

# NORTHWEST IRONWORKERS HEALTH AND SECURITY TRUST

## 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.**

Pursuant to regulations issued by the federal government, the Trust is providing you this Notice about the possible uses and disclosures of your health information. Your health information is information that constitutes protected health information as defined in the Privacy Rules of the Administrative Simplification provision of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). As required by law, the Trust has established a policy to guard against unnecessary disclosure of your health information. This Notice describes the circumstances under which and the purposes for which your health information may be used and disclosed and your rights in regard to such information.

### **PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION**

Protected health information generally means information that: (1) is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, employer, or health care clearinghouse; and (2) 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 (3) identifies the individual, or there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

### **USE AND DISCLOSURE OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

Your health information may be used and disclosed without an authorization for the purposes listed below. The health information used or disclosed will be limited to the "minimum necessary," as defined under the Privacy Rules.

***To Make or Obtain Payment.*** The Trust may use or disclose your health information to make payment to or collect payment from third parties, such as other health plans or providers, for the care you receive. For example, the Trust may use your health information to pay claims, or share information regarding your coverage or health care treatment with other health plans to coordinate payment of benefits.

***To Facilitate Treatment.*** The Trust may disclose information to facilitate treatment which involves the provision, coordination or management of health care or related services. For example, the Plan may disclose the name of your treating physician to another treating physician for the purpose of obtaining x-rays.

***To Conduct Health Care Operations.*** The Trust may use or disclose health information for its own operations to facilitate the administration of the Trust and as necessary to provide coverage and services to all of the Trust's participants. Health care operations include such activities as: contacting health care providers; providing participants with information about health-related issues or treatment alternatives; developing clinical guidelines and protocols; conducting case management, medical review and care coordination; handling claim appeals; reviewing health information to improve health or reduce health care costs; participating in drug or disease management activities; conducting underwriting, premium rating or related functions to create, renew or replace health insurance or health benefits; and performing the general administrative activities of the Trust (such as providing customer service, conducting compliance reviews and auditing, responding to legal matters and compliance inquiries, including cost management and planning related

analyses and formulary development, and accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities).

***In Connection With Judicial and Administrative Proceedings.*** If required or permitted by law, the Trust may disclose your health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal as expressly authorized by such order or in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process. The Trust will make reasonable efforts to either notify you about the request or to obtain an order protecting your health information.

***When Legally Required For Law Enforcement Purposes.*** The Trust will disclose your health information when it is required to do so by any federal, state or local law. Additionally, as permitted or required by law, the Trust may disclose your health information to a law enforcement official for certain law enforcement purposes, including, but not limited to, if the Trust has a suspicion that your death was the result of criminal conduct or in an emergency to report a crime.

***To Conduct Health Oversight Activities.*** The Trust may disclose your health information to a health oversight agency for authorized activities including audits, civil, administrative or criminal investigations, inspections, licensure or disciplinary action. The Trust, however, may not disclose your health information if you are the subject of an investigation and the investigation does not arise out of or is not directly related to your receipt of health care or public benefits.

***In the Event of a Serious Threat to Health or Safety.*** The Trust may, consistent with applicable law and ethical standards of conduct, disclose your health information if the Trust, in good faith, believes that such disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to your health or safety or to the health and safety of the public.

***For Specified Government Functions.*** In certain circumstances, federal regulations require the Trust to use or disclose your health information to facilitate specified government functions related to the military and veterans, national security and intelligence activities, protective services for the president and others, and correctional institutions and inmates.

***To Your Personal Representative.*** The Trust may disclose your health information to an individual who is considered to be your personal representative under applicable law.

***To Individuals Involved in Your Care or Payment for Your Care.*** The Trust may disclose your health information to immediate family members, or to other individuals who are directly involved in your care or payment for your care.

***To Business Associates.*** The Trust may disclose your health information to its Business Associates, which are entities or individuals not employed by the Trust, but which perform functions for the Trust involving protected health information, such as claims processing, utilization review, or legal, consulting, accounting or administrative services. The Trust's Business Associates are required to safeguard the confidentiality of your health information.

***For Workers' Compensation.*** The Trust may release your health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws related to workers' compensation or similar programs.

***For Disclosure to the Plan Trustees.*** The Trust may disclose your health information to the Board of Trustees (which is the plan sponsor) and to necessary advisors for plan administration functions, such as those listed in this summary, or to handle claim appeals, solicit bids for services, or modify, amend or terminate the plan. The Trust may also disclose information to the Trustees regarding whether you are participating or enrolled in the plan.

## **AUTHORIZATION TO USE OR DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION**

Other than as stated above, the Trust will not disclose your health information other than with your written authorization. Authorization forms are available from the Privacy Contact Person, listed below. If you have authorized the Trust to use or disclose your health information, you may revoke that authorization in writing at any time. The revocation should be in writing, include a copy of or reference your authorization and be sent to the Privacy Contact Person, listed below.

