



P.O. Box 163781, Fort Worth, Texas, 76161-3781
(682) 651-7621

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, which may identify you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services, is referred to as Protected Health Information (“PHI”). This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how we may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”), regulations promulgated under HIPAA including the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules, and the Code of Ethics of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the Texas Counseling Association. 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 of PHI and to provide you with notice of our legal duties and privacy 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, sending a copy to you in the mail upon request, or providing one to you at your next appointment.

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 disclose PHI to any other consultant only with your authorization.

For Payment. We may use or disclose PHI so that we can receive payment for the treatment services provided to you. This will only be done with your authorization. Examples of payment-related activities are: making a determination of eligibility or 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, reminding you of appointments, to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business



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activities (e.g., billing or typing services) provided we have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI. For training or teaching purposes PHI will be disclosed only with your authorization.

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 Rule.

Following is a list of the categories of uses and disclosures permitted by HIPAA without an authorization.

**Abuse and Neglect
Emergencies
National Security**

**Judicial and Administrative Proceedings
Law Enforcement
Public Safety (Duty to Warn)**

Without Authorization. Applicable law and ethical standards permit us to disclose information about you without your authorization 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:

Child Abuse or Neglect. We may disclose your PHI to a state or local agency that is authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. We may disclose your PHI pursuant to a subpoena (with your written consent), court order, administrative order or similar process.

Deceased Patients. We may disclose PHI regarding deceased patients as mandated by state law, or to a family member or friend that was involved in your care or payment for care prior to death, based on your prior consent. A release of information regarding deceased patients may be limited to an executor or administrator of a deceased person's estate or the person identified as next-of-kin. PHI of persons that have been deceased for more than fifty (50) years is not protected under HIPAA.

Medical Emergencies. We may use or disclose your PHI in a medical emergency situation to medical personnel only in order to prevent serious harm. Our staff will try to provide you a copy of this notice as soon as reasonably practicable after the resolution of the emergency.

Family Involvement in Care. We may disclose information to close family members or friends directly involved in your treatment based on your consent or as necessary to prevent serious harm.

Health Oversight. If required, we may disclose PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies and organizations that provide financial assistance to the



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program (such as third party payors based on your prior consent) and peer reviewed organizations performing utilization and quality control.

Law Enforcement. We may disclose PHI to a law enforcement official, as required by law, in compliance with a subpoena (with your written consent), court order, administrative order or similar document, for the purpose of identifying a suspect, material witness or missing person, in connection with the victim of a crime, in connection with a deceased person, in connection with the reporting of a crime in an emergency, or in connection with a crime on the premises.

Specialized Government Functions. We may review requests from U.S. military command authorities if you have served as a member of the armed forces, authorized officials for national security and intelligence reasons and to the Department of State for medical suitability determinations, and disclose your PHI based on written consent, mandatory disclosure laws and the need to prevent serious harm.

Public Health. If required, we may use or disclose your PHI for mandatory public health activities to a public health authority authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability, or if directed by a public health authority, to a government agency that is collaborating with that public health authority..

Public Safety. We may disclose your PHI if 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.

Research. PHI may only be disclosed after a special approval process or with your authorization.

Fundraising. We may send you fundraising communications at one time or another. You have the right to opt out of such fundraising communications with each solicitation you receive.

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.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI

You have the following rights regarding your personal PHI maintained by our office. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing to our Privacy Officer at P.O. Box 163781, Fort Worth, Texas 76161-3781



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- **Right of Access to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right, which may be restricted only in exceptional circumstances, to inspect and copy PHI that may be used to make decisions about your care. Your right to inspect and copy PHI will be restricted only in those situations where there is compelling evidence that access would cause serious harm to you. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for copies.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Breach Notification.** If there is a breach of unsecured PHI concerning you. We may be required to notify you of this breach, including what happened and what you can do to protect yourself.
- **Right to a Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a copy of this Notice.
- **Electronic Transactions Standards.**

COMPLAINTS

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint in writing with our Privacy Officer, Carrie Allen, at PO Box 163781, Fort Worth, Texas 76161-3781, or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, or by calling (202) 619-0257. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

The effective date of this notice is June 2015.