phone messages, texts, and email.
- **Business associates:** vendors (such as billing, IT, or AI service providers) who perform services for us and are required to protect your information.
- **Family and others involved in your care or payment:** as allowed by law, with an opportunity for you to agree or object when required.
- **Other uses permitted or required by law:** as required by federal, state, or local law; to avert a serious and imminent threat to health or safety (to medical or law enforcement personnel); organ and tissue donation; research (with required approvals or de-identified data); military and veterans; workers' compensation; public health (disease reporting, births and deaths, child abuse or neglect, adverse drug reactions, product recalls, exposure notification, and abuse/neglect/domestic violence reporting as required or authorized by law); health oversight; lawsuits and legal proceedings (court or administrative orders, subpoenas, lawful process); law enforcement as required or permitted by federal and Texas law; national security and intelligence; coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors; and inmates in custody.
- **Electronic disclosures:** Texas law requires us to notify you that your medical information may be disclosed electronically for treatment, payment, health care operations, or as otherwise authorized or required by law.
- **Marketing & fundraising:** We will not use your information for paid marketing communications without your authorization (except face-to-face communications or promotional gifts of nominal value). If we contact you for fundraising, you may opt out.

Uses that require your written authorization

- **Authorization:** Most uses of psychotherapy notes, marketing, and any sale of medical information require your authorization, as does any use not described in this Notice. You may revoke an authorization in writing at any time, except for actions already taken in reliance on it.
- **Texas law:** Texas prohibits the sale of your medical information (Tex. Health & Safety Code §181.153) and requires your authorization for electronic disclosures other than for treatment, payment, health care operations, or as authorized or required by law (§181.154). HIV/AIDS test results, mental health records, and genetic information receive additional protection, and we follow the more protective law.
- **Substance use disorder records:** If we receive records protected by 42 C.F.R. Part 2, we will not use or disclose them, or testimony about their content, in civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative

proceedings against you without your written consent or a court order issued after notice and an opportunity to be heard. You may opt out of any fundraising using these records.

Your rights

- **Inspect and copy:** You may inspect or get a paper or electronic copy of your medical and billing records by written request to our HIPAA Officer. We will respond within 15 business days as required by Texas law. Fees will not exceed Texas limits (22 TAC §165.2) and, for your own records, a reasonable cost-based fee; no fee for disability benefits claims; records are not withheld for unpaid balances. If we deny access in limited circumstances, you may request review by another licensed professional.
- **Amend:** You may request in writing, with a reason, that we amend information you believe is incorrect or incomplete. We may deny requests in limited circumstances and will tell you in writing.
- **Accounting of disclosures:** You may request a list of certain disclosures made in the past six years (not including treatment, payment, operations, or authorized disclosures). The first list in 12 months is free.
- **Restrictions:** You may request limits on uses or disclosures. We are not required to agree, except that if you (or someone other than a health plan) pay in full out of pocket for a service, we must honor your request not to disclose information about that service to your health plan for payment or operations, unless required by law.
- **Confidential communications:** You may ask us to contact you in a certain way or at a certain location. We will accommodate reasonable requests without asking why.
- **Paper copy:** You may ask for a paper copy of this Notice at any time.
- **Breach notification:** You will be notified if your unsecured medical information is affected by a breach, as required by HIPAA and Texas law.

Changes, questions & complaints

We may change this Notice and apply changes to all information we hold. The current Notice is posted in our office and available on request. If you believe your privacy rights were violated, contact: Lonestar Rheumatology, PLLC, Attn: HIPAA Officer, 11914 Astoria Blvd, Suite 355, Houston, TX 77089, 713-588-1674. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, 200 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-877-696-6775, www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.