**WHY WE MUST OBTAIN YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

Augusta Ear Nose & Throat, LLC strictly practices all HIPAA laws requiring the protection of patient information. We are committed to providing excellent medical care for you or your child. In order to do so, we must run the financial aspects of the practice as efficiently as possible. When we see you/your child in the office, we do not usually ask for payment in full at the time of the visit. As a courtesy to you, we bill your participating insurance company first, and, if the insurance company does not pay for the visit in full, we then bill you later for the remaining balance. By delaying our request for payment for services, we are essentially granting you credit for the cost of that visit, in faith that we will ultimately be paid either by you or your insurance company. By granting this credit, we take on risk that we may not be paid for our services to you. However, we are willing to take that risk in order to decrease the immediate financial burden to you while we await a response from your insurance company.

In order for us to take on that risk, we do ask for your social security number. This is important information for us to have if payment is not received and we must utilize a collection agency. This is a standard practice, employed by any merchant granting you credit. If after reading the above information, you choose to withhold the information our office requires you have three (3) options:

1. We will contact your insurance company to determine the balance remaining of your current annual deductible and payment in full for services rendered will be collected at the time of checkout, or

2. Before services are rendered, you must provide us with a valid credit card and a signed authorization to allow us to bill to the card any charges, co-pays, or deductibles for which you are responsible, or

3. We will not accept you as a patient, but will assist in the transfer of your information to another practice.

Please be assured that we have very strict policies to protect the privacy of your medical records and billing information. Thank you for trusting us to care for you or your child, and partnering with us to make our practice the best that it can be.

Thank you,

Carey Keefe, Practice Administrator

Augusta Ear Nose & Throat

**Authorization to Keep Credit Card Information on File**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ give Augusta Ear Nose & Throat the authority to keep my credit card information on file for the purpose of billing any balance remaining on my account or the account of my child after insurance payments have been processed. This information is kept in a secure, locked location, and accessed only by the Practice Administrator.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Photocopy of Credit Card Attached.**

**PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Augusta Ear Nose & Throat, LLC, has taken a proactive stance of protecting all patient/parent private and medical information. To do so, we have developed the following practices and principles to secure all private information within this office.

\*Limiting access to records containing private personal and medical information to those who need to see the information for the performance of their duties.

 \*Restricting access to all computers via the use of ID, password, firewall, and anti-virus/spyware.

 \*No storage of records on any computers or other devices not secured against unauthorized access.

 \*Sharing of personal/medical information only with other companies or organization where required by law for treatment, operations, or payment.

 \*Shredding of all paper documentation containing personal or medical information before discarding.

\*Prompt notification of the affected individual in any instance where personal/medical information may have been inappropriately disclosed and risk of identity theft or other harm exists. This office has a mandated “Red Flag” policy in place.

\*Our office assigns a unique number to a patient’s file.