

## **WHY WE ASK FOR YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

The Austin-Weston Center uses your social security number for a variety of *internal* purposes. Because your social security number is the one identifier that we can trust is unique to you, we use your social security number identify you while you are a patient within the Austin-Weston Center. This unique identifier allows our doctors, nurses and administrative staff to quickly search our information system and retrieve vital information about you, not that of a patient with the same or similar name. Being able to retrieve *your* personal information when and where we need it is essential to our ability to provide quality care. Your social security number is also a required element for certain insurers, as well as government agencies. It is a vital link when we communicate on your behalf. Also, your social security number is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPPA”) of 1996 which mandates privacy and security of your information.

The Austin-Weston Center and staff treat all of your personal information, including your social security number, as confidential. The Austin-Weston Center, in compliance with federal law, has implemented a number of information security procedures to help ensure that this information remains confidential. The Austin-Weston Center does *not* display your social security number in any place in its facilities where it may be viewed by members of the public. The Austin-Weston Center does *not* give social security numbers to any person outside of the Center unless such information is necessary for treatment, required by the State of Virginia mandatory reporting and disclosure, as well as healthcare operations purposes. Please refer to our Notice of Privacy Practices for more information about the use and disclosure of your personal information.

We appreciate your cooperation in providing your social security number and hope that this explanation satisfies any concerns you may have regarding the Austin-Weston Center’s use of your social security number. Please be aware that we believe that a social security number is so important to our ability to provide quality care that the Austin-Weston Center reserves the right to deny elective care to any person who may refuse to provide a social security number.

In the event you have questions regarding this notice, please contact Donna Aguas, Office Manager, at 703 893-6168.