

This notice describes how medical and/or dental information about you may be used and disclosed, and how you can get access to this information. **Please review it carefully.**

Practice: Sweetwater Dental

Privacy Officer: Dr. Srinivas R. Mandala

Office Address: 1481 Richardson Road, Ste #111, Apex, NC 27523

Contact Number: (919) 446-3131

External HIPAA Resource: David Wornica, CHPSE • Contact: 469-342-8300 ext. 628

This Notice describes how we may use and disclose your protected health information (PHI) under federal law, including HIPAA, and applicable North Carolina confidentiality laws. We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your information, provide you with this Notice, and follow its terms. We may change these terms at any time; any revised Notice will apply to all information we maintain and will be available upon request, in our office, or on our website.

A. USES AND DISCLOSURES OF INFORMATION

Uses and Disclosures Based on Your Implied Consent

When you receive care in our office, you imply consent for us to use and disclose your information for:

Treatment: To provide, coordinate, or manage care. Includes sharing X-rays and chart notes with specialists, sending laboratory specifications, communicating with pharmacists, and coordinating care with other health providers.

Payment: To obtain payment for services, including submitting claims to your dental/health plan, verifying eligibility, obtaining prior authorizations, and responding to utilization reviews.

Health Care Operations: Administrative purposes such as quality improvement, staff training, evaluation, licensing, accreditation, compliance, and calling your name in waiting areas (limited info may be disclosed to interns/trainees).

Business Associates: We may share data with third-party vendors (billing, IT, transcription, secure cloud storage) who are required by law to safeguard your information.

Reminders & Communication: We may contact you via phone, text, email, or mail regarding appointments, care, or alternatives. You may request alternate methods.

Uses & Disclosures Requiring Specific Authorization or Consent

Written Authorization Required: Marketing communications not conducted face-to-face, sale of PHI, most psychotherapy notes, and disclosures to employers or uninvolved third parties. You may revoke authorization in writing at any time.

Opportunity to Object: We may share details with family members, partners, or friends involved in your care or payment, and disaster relief organizations, unless you object. Professional judgment is used if you are unavailable.

Disclosures Without Consent, Authorization, or Opportunity to Object

Permitted without consent under defined law:

- **Required by Law:** Mandated by federal or state statute.
- **Public Health:** Disease prevention, adverse event reporting.
- **Abuse or Neglect:** Reporting child, elder, or adult abuse.
- **Health Oversight:** Audits, investigations, inspections.
- **Legal Proceedings:** Court orders or lawful subpoenas.
- **Law Enforcement:** Locating suspects, reporting crimes.
- **Coroners & Examiners:** Identification or cause of death.
- **Organ Donation & Military:** Procurement; national security.
- **Workers' Comp:** Compliance with work injury programs.

SPECIAL STATUTORY PROTECTIONS

Substance Use Disorder Records

If we receive or maintain records relating to substance use disorder treatment protected under federal law (42 CFR Part 2), those records carry additional protections. They may be used and disclosed for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations as permitted by law. We will not use or disclose these records—or testimony regarding their contents—in civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against you unless permitted by law, with your written consent, or under a court order following proper legal procedures. Other disclosures require specific written authorization.

Reproductive Health Information

Information related to reproductive health care is subject to heightened privacy protections under federal rules and our internal practices. We may use and disclose reproductive health data for treatment, payment, and health care operations as permitted by law. We will **not** use or disclose reproductive health information for the purpose of investigating or imposing liability on any individual for seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating lawful reproductive health care.

B. YOUR RIGHTS

You have the following rights regarding your protected health information:

Inspect and Copy: You may inspect or obtain a copy of your records. Federal law restricts access to psychotherapy notes and certain litigation files.

Request Restrictions: You may ask us not to use or disclose specific PHI. We must agree if the disclosure is to a health plan for services paid fully out-of-pocket.

Confidential Communications: You may request contact via alternate means or addresses (such as mail sent exclusively to a P.O. Box).

Request Amendment: You may request an amendment if you believe records are inaccurate or incomplete, and may submit a statement of disagreement if denied.

Accounting of Disclosures: You may request an accounting of disclosures made in the prior 6 years (excluding routine treatment, payment, or operational uses).

Paper Copy & Breach Notice: You have the right to receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request, and you will be promptly notified if a breach of your PHI occurs.

C. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We must notify you promptly if a breach occurs that compromises the privacy or security of your information.
- We will use and disclose your information strictly in accordance with the terms described in this Notice.
- When federal and North Carolina privacy laws differ, we follow the more protective, stringent standard.

D. QUESTIONS & COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, or if you have questions about our policies, you may file a formal complaint without fear of retaliation:

File with Our Office:

Dr. Srinivas R. Mandala, Privacy Officer
Sweetwater Dental
1481 Richardson Road, Ste #111, Apex, NC 27523
Phone: (919) 446-3131

File with the Federal Government:

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201

Effective Date: This notice was published and became effective on **February 16, 2026**.