

CenCal Health Notice of Privacy Practices

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.

WHY AM I RECEIVING THIS NOTICE?

By law, CenCal Health must keep your Protected Health Information (PHI) safe. CenCal Health must also do the following:

- Provide you with this notice of its legal duties and privacy practices about your PHI.
- Follow the terms of this notice.
- Notify members if their PHI was not secured properly.

This notice tells you:

- How CenCal Health protects your PHI.
- How CenCal Health may use and share your PHI.
- Your rights about your PHI.

WHAT IS PHI?

PHI is information about you, including demographic information, that can be used to tell who you are. It includes things about your health in the past, now, or in the future, and information on how your health care is provided and gets paid for. Your PHI can be spoken, written, or electronic. CenCal Health must protect your PHI.

Demographic Information can include your:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Preferred language
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity

We use demographic information to help improve the quality of your care and the services we provide. This information helps us to:

- Better understand your health care needs
- Speak to you in your preferred language
- Provide health care information and programs to meet your care needs

Your demographic information is protected like the rest of your PHI. This means the information you give us is private and secure. We can only share this information with health care practitioners and providers for the purposes of care and as otherwise permitted or required by law. It will not be shared with anyone else unless you give your permission.

HOW CENCAL HEALTH PROTECTS YOUR PHI?

CenCal Health employees are trained to follow privacy and security rules that help keep your personal information safe. Only CenCal Health employees who need to access to your PHI to perform their job duties are given access. CenCal Health employees make sure your PHI stays private and do not talk about it in public or with people who are not allowed to know.

CenCal Health takes many steps to ensure your PHI is safe. For example, CenCal Health employees must:

- Lock and store away PHI when not in use.
- Immediately pick up PHI from fax machines, printers, and copiers.
- Use security measures like data encryption and password protected devices, keycards, and emails.

These steps ensure PHI is only accessed by those who need it to perform their job functions.

CenCal Health also protects and tracks the receipt, removal of, and access to devices and media that contain individual-level race, ethnicity, language, gender, and sexual orientation data (PII) or devices and media that may be used to access this data.

HOW CENCAL HEALTH MAY USE AND SHARE YOUR PHI

CenCal Health may use and share your PHI for health care purposes. Some of the information CenCal Health uses and shares is:

- Your name
- Your address
- Health care you have received
- The cost of your care
- Your medical history

CenCal Health may use or share your PHI without your permission for the following purposes:

- **Treatment:** CenCal Health may use and share your PHI with doctors, dentists, pharmacies, hospitals, and others to get you the care you need.
- **Payment:** CenCal Health may use and share your PHI to pay for your health care services. CenCal Health may share your health information with other health plans, doctors, and organizations to pay for your care, as allowed by federal privacy rules.
- **Health Care Operations:** CenCal Health may use and share your PHI to perform its health care operations such as audits, accreditation surveys, customer service, medical review of claims, improvement activities, and activities required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- **Health Information Exchange (HIE):** CenCal Health participates in multiple Health Information Exchanges (HIEs). This allows providers to coordinate care and provide faster access to our members. HIEs help providers and public health officials to:
 - Make more informed decisions
 - Avoid duplicate care
 - Reduce the likelihood of medical errors

By participating in an HIE, CenCal Health may share your health information with other providers and participants as permitted by law. If you do not want your medical information shared in the HIE, you must make this request directly to CenCal Health.

Please Note: In some situations, your health information may not be shared (e.g., protected records). In this case, CenCal Health must get your permission before sharing it. Examples of protected records are:

- Mental health diagnosis and treatment
- Diagnosis or treatment for
 - Drug or alcohol abuse
 - STD
 - HIV test results
- **Data Exchange Framework (DxF):** The California Health and Safety code section 130290 requires CenCal Health to participate in the Data Exchange Framework (DxF). The goal of the DxF is to safely and easily share health information.
 - To learn more about the DxF, visit: <https://www.cdii.ca.gov/committees-and-advisory-groups/data-exchange-framework/>.

Once your health information is shared by CenCal Health as permitted under this notice, it may be reshared by the person or group receiving it. As a result, your health information may no longer be protected by the federal privacy rules.

OTHER TIMES YOUR PHI CAN BE SHARED WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION

CenCal Health may use and share your PHI for certain reasons without asking you first, as explained below. However, these uses must still follow other laws, including but not limited to, rules in “Protected Categories of Health Information.”

- **Care Coordination and Social Services:** CenCal Health may share your health information with social service groups to help with your care. This could include help with housing, food, or transportation if it's part of your care plan.
- **As Required by Law:** CenCal Health may share your health information if the law says it needs to.
- **Public Health Activities:** CenCal Health may share your PHI to public health agencies for reasons such as preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.
- **Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence:** CenCal Health may share your health information with government agencies if there is a reason to believe abuse, neglect, or domestic violence has happened.
- **Health Oversight Activities:** CenCal Health may share your health information with government agencies that check on health programs (e.g., state insurance departments).
- **Judicial and Administrative Proceedings:** CenCal Health may share your health information if a court or legal office asks for it through an order or other legal request.
- **Law Enforcement Official or a Correctional Institution:** CenCal Health may share your relevant PHI under limited situations to law enforcement or jails in response to a warrant.
- **Coroners, Medical Examiners, and Funeral Directors:** CenCal Health may release your PHI to coroners or funeral directors as necessary.
- **Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation:** CenCal Health may share your PHI in connection with organ or tissue donation.
- **Research:** Under certain situations, CenCal Health may share your PHI for research purposes, if steps have been taken to protect your privacy.
- **Threats to Health and Safety:** CenCal Health may share your PHI if necessary to prevent or reduce a serious or immediate threat to someone's health or safety.
- **Specialized Government Functions:** CenCal Health may share your health information with the military or federal officials for national security or intelligence work.
- **Workers' Compensation:** CenCal Health may share your PHI to follow state law for workers' compensation programs.
- **Business Associates:** CenCal Health may share your health information with companies it works with to help carry out services like billing. These companies, referred to as “business associates,” must follow laws to keep your information private. Business associates are required by law to protect your PHI.

