

# Appendix DD

## What You Can Do to Protect Your Privacy

### **Request a copy of your medical record**

Currently, about half the states give individuals a legal right to inspect and copy their medical records. Even if your state does not provide such a legal right, you may be able to inspect and copy your record upon request.

### **Request a copy of your file from the Medical Information Bureau**

The Medical Information Bureau (MIB) is a membership organization of more than 600 insurance companies. When applying for insurance, you may be authorizing the insurance company to check your records with MIB to verify that the information you have provided is accurate. MIB does not have a file on everyone. MIB reports are compiled on those with serious medical conditions or other factors that might affect longevity, such as affinity for a dangerous sport. If MIB has a file on an individual, that person has a right to see and correct the file. To obtain a copy of your file, contact: MIB Inc., P.O. Box 105, Essex Station, Boston MA 12112; Tel: 617-426-3660; <http://www.mib.com>.

### **Talk about confidentiality concerns with your doctor**

Your health care provider should be able to help you understand the uses of your health information, and may be able to offer certain assurances of confidentiality. For example, some providers keep treatment notes separate from the general medical chart to help ensure that the most sensitive information remains confidential. Your provider may also be able to help you understand the current limits of confidentiality, such as what kinds of information he or she is required to provide for insurance purposes.

### **Read authorization forms before you sign; edit them to limit the sharing of information**

Before you sign any forms find out to whom you are authorizing the release of your medical records and for what purpose. You may be able to limit distribution and restrict secondary disclosures of the information by revising the authorization form. Be sure to initial and date your revisions

### **Register your objection to disclosures that you consider inappropriate**

Registering objections may not result in immediate change, but sharing your concerns will help to educate your providers, plans, and others seeking health information. These entities should be aware that lack of privacy impacts how you seek and receive your health care.

### **Be cautious on health web sites**

When providing personal information for "surveys," health screenings, or on medical information Web sites be cautious about how much information you provide. Look for and read privacy policies before using the site. Ask how the information will be used and who will have access to it.

### **Educate yourself about medical privacy issues**

The Health Privacy Project Web site includes many resources for consumers. You may also sign-up for our news-list to be sent emails about new developments.

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