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## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – PLEASE READ**

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### **A. Introduction:**

This notice will inform you about how your therapist handles information obtained about you. The **HEALTH Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)** requires that you be informed about how I use information acquired here in this office; how I share it with other professionals and how you can have access to it. Because this law and the laws of this state are very complicated, the following are some simplified parts. If you have any questions regarding this information please let me know.

### **B. What is meant by your Medical Record:**

Each time that you visit this or any other doctor's office, information is collected about your physical and/or mental health. It may have been information about your past and/or present health issues, or the treatments that you are receiving. This information that your therapist collects is called **PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)**. PHI goes into your health care file and it may contain information about your history, current concerns, diagnosis, treatment plans, legal information, treatment from other professionals, school records and/or billing information. The therapist uses this information to plan for your care, verify services received for your health insurance company and to aid in consultation with other professionals who you may be working with.

### **C. Privacy & Laws:**

The HIPAA Law requires that your therapist keeps your PHI private and that you are to read and be informed about this notice, which is called the **NOTICE of PRIVACY PRACTICES (NPP)**. This therapist and others you may be working with will obey the rules of NPP as long as it is in effect. You will be notified if there are to be any changes.

### **D. What happens to your PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)?**

When, your PHI is read by the therapist (or other therapists in the same employment who originally collected the information); it is then legally called "USE". If this information is shared with other outside professionals, this is legally called "DISCLOSURE". In contact with other parties, your therapist will disclose only the minimum information needed for the purpose. The law gives you the right to know about your PHI, understand how it is used and control how it is disclosed. Your written permission is required for the disclosure of your PHI except in special circumstances.

## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES – PLEASE READ**

- **Uses & Disclosures of PHI in health care with your consent.**

After you read this notice you will be asked to sign a separate CONSENT form to allow your therapist to use and share your PHI. In almost all cases your therapist will use your PHI as described above: to provide, plan and coordinate treatment or arrange billing. These routine purposes are called TPO.

This Notice and the consent form allow me to use and disclose your PHI for TPO. Under the regulations of HIPAA, your therapist cannot treat you without a signed consent. If your therapist wants to use your information for any other purposes, they will require your permission on an Authorization form. Furthermore, you can cancel or withdraw your permission at any time, by doing so in writing. Your therapist cannot take back any information they have already disclosed with your previous consent.

- **Uses & Disclosures of PHI NOT requiring your consent.**

In rare cases the law requires therapists to disclose some of your PHI without your consent. Your therapist is required to report suspected child abuse and elder abuse. The therapist must also disclose portions of you PHI if they believe you are likely to harm yourself or someone else. Finally, if you are involved in a lawsuit or legal proceeding and your therapist receives a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful processes, they may release some or all of your PHI to comply. This would happen only after you have been told of the request. When information on your PHI has been released without your consent, you are entitled to obtain records about what and how that information was conveyed.

### **E. Access to your PHI.**

Although your health record is the physical property of the healthcare practitioner or facility that collected it, the information belongs to you.

You are entitled to review it. If you want a copy one can be provided and you may be charged for the costs of reproducing and mailing it. In some situations, you may not be able to see all that is in your records. Your PHI **will not contain process notes from individual therapy sessions, but a summary of progress and treatment.** If you have specific questions about your therapist's treatment plan or diagnostic impression; it is most helpful if you talk to your therapist directly.

### **F. Electronic Information.**

Your insurance company may require portions of your PHI to be transmitted electronically through fax or email.

### **G. Further Information.**

These policies are effective as of April 15, 2003. If you need more information or have questions about the privacy practice described above please speak to your therapist (privacy officer). If you have a problem with how your PHI has been handled or if you believe your privacy rights have been violated, let me know. You have a right to file a complaint with me and with the secretary of the federal department of Health and Human Services. No action will be taken against you if you complain.