

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how medical and mental health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

I am required by applicable federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. I am also required to give you this Notice about my privacy practices, my legal duties, and your rights concerning your health information. I am required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. I may change the terms of our notice, at any time. The new notice will be effective for all protected health information that I maintain at that time. In the event that the notice is changed a new notice will be sent to you by mail or at the time of your next appointment. You may request a copy of our Notice at any time.

This notice takes effect January 1st, 2022, and will remain in effect until I replace it.

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information Based Upon Your Written Consent

You will be asked to sign a consent form. Once you have consented to the use and disclosure of your protected health information for treatment, payment and health care operations by signing the consent form, this agency will use or disclose your protected health information as described below.

Treatment: I may use and disclose, as needed, your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services. This includes the coordination or management of your health care with a third party that has already obtained your permission to have access to your protected health information.

Payment: I may use and disclose, as needed, your health information to obtain payment for services I provide to you. This may include certain activities that your insurance plan may undertake before it approves or pays for the mental health care services I recommend for you such as; making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, reviewing services provided to you and undertaking utilization review activities.

Healthcare Operations: I may use and disclose, as needed, your health information in connection with our healthcare operations. Healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, reviewing the competence or qualifications of mental healthcare professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, employee review activities, conducting training programs, accreditation, certification, licensing or credentialing activities, and conducting or arranging for other business activities.

Uses and Disclosures of protected Health Information Based upon Your Written Authorization

Other uses and disclosures of your protected health information will be made only with your written authorization, unless otherwise permitted or required by law. You may revoke this authorization, at any time, in writing. Your revocation will not affect any use or disclosures permitted by your authorization while it was in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, I cannot use or disclose your health information for any reason except those described in the Notice.

Emergencies: I may use or disclose your protected health information in an emergency treatment situation. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, I will disclose health information based on determination using our professional judgment disclosing only health information that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare. If this occurs, the agency will try to obtain your consent as soon as reasonably practicable after the delivery of treatment.

Other permitted and Required Uses and Disclosures That May Be Made Without Your Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Object

I may use or disclose your protected health information in the following situations without your consent or authorization. These situations include:

Required by Law: I may use or disclose your protected health information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by law. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law. You will be notified, as required by law, of any such uses or disclosures.

Public Health: I may disclose your protected health information for public health activities and purposes, to a public health authority that is permitted by law to collect or receive this information.

Health Oversight: I may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections.

Abuse or Neglect: I may disclose your protected health information to a public health authority that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, I may disclose your protected health information if I believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information. In this case, the disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.

Legal Proceedings: I may disclose protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to an order of a court or administrative tribunal (to the extent such disclosure is expressly authorized), in certain conditions in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process.

Law Enforcement: I may also disclose protected health information, so long as applicable legal requirements are met, for law enforcement purposes.

Criminal Activity: Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, I may disclose your protected health information, if I believe that the use or disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. I may also disclose protected health information if it is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual.

National Security: I may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. I may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. I may disclose to correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody of protected health information of inmate or consumer under certain circumstances.

Appointment Reminders: I may use or disclose your health information to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages, postcards, or letters).

Required Uses and Disclosures: Under the law, I must make disclosures to you and when required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to investigate or determine our compliance with the requirements of Section 164.500 et.seq.

Rights Access: You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information. You may request that I provide copies in a format other than photocopies. I will use the format you request unless I cannot practicably do so. You must submit your request in writing to obtain access to your health information. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information at the end of this notice. I will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for expenses such as copies and staff time. If your request copies, I will charge you \$0.25 for each page and postage if you want the copies mailed to you. If you request an alternative format, I will charge a cost-based fee for providing your health information in that format.

Under federal law, however, you may not inspect or copy the following records: psychotherapy notes; information compiled in reasonable anticipation of, or use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative action or

proceeding, and protected health information that is subject to law that prohibits access to protected health information.

Restriction: You have the right to request a restriction of your protected health information. You may also request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care or for notification purposes as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. Your request must be in writing and state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply. If I agree to the additional restrictions I will abide by our agreement (except in and emergency).

I am not required to agree to a restriction that you may request. If I believe it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected information will not be restricted.

Alternative Communication: You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. You must make your request in writing. I may also condition this accommodation by asking you for information as to how payment will be handled or specification of an alternative address or other method of contact.

Amendment Request: You have the right to request that I amend your protected health information. Your request must be in writing and explain why the information should be amended. In certain cases, I may deny your request for an amendment. If I deny your request for amendment, you have the right to file a statement of disagreement with us and I may prepare a rebuttal to your statement and will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal.

Disclosure Accounting: You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures I have made, if any, of your protected health information. This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices.

Notice: You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from us upon request.

Questions and Complaints

You may complain to us or to the Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated by us. You may file a complaint with us by notifying our privacy contact of your complaint. I support your right to the privacy of your protected health information. I will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint with us or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.