IMPERMISSIBLE USES OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

CenCal Health will not use your race/ethnicity, language, gender identity, and sexual orientation information for the following:

- To perform underwriting, rate setting, benefit determination, or denial of services, coverage, or benefits, if applicable; or
- To disclose to unauthorized users.

PROTECTED CATEGORIES OF HEALTH INFORMATION

- Substance Use Disorder Records.
 - Records about your treatment for drug or alcohol problems are protected by federal law. These records have extra privacy rules. They cannot be used in a legal case against you unless you give written permission or a judge orders it. If a judge gives permission, there must also be a legal reason to share the records.
 - We may use some of your information to contact you about raising money for our organization. If we plan to use your drug or alcohol treatment records for fundraising, we will give you a clear chance to decline before we do. You can choose not to get fundraising messages. Declining will not affect your care or payment for services.
 - If you give written permission to share your treatment records with other doctors or with CenCal Health, we may use or share that information to help with your treatment, payment, or for health care operations. You don't need to give permission again unless you cancel it in writing. Once shared, your information may be shared again as allowed by privacy laws.

WHEN WRITTEN PERMISSION IS NEEDED

CenCal Health is required to obtain your written permission to use or share your PHI for any other purpose not listed in this notice. You may cancel permission at any time, in writing, except to the extent CenCal Health has taken action in reliance on the permission.

YOUR PRIVACY RIGHTS

You have certain rights regarding your PHI that CenCal Health maintains. These rights include:

- **Right to Request Restrictions on the Use and Disclosure of Your PHI:** You can ask CenCal Health to limit how your health information is used or shared for treatment, payment, or health care operations. CenCal Health doesn't have to agree unless you paid for the service yourself and asked not to share it with your health plan. Even then, we may still share it with your doctor if needed for your care or it is required to be shared by law.
- **Right to Access Your PHI:** You can ask to see or get a copy of your health records. You must ask in writing. CenCal Health may charge a fee to copy and mail your records, but will tell you the cost first. If your records are electronic, you can ask for an electronic copy. You can also ask us to send your records to someone else, but your request must be signed and clearly say where to send it.

Please Note: CenCal Health doesn't keep full medical records. Contact your doctor if you want to see or fix your medical records.

- **Right to Request Information Through a Third-Party Application:** You have the right to ask for your health information through an app of your choice. This is allowed by special rules called the Interoperability Rules. These rules say CenCal Health must give you certain health information through the app you choose. To learn how to pick an app, check the "Third Party Health Applications" document on our website.

Please note: CenCal Health is not responsible for the app or what happens to your information after it is sent to the app at your request.

- **Right to Correct Your PHI:** You can ask us to fix something in your records. Your request must be in writing and explain why you need the change. CenCal Health may say no if we didn't create the record. If we say no, we will tell you in writing. You can then send us a written disagreement, and we may respond to it.
- **Right to an Accounting (Listing) of Disclosures:** You can ask for a list of times CenCal Health shared your health information. The list will include:
 - The date we shared it
 - Who asked for it
 - What was shared
 - Why it was shared

The list will cover the last six years unless you ask for a shorter time. It won't include times we shared information with you, with your permission, or for treatment, payment, or health care operations.

- **Right to Receive Confidential Communications:** You can ask CenCal Health to contact you in a certain way (like by home or work phone) or send mail to a different address. We will try to meet all reasonable requests.
- **Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice:** You can ask for a paper copy of this notice anytime. Call CenCal Health's Member Services at 1-877-814-1861 or visit www.cencalhealth.org.

FILE A COMPLAINT

If you believe that CenCal Health has not protected your PHI and wish to file a complaint or grievance, you have the right to file a complaint. You may file a complaint by contacting:

CenCal Health

Attn: Grievance and Appeals

4050 Calle Real

Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Phone: 1-877-814-1861

Fax: 1-805-692-1684

Online: <https://web.cencalhealth.org/OnlineGrievance/Index>

California Department of Health Care Services

Office of HIPAA Compliance

Attn: DHCS Privacy Officer

1501 Capitol Avenue, MS0010

P.O. Box 997413

Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

Phone: 1-916-445-4646

Fax: 1-916-440-7680

Email: DHCSPrivacyOfficer@dhcs.ca.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Office for Civil Rights

Attn: Regional Manager

90 7th Street, Suite 4-100

San Francisco, CA 94103

Phone: 1-800-368-1019

Fax: 1-202-619-3818

Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

Online: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

CenCal Health supports your right to protect the privacy of your PHI. CenCal Health will not retaliate against you or penalize you for filing a complaint.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

CenCal Health reserves the right to change these privacy practices. Any time CenCal Health makes a material change to this notice, it will post the most updated version on its web site and mail you a paper copy within 90 days.

This notice has been updated and is effective January 1, 2026.

NOTICE IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE OR FORMAT

If you would like this notice in Spanish or in another format, contact CenCal Health's Member Services Department at:

CenCal Health
Attn: Member Services Department
4050 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
Phone: 1-877-814-1861
Fax: 1-805-692-1684

QUESTIONS

If you have questions about this notice and want to learn more, please contact CenCal Health's Privacy Office at:

CenCal Health
Attn: Privacy Office
4050 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
Phone: 1-877-814-1861
Fax: 1-805-681-8279
Email: privacy@cencalhealth.org