



PRIVACY PRACTICES NOTICE

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 PRIVACY OF YOUR MEDICAL INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT TO US.**

Our Legal Duty

We are required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your medical information and to notify you if there is a breach of your health information. We are also required to give you this notice about our privacy practices, our legal duties, and your rights concerning your medical information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this notice while it is in effect. This notice takes effect December 23, 2024, and will remain in effect until we replace it.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law. We reserve the right to make the changes in our privacy practices and the new terms of our notice effective for all medical information that we maintain, including medical information we created or received before we made the changes. Before we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this notice and post the new notice on our website. We will provide a copy of the new notice (or information about the changes to our privacy practices and how to obtain the new notice) in our next annual mailing to health plan contract holders.

You may request a copy of our notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice.

Organizations Covered by this Notice

This notice applies to the privacy practices of the group health plans, health insurers and HMO listed below. These organizations are each participants in an organized health care arrangement. As such, we may share your medical information and the medical information of others we service with each other as needed for the payment activities or health care operations relating to our organized health care arrangement. We also may disclose your medical information to a business associate to assist us in these activities. Our business associates are required to comply with federal Privacy Rules and this Privacy Practices Notice.

- Wellmark, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa
- Wellmark of South Dakota, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota
- Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc.
- Wellmark Synergy Health, Inc.
- Wellmark Value Health Plan, Inc.
- Wellmark, Inc. Employee Health Care Plan
- Wellmark, Inc. Retiree Health and Life Plan
- Wellmark, Inc. Employee Assistance Program

Uses and Disclosures of Medical Information

We use and disclose medical information about you for treatment, payment, and health care operations. For example:

Treatment: We may use or disclose a member's medical information to help treat a patient. For example, we may disclose a list of prescriptions you have filled to a physician in order to provide treatment to you.

Payment: We may use and disclose your medical information to pay claims from physicians, hospitals and other providers for services delivered to you that are covered by your health plan, to determine your eligibility for benefits, to coordinate benefits, to examine medical necessity, to obtain premiums, to issue explanations of benefits to the person enrolled in the health plan in which you participate, and the like. We may disclose your medical information to

a health care provider or entity subject to the federal Privacy Rules so they can obtain payment or engage in similar payment activities.

Health Care Operations: may use and disclose your medical information in connection with our health care operations. Health care operations include:

- Rating our risk and determining our premiums for your health plan;
- Quality assessment and improvement activities;
- Reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities;
- Medical review, legal services, and auditing, including fraud and abuse detection and compliance;
- Business planning and development; and
- Business management and general administrative activities, including management activities relating to privacy, customer service, resolution of internal grievances, and creating de-identified information or a limited data set.

We may disclose your medical information to another entity that has a relationship with you and is subject to the federal Privacy Rules, for their health care operations relating to quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, or detecting or preventing health care fraud and abuse.

On Your Authorization: You may give us written authorization to use your medical information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot sell your medical information and we cannot use or disclose your medical information for any reason that is not described in this notice. We also need your authorization to market products or services to you, except that we may use your medical information to contact you with information about health-related benefits and services or about treatment alternatives that may be of interest to you. We also may use or disclose your medical information to encourage you to purchase or use a product or service by face-to-face communication or to provide you with promotional gifts.

To Your Family and Friends: We may disclose your medical information to a family member, friend or other person to the extent necessary to help with your health care or with payment for your health care. We may use or disclose an individual's name, location, and general condition or death to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating), a person involved in the individual's care.

Before we disclose your medical information to a person involved in your health care or payment for your health care, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. If you are not present, or in the event of your incapacity or an emergency, we will disclose your medical information based on our professional judgment of whether the disclosure would be in your best interest.

Your Employer or Organization Sponsoring Your Group Health Plan: If you are a member of a group health plan, we may disclose your medical information and the medical information of others enrolled in your group health plan to the employer or other organization that sponsors your group health plan to permit the plan sponsor to perform plan administration functions. Please see your group health plan document for a full explanation of the uses and disclosures that the plan sponsor may make of your medical information in providing plan administration.

We may also disclose enrollment data and summary information about the members in your group health plan to the plan sponsor to use to obtain premium bids for the health insurance coverage offered through your group health plan or to decide whether to modify, amend or terminate your group health plan. The summary information we may disclose summarizes claims history, claims expenses, or types of claims experienced by the members in your group health plan. The summary information will be stripped of demographic information about the members in the group health plan, but the plan sponsor may still be able to identify you or other members in your group health plan from the summary information.

Underwriting: We may receive your medical information for underwriting, premium rating or other activities relating to the creation, renewal or replacement of a contract of health insurance or health benefits. Wellmark is prohibited from using or disclosing your genetic information for underwriting purposes. We will not use or further disclose this medical information for any other purpose, except as required by law, unless the contract of health insurance or health benefits is placed with us. In that case, our use and disclosure of your medical information will only be as described in this notice.

