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Dear Patient:

Health Care providers/Physicians have always protected the confidentiality of health information by sealing medical records away in file cabinets and refusing to reveal your information. Today, state and federal laws also attempt to ensure the confidentiality of this sensitive information.

The federal government recently published regulations designed to protect the privacy of your health information. This "privacy rule" protects health information that is maintained by physicians, hospitals, other health care providers and health plans.

This new regulation protects virtually all patients regardless of where they live or where they receive their health care. Every time you see a physician, are admitted to the hospital, fill a prescription, or send a claim to a health plan, your physician, the hospital or other health care provider will need to consider the privacy rule. All health information including paper records, oral communications, and electronic formats (such as e-mail) are protected by the privacy rule.

The privacy rule also provides you certain rights, such as the right to have access to your medical records. However, there are exceptions; these rights are not absolute. We also take precautions in our office to safeguard your health information such as training our employees and employing computer security measures. Please feel free to ask your health care providers/physicians or our privacy officer about exercising your rights or how your health information is protected in our office.

The Notice of Private Practices attached to this letter explains our privacy practices. It contains very important information about how your confidential health information is handled by our office. It also describes how you can exercise your rights with regard to your protected health information.

Please let us know if you have any questions about our Notice of Privacy Practices. You may contact our Privacy Officer, Greg Yarbrough at our office, or discuss any questions you may have with your physician/ health care provider.