THE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF TEXAS
SUMMARY NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

The Employees Retirement System of Texas ("ERS") administers the Texas Employees Group Benefits Program, including your health plan, pursuant to Texas law. THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW ERS MAY USE OR DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO YOUR OWN INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

Uses and disclosures of health information:

ERS and/or a third-party administrator under contract with ERS may use health information about you on behalf of your health plan to authorize treatment, to pay for treatment, and for other allowable health care purposes. Health care providers submit claims for payment for treatment that may be covered by the group health plan. Part of payment includes ascertaining the medical necessity of the treatment and the details of the treatment or service to determine if the group health plan is obligated to pay. Information may be shared by paper mail, electronic mail, fax, or other methods. By law, ERS may use or disclose identifiable health information about you without your authorization for several reasons. Subject to certain requirements, we may disclose health information without your authorization for public health purposes, for auditing purposes, for research studies, and for emergencies. ERS provides information when otherwise required by law, such as for law enforcement in specific circumstances. In any other situation, ERS will ask for your written authorization before using or disclosing any identifiable health information about you. If you choose to sign an authorization to disclose information, you can later revoke that authorization to stop any future uses and disclosures. ERS may change its policies at any time. Before ERS makes a significant change in its policies, ERS will change its notice and post the new notice on the ERS web site at www.ers.state.tx.us. You can also request a copy of our full notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, contact the ERS Privacy Officer.

Individual rights:

In most cases, you have the right to look at or get a copy of health information about you that ERS uses to make decisions about you. If you request copies, we will charge you the normal copy fees that reflect the actual costs of producing the copies including such items as labor and materials. For all authorized or by law requests made by others, the requestor will be charged for production of medical records per ERS' schedule of charges. You also have the right to receive a list of instances when we have disclosed health information about you for reasons other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations, related administrative purposes, and when you explicitly authorized it. If you believe that information in your record is incorrect or if important information is missing, you have the right to request that ERS correct the existing information or add the missing information. You have the right to request that ERS restrict the use and disclosure of your health information above what is required by law. If ERS accepts your request for restricted use and disclosure then ERS must abide by the request and may only reverse its position after you have been appropriately notified. You have the right to request an alternative means of communications with ERS. You are not required to explain why you want the alternative means of communication.

Complaints:

If you are concerned that ERS has violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision ERS has made about access to your records, you may contact the ERS Privacy Officer. You also may send a written complaint to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ERS Privacy Officer can provide you with the appropriate address upon request.

Our Legal duty:

ERS is required by law to protect the privacy of your information, provide this notice about our information practices, follow the information practices that are described in this notice, and obtain your acknowledgement of receipt of this notice.

Detailed Notice of Privacy Practices:

For further details about your rights and the federal Privacy Rule, refer to the detailed statement of this Notice. You can ask for a written copy of the detailed Notice by contacting the Office of the Privacy Officer or by visiting ERS' web site at www.ers.state.tx.us. If you have any questions or complaints, please contact the ERS Privacy Officer, by calling (512) 867-7711 or toll-free (877) 275-4377 or by writing to ERS Privacy Officer, The Employees Retirement System of Texas, P.O. Box 13207, Austin, TX 78711-3207.

I have retained a copy of the Continuation Coverage Notification (COBRA), the HIPAA notice of Privacy Practices and the HIPAA Exemption Notice for my records.

_____ _____
Name (Print) **Signature**

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Date