

Notice of Privacy Practices

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THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.

My pledge regarding health information. I understand that health information about you and your health care is personal. I am committed to protecting health information about you. I create a record of the care and services you receive from me. I need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements. This notice applies to all the records of your care generated by this mental health care practice. This notice will tell you about the ways in which I may use and disclose health information about you. I also describe your rights to the health information I keep about you and describe certain obligations I have regarding the use and disclosure of your health information. I can change the terms of this Notice, and such changes will apply to all information I have about you. The new Notice will be available upon request, in my office, and on my website.

I am required by law to:

- Make sure that protected health information (“PHI”) that identifies you is kept private.
- Give you this notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to health information.
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

How I may use and disclose health information about you. The following categories describe different ways that I use and disclose health information. For each category of uses or disclosures I will explain what I mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all the ways I am permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

Disclosure at Your Request. I may disclose information when requested by you. This disclosure at your request may require a written authorization by you.

For Treatment. Your PHI may be used and disclosed by those who are involved in your care for the purpose of providing, coordinating, or managing your health care treatment and related services. This includes consultation with other treatment team members. The word “treatment” includes, among other things, the coordination and management of health care providers with a third party, consultations between health care providers and referrals of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

For Payment. I may use and disclose PHI so that I can receive payment for the treatment services provided to you. This will only be done with your authorization. Examples of payment-related activities are processing claims with your insurance company, reviewing services provided to you to determine medical necessity, or undertaking utilization review activities.

For Health Care Operations. I may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI to support our business activities including, but not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, I may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business activities (e.g., scanning documents) provided I have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI.

Lawsuits and Disputes. If you are involved in a lawsuit, I may disclose health information in response to a court or administrative order. I may also disclose health information about your child in response to a subpoena (with your written consent), discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Certain uses and disclosures require your authorization.

Psychotherapy Notes. I do keep “psychotherapy notes” as that term is defined in 45 CFR § 164.501, and any use or disclosure of such notes requires your Authorization unless the use or disclosure is:

- a. For my use in treating you.
- b. For my use in training or supervising mental health practitioners to help them improve their skills in group, joint, family, or individual counseling or therapy.
- c. For my use in defending myself in legal proceedings instituted by you.
- d. For use by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to investigate my compliance with HIPAA.
- e. Required by law and the use or disclosure is limited to the requirements of such law.
- f. Required by law for certain health oversight activities pertaining to the originator of the psychotherapy notes.
- g. Required by a coroner who is performing duties authorized by law.
- h. Required to help avert a serious threat to the health and safety of others.

Marketing Purposes. As a psychotherapist, I will not use or disclose your PHI for marketing purposes.

Sale of PHI. As a psychotherapist, I will not sell your PHI in the regular course of my business.

Certain uses and disclosures do not require your authorization. Following is a list of the categories of uses and disclosures permitted by HIPAA without an authorization. Applicable law and ethical standards permit us to disclose information about you without your authorization only in a limited number of situations.

Child Abuse or Neglect. I may disclose your PHI to a state or local agency that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect.

Elder Abuse or Neglect. I may disclose your PHI to a state or local agency that is authorized by law to receive reports of elder abuse or neglect.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. I may disclose your PHI pursuant to a subpoena (with your written consent), court order, administrative order, or similar process.

Required by Law. I must make disclosures to the government agencies for the purpose of investigating or determining our compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule.

Health Oversight. If required, I may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies and organizations that provide financial assistance to the program (such as third-party payors based on your prior consent) and peer review organizations performing utilization and quality control.

Law Enforcement. I may disclose PHI to a law enforcement official as required by law, in compliance with a subpoena (with your written consent), court order, administrative order or similar document, for the purpose of identifying a suspect, material witness or missing person, in connection with the victim of a crime, in connection with a deceased person, in connection with the reporting of a crime in an emergency, or in connection with a crime on the premises.

Specialized Government Functions. I may review requests from U.S. military command authorities if you have served as a member of the armed forces, authorized officials for national security and intelligence reasons and to the Department of State for medical suitability determinations, and disclose your PHI based on your written consent, mandatory disclosure laws and the need to prevent serious harm.

Public Health. If required, I may use or disclose your PHI for mandatory public health activities to a public health authority authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability, or if directed by a public health authority, to a government agency that is collaborating with that public health authority.

Public Safety. I may disclose your PHI if necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. If information is disclosed to prevent or lessen a serious threat it will be disclosed to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.

For workers' compensation purposes. Although my preference is to obtain an Authorization from you, I may provide your PHI to comply with workers' compensation laws.

Appointment reminders and health related benefits or services. I may use and disclose your PHI to contact you to remind you that you have an appointment with me. I may also use and disclose your PHI to tell you about treatment alternatives, or other health care services or benefits that I offer.

Certain uses and disclosures require you to have the opportunity to object.

Disclosures to family, friends, or others. I may provide your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person that you indicate is involved in your care or the payment for your health care, unless you object in whole or in part. The opportunity to consent may be obtained retroactively in emergency situations.

You have the following rights with respect to your PHI:

Right to Request Restrictions. You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the use or disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. I am not required to agree to your request unless the request is to restrict disclosure of PHI to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the PHI pertains to a health care item or service that you paid for out of pocket. In that case, I am required to honor your request for a restriction.

Right to Request Confidential Communication. You have the right to request that I communicate with you about health matters in a certain way or at a certain location. I will accommodate reasonable requests. I may require information regarding how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact as a condition for accommodating your request. I will not ask you for an explanation of why you are making the request.

Right of Access to Inspect and Copy. Unless your information was compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or for use in a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding, you have the right, which may be restricted only in exceptional circumstances, to inspect and copy PHI that is maintained in a “designated record set”. A designated record set contains mental health/medical and billing records and any other records that are used to make decisions about your care. Your right to inspect and copy PHI will be restricted only in those situations where a licensed professional believes it is reasonably likely that access would endanger the life or physical safety of or cause substantial harm to the individual or another person. I may charge a reasonable, fee for copies. If your records are maintained electronically, you may also request an electronic copy of your PHI. You may also request that a copy of your PHI be provided to another person.

Right to Amend. If you feel that the PHI I have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information although I are not required to agree to the amendment. If I deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us. I may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy. Please contact the Privacy Officer if you have any questions.

Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an accounting of certain of the disclosures that I make of your PHI. I may charge you a reasonable fee if you request more than one accounting in any 12-month period.

The Right to Get a Paper or Electronic Copy of this Notice. You have the right get a paper copy of this Notice, and you have the right to get a copy of this notice by e-mail. And, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice via e-mail, you also have the right to request a paper copy of it.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Privacy Notice

Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), you have certain rights regarding the use and disclosure of your protected health information. By checking the box below, you are acknowledging that you have received a copy of HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices.

By signing below. I am agreeing that I have read, understood, and agree to the items contained in this document. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the information in this document and my questions have been answered.