

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION**

**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.** The terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices – Protected Health Information (“Notice”) apply to Protected Health Information (defined below) associated with Health Plans (defined below) issued by American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus, American Family Life Assurance Company of New York, Continental American Insurance Company and Continental American Life Insurance Company (collectively, “we,” “our,” or “Aflac”) <sup>1</sup>. This Notice describes how Aflac may use and disclose Protected Health Information to carry out payment and health care operations, and for other purposes that are permitted or required by law.

We are required by the privacy regulations issued under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) to maintain the privacy of Protected Health Information and to provide our policyholders and certificateholders with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices concerning Protected Health Information. In the event applicable law, other than HIPAA, prohibits or materially limits our uses and disclosures of Protected Health Information, as set forth below, we will restrict our uses or disclosure of your Protected Health Information in accordance with the more stringent standard. We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice so long as it remains in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices as necessary and to make the new Notice effective for all Protected Health Information maintained by us. If we make material changes to our privacy practices, we will mail copies of revised notices to all policyholders and certificateholders then covered by a Health Plan. Copies of our current Notice may be obtained by contacting Aflac at the telephone number or address below, or on our Web site at [www.aflacgroupinsurance.com](http://www.aflacgroupinsurance.com).

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Health Plan** means, for purposes of this Notice, the following plans issued by Aflac: dental, specified disease (e.g., cancer), hospital indemnity and other coverages that meet the definition of Health Plan contained in HIPAA. The following products are not considered Health Plans: coverage only for accident, or disability income insurance, or any combination thereof, life insurance, and other coverages that do not meet the definition of Health Plan contained in HIPAA.

**Protected Health Information (“PHI”)** means individually identifiable health information, as defined by HIPAA, that is created or received by Aflac and that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual; and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual. PHI includes information of persons living or deceased, unless the person has been deceased more than 50 years.

### **USES AND DISCLOSURES OF YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION**

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose PHI. For each category of uses and disclosures we will explain what we mean and, where appropriate, provide examples for illustrative purposes. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted or required to use and disclose PHI will fall within one of the categories.

**Uses and Disclosures for Payment** – We may make requests, uses, and disclosures of your PHI as necessary for payment purposes. For example, we may use information regarding your medical procedures and treatment to process and pay claims. We may also disclose your PHI for the payment purposes of a health care provider or another Health Plan.

**Uses and Disclosures for Health Care Operations** – We may use and disclose your PHI as necessary for our health care operations. Examples of health care operations include underwriting, premium rating, or other activities relating to the creation, renewal, or replacement of a Health Plan, reinsurance, compliance, auditing, rating, business management, quality improvement and assurance, and other functions related to your Health Plan. Although underwriting falls within the definition of health care operations, we will not use or disclose genetic information for purposes of underwriting. Genetic information is defined under the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA).

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<sup>1</sup> *With respect to its Health Plans, American Family Life Assurance Company of Columbus, American Family Life Assurance Company of New York and Continental American Insurance Company are affiliated covered entities (see 45 CFR 164.105).*

**Family and Friends Involved in Your Care** – If you are available and do not object, we may disclose your PHI to your family, friends, and others who are involved in your care or payment of a claim. If you are unavailable or incapacitated and we determine that a limited disclosure is in your best interest, we may share limited PHI with such individuals. For example, we may use our professional judgment to disclose PHI to your spouse concerning the processing of a claim. If you do not wish Aflac to share PHI with your spouse or others, you may exercise your right to request a restriction on Aflac’s disclosures of your PHI (see below).

**Business Associates** – Certain aspects and components of our services are performed through contracts with outside persons or organizations. Examples of these outside persons and organizations include our duly-appointed insurance agents and vendors that help us process your claims. At times it may be necessary for us to provide certain of your PHI to one or more of these outside persons or organizations.

**Other Products and Services** – We may contact you to provide information about other health-related products and services that may be of interest to you. For example, we may use and disclose your PHI for the purpose of communicating to you about our health insurance products that could enhance or substitute for existing Health Plan coverage, and about health-related products and services that may add value to your Health Plan.

**Other Uses and Disclosures** – We may make certain other uses and disclosures of your PHI without your authorization:

- We may use or disclose your PHI for any purpose required by law. For example, Aflac may be required by law to use or disclose your PHI to respond to a court order.
- We may disclose your PHI for public health activities, such as reporting of disease, injury, birth and death, and for public health investigations.
- We may disclose your PHI to the proper authorities if we suspect child abuse or neglect; we may also disclose your PHI if we believe you to be a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.
- We may disclose your PHI if authorized by law to a government oversight agency (e.g., a state insurance department) conducting audits, investigations, or civil or criminal proceedings.
- We may disclose your PHI in the course of a judicial or administrative proceeding (e.g., to respond to a subpoena or discovery request).
- We may disclose your PHI to the proper authorities for law enforcement purposes.
- We may disclose your PHI to coroners, medical examiners, and/or funeral directors consistent with law.
- We may use or disclose your PHI for cadaveric organ, eye or tissue donation.
- We may use or disclose your PHI for research purposes, but only as permitted by law.
- We may use or disclose PHI to avert a serious threat to health or safety.
- We may use or disclose your PHI if you are a member of the military as required by armed forces services, and we may also disclose your PHI for other specialized government functions such as national security or intelligence activities.
- We may disclose your PHI to workers' compensation agencies for your workers' compensation benefit determination.
- We will, if required by law, release your PHI to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services for enforcement of HIPAA.