Disaster Relief: We may use or disclose your medical information to a public or private entity authorized by law or by its charter to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Public Benefit: We may use or disclose our members' medical information as authorized by law for the following purposes deemed to be in the public interest or benefit:

- As required by law;
- For public health activities, including disease and vital statistic reporting, child abuse reporting, FDA oversight, and to employers regarding work-related illness or injury;
- To report adult abuse, neglect, or domestic violence;
- To health oversight agencies;
- In response to court and administrative orders and other lawful processes;
- To law enforcement officials pursuant to subpoenas and other lawful processes, concerning crime victims, suspicious deaths, crimes on our premises, reporting crimes in emergencies, and for purposes of identifying or locating a suspect or other person;
- To coroners, medical examiners, and funeral directors;
- To organ procurement organizations;
- To avert a serious threat to health or safety;
- In connection with certain research activities;
- To the military and to federal officials for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and national security activities;
- To correctional institutions regarding inmates; and
- As authorized by state worker's compensation laws.

Once we disclose information to a third party other than a health care provider, health plan, or other person subject to the federal Privacy Rules, the information may no longer be protected by federal Privacy Rules and the recipient may use or redisclose that information for other purposes.

Individual Rights

Access: You have the right to look at or get copies of your medical information, with limited exceptions. You may request that we provide copies in a format other than photocopies. We will use the format you request unless we cannot practicably do so. You must make a request in writing to obtain access to your medical information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this notice. You may also request access by sending us a letter to the address at the end of this notice. If you request copies, we will charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for copying your medical information and postage if you want the copies mailed to you. If you request an alternative format, we will charge a cost-based fee for providing your medical information in that format. If you prefer, we will prepare a summary or an explanation of your medical information for a fee. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we or our business associates disclosed your medical information for purposes other than treatment, payment, health care operations, as authorized by you, and for certain other purposes, for up to six (6) years after the record is created. We will provide you with the date on which we made the disclosure, the name of the person or entity to whom we disclosed your medical information, a description of the medical information we disclosed, the reason for the disclosure, and certain other information. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice for a full explanation of our fee structure.

Restriction: You have the right to request that we place additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your medical information. We are not required to agree to these additional restrictions, but if we do, we will abide by our agreement (except in an emergency). Any agreement to additional restrictions must be in writing signed by a person authorized to make such an agreement on our behalf. We will not be bound unless our agreement is so memorialized in writing.

Confidential Communication: You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your medical information by alternative means or to alternative locations if you believe our current mode of communication could endanger you. You must make your request in writing, and you must state that the information could endanger you if it is not communicated in confidence as you request. We must accommodate your request if it is reasonable, specifies the alternative means or location, and continues to permit us to collect premiums and pay claims under your health plan, including issuance of explanations of benefits to the contract holder of the health plan in which you participate.

An explanation of benefits issued to the contract holder for health care that you received for which you did not request confidential communications or about the contract holder or others covered by the health plan in which you participate may contain sufficient information to reveal that you obtained healthcare for which we paid, even though you requested that we communicate with you about that health care in confidence.

Amendment: You have the right to request that we amend your medical information. Your request must be in writing, and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request if we did not create the information you want amended and the originator remains available or for certain other reasons. If we deny your request, we will provide you a written explanation. You may respond with a statement of disagreement to be appended to the information you want to amend. If we accept your request to amend the information, we will make reasonable efforts to inform others, including people you name, of the amendment and to include the changes in any future disclosures of that information.

Other Limitations on Our Uses and Disclosures of Medical Information

We are prohibited by federal law from using or disclosing certain information about a member's substance use disorders for any purpose, unless the member consents to the uses and disclosures. In most cases, the member will give us consent through the treating provider. We cannot use or disclose information about a member's treatment for substance use disorders (or provide testimony based on such information) for any civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceedings against the member. Any such disclosure is permitted only with the member's consent or a special type of court order, for which the member must have notice and an opportunity to object, as well as a subpoena, court order, or similar legal mandate.

We will comply with State or other laws that impose more stringent limitations on our use or disclosure of members' Medical Information than the federal Privacy Rules.

Questions and Complaints

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this notice.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your medical information or your other rights described in this Notice, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request.

We support your right to the privacy of your medical information. We will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Contact Office: **Mailing Address:** Wellmark, Inc.
Privacy Office, Station 5W590
1331 Grand Avenue
Des Moines IA 50309-2901

Telephone:
877-610-6395 Outside Des Moines Area
515-376-5850 Des Moines Local Area
Email: privacyoffice@wellmark.com
Web Site: www.wellmark.com

