

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

II. I HAVE A LEGAL DUTY TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)

I am legally required to protect the privacy of your PHI, which includes information that can be used to identify you that I've created or received about your past, present, or future health or condition, the provision of health care to you, or the payment of this health care. I must provide you with this Notice about my privacy practices, and such Notice must explain how, when, and why I will "use" and "disclose" your PHI. A "use" of PHI occurs when I share, examine, utilize, apply, or analyze such information within my practice; PHI is "disclosed" when it is released, transferred, has been given to, or is otherwise divulged to a third party outside of my practice. With some exceptions, I may not use or disclose any more of your PHI than is necessary to accomplish the purpose for which the use or disclosure is made. And, I am legally required to follow the privacy practices described in this Notice.

However, I reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice and my privacy policies at any time. Any changes will apply to PHI on file with me already. Before I make any important changes to my policies, I will promptly change this Notice and post a new copy of it in my office and on my website (if applicable). You can also request a copy of this Notice from me, or you can view a copy of it in my office or at my website, which is located at (insert website address, if applicable).

III. HOW I MAY USE AND DISCLOSE YOUR PHI. I will use and disclose your PHI for many different reasons. For some of these uses or disclosures, I will need your prior written authorization; for others, however, I do not. Listed below are the different categories of my uses and disclosures along with some examples of each category.

A. Uses and Disclosures Relating to Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations Do Not Require Your Prior Written Consent. I can use and disclose your PHI without your consent for the following reasons:

1. For Treatment. I can use your PHI within my practice to provide you with mental health treatment, including discussing or sharing your PHI with my trainees and interns. I can disclose your PHI to physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other licensed health care providers who provide you with healthcare services or are involved in your care. For example, if a psychiatrist is treating you, I can disclose your PHI to your psychiatrist to coordinate your care.

2. To Obtain Payment for Treatment. I can use and disclose your PHI to bill and collect payment for the treatment and services provided by me to you. For example, I might send your PHI to your insurance company or health plan to get paid for the health care services that I have provided to you. I may also provide your PHI to my business associates, such as billing companies, claims processing companies, and others that process my health care claims.

3. For Health Care Operations. I can use and disclose your PHI to operate my practice. For example, I might use your PHI to evaluate the quality of health care services that you received or to evaluate the performance of the health care

professionals who provided such services to you. I may also provide your PHI to my accountant, attorney, consultants, or others to further my health care operations.

4. Patient Incapacitation or Emergency. I may also disclose your PHI to others without your consent if you are incapacitated or if an emergency exists. For example, your consent isn't required if you need emergency treatment, as long as I try to get your consent after treatment is rendered, or if I try to get your consent but you are unable to communicate with me (for example, if you are unconscious or in severe pain) and I think that you would consent to such treatment if you were able to do so.

B. Certain Other Uses and Disclosures Also Do Not Require Your Consent or Authorization. I can use and disclose your PHI without your consent or authorization for the following reasons:

1. When federal, state, or local laws require disclosure. For example, I may have to make a disclosure to applicable governmental officials when a law requires me to report information to government agencies and law enforcement personnel about victims of abuse or neglect.

2. When judicial or administrative proceedings require disclosure. For example, if you are involved in a lawsuit or a claim for workers' compensation benefits, I may have to use or disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order. I may also have to use or disclose your PHI in response to a subpoena.

3. When law enforcement requires disclosure. For example, I may have to use or disclose your PHI in response to a search warrant.

4. When public health activities require disclosure. For example, I may have to use or disclose your PHI to report to a government official an adverse reaction that you have to a medication.

5. When health oversight activities require disclosure. For example, I may have to provide information to assist the government in conducting an investigation or inspection of a health care provider or organization.

6. To avert a serious threat to health or safety. For example, I may have to use or disclose your PHI to avert a serious threat to the health or safety of others. However, any such disclosures will only be made to someone able to prevent the threatened harm from occurring.