Special rules apply to disclosure of psychotherapy notes. Your written authorization will generally be required before the Plan will use or disclose psychotherapy notes. Psychotherapy notes are separately filed notes about your observations with your mental health professional during a counseling session. They do not include summary information about your mental health treatment. The Plan may use and disclose such notes when needed to defend against litigation filed by you.

## **YOUR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

You have the following rights regarding your health information that the Trust maintains:

***Right to Request Restrictions.*** You may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your health information. You have the right to request a limit on the Trust's disclosure of your health information to someone involved in the payment of your care. However, the Trust is not required to agree to your request. If you wish to request restrictions, please make the request in writing to the Trust's Privacy Contact Person listed below.

***Right to Confidential Communications.*** You have the right to request that the Trust communicate with you in a certain way if you feel the disclosure of your health information through regular procedures could endanger you. For example, you may ask that the Trust only communicate with you at a certain telephone number or by e-mail. If you wish to receive confidential communications, please make your

request in writing to the Trust's Privacy Contact Person, listed below. The Trust will attempt to honor your reasonable requests for confidential communications.

***Right to Inspect and Copy Your Health Information.*** You have the right to inspect and copy your health information. This right, however, does not extend to psychotherapy notes or information compiled for civil, criminal or administrative proceedings. The Trust may deny your request in certain situations subject to your right to request review of the denial. A request to inspect and copy records containing your health information must be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person, listed below. If you request a copy of your health information, the Trust may charge a reasonable fee for copying, assembling costs and postage, if applicable, associated with your request.

***Right to Amend Your Health Information.*** If you believe that your health information records are inaccurate or incomplete, you may request that the Trust amend the records. That request may be made as long as the information is maintained by the Trust. A request for an amendment of records must be made in writing to the Trust's Privacy Contact Person, listed below. The Trust may deny the request if it does not include a reasonable reason to support the amendment. The request also may be denied if your health information records were not created by the Trust, if the health information you are requesting be amended is not part of the Trust's records, if the health information you wish to amend falls within an exception to the health information you are permitted to inspect and copy, or if the Trust determines the records containing your health information are accurate and complete.

If the Trust denies a request for amendment, you may write a statement of disagreement. The Trust may write a rebuttal statement and provide you with a copy. If you write a statement of disagreement, then your request for amendment, your statement of disagreement, and the Trust's rebuttal will be included with any future release of the disputed health information.

***Right to an Accounting.*** You have the right to request a list of disclosures of your health information made by the Trust. The request must be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person listed below. The request should specify the time period for which you are requesting the information, but may not start earlier than **April 14, 2003** when the Privacy Rules became effective. Accounting requests may not be made for periods of time going back more than six (6) years. An accounting will not include disclosure made to carry out treatment, payment, and health care operations; disclosures that were made to you; disclosures that were incident to a use or disclosure that is otherwise permitted by the Privacy Rules; disclosures made pursuant to an authorization; or in other limited situations. The Trust will provide the first accounting you request during any 12-month period without charge. Subsequent accounting requests may be subject to a reasonable cost-based fee. The Trust will inform you in advance of the fee, if applicable.

***Right to a Paper Copy of this Notice.*** You have a right to request and receive a paper copy of this Notice at any time, even if you have received this Notice previously or agreed to receive the Notice electronically. To obtain a paper copy, please contact the Privacy Contact Person, listed below. You will also be able to obtain a copy of the current version of the Trust's Notice at its web site, [www.wpas-inc.com](http://www.wpas-inc.com)

***Privacy Contact Person.*** To exercise any of these rights related to your health information you should contact the Privacy Contact Person listed below. The Trust has also designated a Privacy Official, listed below.

Privacy Contact Person

Claims Manager  
Welfare & Pension Administration Service, Inc.  
P.O. Box 34203  
Seattle, WA 98124  
Phone No: 206-441-7574  
Toll Free: 800-331-6158  
Fax No: 206-441-9110

Privacy Official

Gilbert Lynn  
Welfare & Pension Administration Service, Inc.  
P.O. Box 34203  
Seattle, WA 98124  
Phone No: 206-441-7574  
Toll Free: 800-331-6158  
Fax No: 206-441-9110

**DUTIES OF THE TRUST**

The Trust is required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information as set forth in this Notice and to provide to you this Notice of its duties and privacy practices. The Trust is required to abide by the terms of this Notice, which may be amended from time to time. The Trust reserves the right to change the terms of this Notice and to make the new Notice provisions effective for all health information that it maintains. If the Trust changes its policies and procedures, the Trust will revise the Notice and will provide a copy of the revised Notice to you within 60 days of the change. You have the right to express complaints to the Trust and to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated. Any complaints to the Trust should be made in writing to the Privacy Contact Person identified above. The Trust encourages you to express any concerns you may have regarding the privacy of your health information. You will not be retaliated against in any way for filing a complaint.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Notice is effective **April 14, 2003**.