

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

Your health record contains personal information about you and your health. This information about you that may identify you and that relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services is referred to Protected Health Information (“PHI”). This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law. It also describes your rights regarding how you may gain access to and control your PHI.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of PHI and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy and security practices with respect to PHI. We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. Any new Notice of Privacy Practices will be effective for all PHI that we maintain at that time. We will provide you with a copy of the revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting a copy on our website or in our office or by sending a copy to you in the mail upon request.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT 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 clinical supervisors or other treatment team members. We may discuss your situation and/or disclose PHI to any other consultant only with your consent, such as your primary care physician. An “*authorization*” is written permission above and beyond the general consent that permits only specific disclosures. In those instances when we are asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, we will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. We will also need to obtain a written authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes. “*Psychotherapy notes*” are notes we have made about our conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, which we 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) we have relied on that authorization; or (2) if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, and the law provides the insurer the right to contest the claim under the policy. Note, psychotherapy notes may not be required to be released for eligibility or underwriting purposes.

For Payment. We may use and disclose PHI so that we can receive payment for the treatment services provided to you. This will only be done with your consent. Examples of payment-related activities are: making a determination of eligibility of coverage for insurance benefits, processing claims with your insurance company, reviewing services provided to you to determine medical necessity, or undertaking utilization review activities. If it becomes necessary to use collection processes due to lack of payment for services, we will only disclose the minimum amount of PHI necessary for purposes of collection.

For Health Care Operations. We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order 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, we may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business activities (e.g., billing or typing services or our lawyer) provided we have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI or we have otherwise obtained your consent to release the information. For training and teaching purposes PHI will be disclosed only with your consent.

Required by Law. Under the law, we must make disclosures of your PHI to you upon your request. In addition, we must make disclosures to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of investigating or determining our compliance with the requirements of the Privacy and/or Security Rule.

Without Authorization. Applicable law and ethical standards permit me to disclose information about you without your authorization or consent only in a limited number of other situations. The types of uses and disclosures that may be made without your authorization are those that are:

- Required or allowed by law, such as (including but are not necessarily limited to): the reporting of child abuse or neglect or mandatory government agency audits or investigations (such as the social work licensing board or the health department), or abuse involving the elderly or the developmentally disabled/mentally retarded.
- If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your evaluation, diagnosis and treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law and we will not release this information without written authorization from you or your personal or legally-appointed representative, or upon receipt of a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party and you have provided an authorization to release the information to the third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.
- 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, or to other persons as permitted by law, including you.
- To defend against an action filed by you against us.

Verbal Permission. We may use or disclose your information to family members that are directly involved in your treatment with your verbal permission.

With Authorization. Uses and disclosures not specifically permitted by applicable law will be made only with your written authorization, which may be revoked, unless we have already relied on it.

Your Rights Regarding Your PHI

You have the following rights regarding PHI we maintain about you. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing to Bill Mason, Counseling Solutions, LLC, 8820 Commerce Loop Dr., Columbus, Ohio 43240.

- Right of Access to Inspect and Copy. You have the right to inspect and copy PHI that are part of treatment records that we have created.
- Right to Amend. If you feel that the PHI we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information although we are not required to agree to the amendment.
- Right to an Accounting of Disclosures. You have the right to request an accounting of certain of the disclosures that we make of your PHI. We may charge you a reasonable fee if you request more than one accounting in any 12-month period. We are not required to report disclosures made for treatment, payment, or health care operations unless they involve electronic records.
- 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. We are not required to agree to your request.
- Right to Request Confidential Communication. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location.
- Right to a Copy of this Notice. You have a right to a copy of this notice.

Complaints

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint in writing with Bill Mason, Executive Director, Counseling Solutions, 8820 Commerce Loop Dr., Columbus, Ohio 43240, 614-880-9800. You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The person listed above can provide you with the appropriate address upon request.

We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

If you need additional information regarding this Notice of Privacy Practices, please contact:

Bill Mason, Executive Director
8820 Commerce Loop Dr.
Columbus, Ohio 43240
614-880-9800
614-880-9802 Fax

