

## **Protected Health Information – Privacy Statement**

HIPAA stands for the “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.” The original purpose of HIPAA was to make health insurance more “portable” so that workers could take their health insurance with them when they moved from one job to another, without losing health coverage. The scope of HIPAA was broadened to require the health care industry to adhere to uniform codes and forms. This would help streamline the processing and use of health data and claims, and contribute to better, more accessible care. The scope of HIPAA also was broadened to better protect the privacy of people’s health care information and give them greater access to that information. The HIPAA Privacy Rule was finalized on August 14, 2002, with a firm deadline for compliance of April 14, 2003.

Broward County’s Employee Benefit Services (EBS) respects the privacy of legally protected health information and understands the importance of keeping this information confidential and secure. Certain divisions or division sections within the County have access to what is called “Protected Health Information” or “PHI,” as it is defined by HIPAA. Not all health care information handled by Broward County is included in the definition of PHI. Only certain kinds of health care information are protected by the Privacy Rule. The following divisions or division sections are called “covered components” because they have access to the PHI covered by the HIPAA rules and regulations: the Elderly and Veterans Services Division, the Employee Benefits Section of the Human Resources Division and the Substance Abuse Section of the Broward Addiction Recovery Centers (BARC) Division.

EBS will use or transmit only the minimum amount of PHI needed to communicate enrollment, eligibility and termination data to Third Party Administrators or to any other entity to which we are required to respond. In addition, EBS will transmit only the minimum amount of PHI to appropriate entities for assistance with claims processing, claims reconsideration and review. EBS also ensures that the vendors, with whom we contract for benefit services, have been duly informed of their need to fully comply with all HIPAA Rules and Regulations.

All Broward County employees receive basic awareness training in HIPAA, which will be updated as required by law. Employees who work for the covered components and certain support agencies receive more extensive training to better enable them to comply with HIPAA.

For more information about rights under HIPAA, employees may contact Broward County’s Privacy Officer at: 954-357-6500. Employees may also contact the Human Resources Manager – Employee Benefit Services at 954-357-6700.