**Your Authorization** – Except as outlined above, we will not use or disclose your PHI unless you have signed a form authorizing the use or disclosure. Specifically, most uses and disclosures of psychotherapy notes, uses or disclosures for marketing purposes and disclosures that constitute a sale of PHI require an authorization. You have the right to revoke that authorization in writing except to the extent that we have taken action in reliance upon the authorization or that the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance, and we have the right, under other law, to contest a claim under the plan itself.

- The following are examples of when your authorization would be required prior to use and disclosure:
  - Most uses and disclosures of your psychotherapy notes.
  - Uses and disclosures of your PHI for marketing purposes.
  - Uses and disclosures that constitute a sale of PHI.

**Breach of Unsecured PHI** – If Aflac or a Business Associate of Aflac causes a breach to occur that involved your unsecured PHI, we are required by law to notify you of the incident.

## **RIGHTS THAT YOU HAVE**

**Access to Your PHI** – You have the right to copy and/or inspect certain PHI that we maintain about you. Certain requests for access to your PHI must be in writing, must state that you want access to your PHI and must be signed by you or your representative (e.g., requests for medical records provided to us directly from your health care provider). We must provide you with access to your PHI in the form or format requested by you, if it is readily producible in such form or format, or, if not, in a form or format agreed upon by you and Aflac. Access request forms are available from Aflac at the address below. We may charge you a fee for copying and postage. We may deny your request for access in certain very limited circumstances, such as request to access psychotherapy notes.

**Amendments to Your PHI** – You have the right to request that PHI that we maintain about you be amended or corrected. We are not obligated to make all requested amendments but will give each request careful consideration. To be considered, your amendment request must be in writing, must be signed by you or your representative, and must state the reasons for the amendment/correction request. Amendment request forms are available from Aflac at the address below.

**Accounting for Disclosures of Your PHI** – You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures made by us of your PHI. Examples of disclosures that we are required to account for include those to state insurance departments, pursuant to valid legal process, or for law enforcement purposes. To be considered, your accounting requests must be in writing and signed by you or your representative. Accounting request forms are available from Aflac at the address below. The first accounting in any 12-month period is free; however, we may charge you a fee for each subsequent accounting you request within the same 12-month period.

**Restrictions on Use and Disclosure of Your PHI** – You have the right to request restrictions on certain of our uses and disclosures of your PHI for insurance payment or health care operations, disclosures made to persons involved in your care, and disclosures for disaster relief purposes. For example, you may request that we not disclose your PHI to your spouse. Your request must describe in detail the restriction you are requesting. HIPAA does not require us to agree to your request but we will accommodate reasonable requests when appropriate. We retain the right to terminate an agreed-to restriction if we believe such termination is appropriate. In the event of a termination by us, we will notify you of such termination. You also have the right to terminate, in writing or orally, any agreed-to restriction. Requests for a restriction (or termination of an existing restriction) may be made by contacting Aflac at the telephone number or address below.

However, we are authorized by law to refuse to honor any request to restrict disclosures for treatment, payment or health care operations. Nonetheless, we will comply with a restriction request if (i) the disclosure is to the Health Plan for purposes of carrying out payment or healthcare operations, except as otherwise required by law, (ii) the PHI relates solely to a health care item or service for which the healthcare provider involved has been paid out-of-pocket in full.

**Request for Confidential Communications** – You have the right to request that communications regarding your PHI be made by alternative means or at alternative locations. For example, you may request that messages not be left on voice mail or sent to a particular address. We are required to accommodate reasonable requests if you inform us that disclosure of all or part of your information could place you in danger. Requests for confidential communications must be in writing, signed by you or your representative, and sent to Aflac at the address below.

**Right to a Copy of the Notice** – You have the right to a paper copy of this Notice upon request by contacting Aflac at the telephone number or address below.

**Complaints** – If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with Aflac in writing at the address below. You may also file a complaint in writing with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., within 180 days of a violation of your rights. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have questions or need further assistance regarding this Notice, you may contact Aflac's Privacy Office by writing to: Aflac, Attn: Privacy Office, P.O. Box 427, Columbia, SC 29202, or by calling 1-800-433-3036.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Notice is effective January 6, 2017.