

## VICTORIA COUNTY'S NOTICE REGARDING WELLNESS PROGRAM

**Victoria County Employees' Primary Healthcare Clinic** is a voluntary wellness program available to all employees that participate in the self-funded health plan. The program is administered according to federal rules permitting employer-sponsored wellness programs that seek to improve employee health or prevent disease, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, as applicable, among others. If you choose to participate in the wellness program you will be asked to complete a voluntary health risk assessment or "HRA" that asks a series of questions about your health-related activities and behaviors and whether you have or had certain medical conditions (e.g., cancer, diabetes, or heart disease). You will also be asked to complete a biometric screening, which will include a blood test for Comprehensive Metabolic Panel, Complete Blood Count, Lipid panel, and a Thyroid profile that includes a Thyroid Stimulating Hormone and Free Thyroxine. Any male over the age of 35 will also have a Prostate Specific Antigen added to the HRA. The Comprehensive Metabolic Panel gives an overview of your body's kidney and liver function as well as your blood glucose (sugar) level and electrolyte balance. A complete blood count will evaluate your overall health and can detect a wide range of disorders including anemia and infection. The lipid panel (also known as Cholesterol Panel) is a test used to measure the amount of fats and fatty substances found in your blood that your body uses for energy. It will also give the practitioner an indicator for future heart disease and stroke with a risk ratio between your body's good and bad cholesterol. A thyroid profile is used to determine how your thyroid is functioning, and can help determine if you have an underlying thyroid disorder such as hypothyroidism, or hyperthyroidism. A Prostate Specific Antigen is tested on males over the age of 35 as a tool to screen for prostate cancer. You are not required to complete the HRA or to participate in the blood test or other medical examinations.

However, employees who choose to participate in the wellness program will receive an incentive of a one hundred dollar discount per month for health insurance premiums. Although you are not required to complete the HRA or participate in the biometric screening, only employees who do so will receive a one hundred dollar discount per month for Health Insurance Premiums. Additional incentives of may be available for employees who participate in certain health-related activities or achieve certain health outcomes. If you are unable to participate in any of the health-related activities or achieve any of the health outcomes required to earn an incentive, you may be entitled to a reasonable accommodation or an alternative standard. You may request a reasonable accommodation or an alternative standard by contacting Gina Howard at 361-578-0752. The information from your HRA and the results from your biometric screening will be used to provide you with information to help you understand your current health and potential risks, and may also be used to offer you services through the wellness program, such as individual diabetes education, nutritional information to reduce risk of future disease, and disease management. You also are encouraged to share your results or concerns with your own doctor.

### **Protections from Disclosure of Medical Information**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your personally identifiable health information. Although the wellness program and Victoria County may use aggregate information it collects to design a program based on identified health risks in the workplace, **Victoria County Employees' Primary Healthcare Clinic** will never disclose any of your personal information either publicly or to the employer, except as necessary to respond to a request from you for a reasonable accommodation needed to participate in the wellness program, or as expressly permitted by law. Medical information that personally identifies you that is provided in connection with the wellness program will not be provided to your supervisors or managers and may never be used to make decisions regarding your employment.

Your health information will not be sold, exchanged, transferred, or otherwise disclosed except to the extent permitted by law to carry out specific activities related to the wellness program, and you will not be asked or required to waive the confidentiality of your health information as a condition of participating in the wellness program or receiving an incentive. Anyone who receives your information for purposes of providing you services as part of the wellness program will abide by the same confidentiality requirements. The only individual(s) who will receive your personally identifiable health information is (are) A Family Nurse Practitioner, Licensed Vocational Nurses, and the Medical Doctor, if needed in order to provide you with services under the wellness program.

In addition, all medical information obtained through the wellness program will be maintained separate from your personnel records, information stored electronically will be encrypted, and no information you provide as part of the wellness program will be used in making any employment decision. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protect participants. Appropriate precautions will be taken to avoid any data breach, and in the event a data breach occurs involving information you provide in connection with the wellness program, we will notify you immediately.

You may not be discriminated against in employment because of the medical information you provide as part of participating in the wellness program, nor may you be subjected to retaliation if you choose not to participate.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this notice, or about protections against discrimination and retaliation, please contact Gina Howard at 361-578-0752.

