

HIPAA NOTICE 1.0

Notice of Clinician's Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information

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

I. Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations

I may use or disclose your protected health information (PHI), for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes with your written authorization. To help clarify these terms, here are some definitions:

- “PHI” refers to information in your health record that could identify you.
- “Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations”
 - *Treatment* is when I provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when I consult with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another clinician.
 - *Payment* is when I obtain reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when I disclose your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage.
 - *Health Care Operations* are activities that relate to the performance and operation of my practice.

Examples of health care operations are quality assessment and improvement activities, business-related matters such as audits and administrative services, and case management and care coordination.

- “Use” applies only to activities within my [office, clinic, practice group, etc.] such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “Disclosure” applies to activities outside of my [office, clinic, practice group, etc.], such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.
- “Authorization” is your written permission to disclose confidential mental health information. All authorizations to disclose must be on a specific legally required form.

II. Other Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI for purposes outside of treatment, payment, or health care operations when your appropriate authorization is obtained. In those instances when I am asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment, or health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. In so far as I use such notes, I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your Psychotherapy Notes. “Psychotherapy Notes” are notes I may make about our conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, and which I have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

You may revoke all such authorizations (of PHI or Psychotherapy Notes) at any time, provided each revocation is in writing. You may not revoke an authorization to the extent that (1) I have relied on that authorization; or (2) if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, law provides the insurer the right to contest the claim under the policy.

III. Uses and Disclosures without Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- *Child Abuse* – If I know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, I must report the matter to the appropriate authorities as required by law.
- *Adult and Domestic Abuse* – If I suspect that an adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited and I have reasonable cause to suspect that the adult is incapacitated or dependent, I must report the matter to the appropriate authorities as required by law.
- *Health Oversight Activities* – I may disclose PHI to the Maine Board of Licensure, or one of its representatives, pursuant to standards or regulations for regulation, accreditation, licensure, or certification.
- *Judicial and Administrative Proceedings* – If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your diagnosis and treatment or the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and I will not release information without the written authorization of you or your

legally appointed representative or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.

- *Serious Threat to Health or Safety* – If, in my reasonable professional judgment, I believe that you pose a direct threat of imminent harm to the health or safety of any individual, including yourself, I may disclose PHI to the appropriate persons.
- *Worker’s Compensation* – I may disclose PHI as authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker’s compensation or other similar programs, established by law, that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness without regard to fault.

IV. Patient’s Rights and Clinician’s Duties

Patient’s Rights:

- *Right to Request Restrictions* – You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information. However, I am not required to agree to a restriction you request.
- *Right to Receive Confidential Communications by Alternative Means and at Alternative Locations* – You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of PHI by alternative means and at alternative locations. (For example, you may not want a family member to know that you are seeing me. On your request, I will send your bills to another address.)
- *Right to Inspect and Copy* – You have the right to inspect or

obtain a copy (or both) of PHI in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your access to PHI under certain circumstances, but in some cases you may have this decision reviewed. I must permit you to request access to inspect or to obtain a copy (or both) of Psychotherapy Notes, unless I believe that such access would be detrimental to your health. If you are denied access to Psychotherapy Notes, it is possible upon presentation of a written authorization signed by you that such notes or a “narrative” of the notes may be made available to your “authorized representative.” On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the request and denial process.

- *Right to Amend* – You have the right to request an amendment of PHI for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your request. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the amendment process.
- *Right to an Accounting* – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the accounting process.
- *Right to a Paper Copy* – You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Clinician’s Duties:

- I am required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.

- I reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless I notify you of such changes, however, I am required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- If I revise my policies and procedures, I will provide notice to existing and new clients by posting in my reception area and providing a revised copy to review and acknowledge by signing.

V. Complaints

If you have questions about this notice, disagree with a decision I make about access to your records or have other concerns about your privacy rights you may discuss it with me directly.

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated and wish to file a complaint with me in writing you may do so.

You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I can provide you with the appropriate address upon request.

You have specific rights under the Privacy Rule. I will not retaliate against you for exercising your right to file a complaint

VI. Effective Date, Restrictions, and Changes to Privacy Policy

This notice will go into effect on 4/14/03

I will limit the uses or disclosures that I will make as follows: to the minimum necessary to address the intent of the request.