

Notice of Privacy Policies

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HIPAA NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES
Effective: September 16, 2013

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.

I am required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information (PHI) and to provide you with notice of your privacy rights and legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. I am required to abide by the terms of this notice with respect to your PHI but reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and make the new notice provisions effective for all PHI that I maintain. I will provide you with a copy of the revised notice sent by regular mail upon request to the last address you have provided to me for this communication purpose.

If changes to this notice are made they will be posted on my website (www.lpccounselor.com), in the office and a copy will be available to you by contacting the privacy office: Linda W. McCune LPC-S, at 972-824-2121.

A twice yearly risk assessment will analyze potential possible risk to your PHI in my counseling practice. As technology management of PHI changes, I will update my HIPAA practices to safeguard your PHI, understanding that as these changes occur they may have potential risk to your PHI. My office maintains a security log outlining security practices (as required by the HITECH Act) regarding safeguarding electronic PHI. In the event of a breach of PHI each individual who's PHI has been, or is reasonably believed by the covered entity to have been, accessed, acquired, or disclosed as a result of such breach will be notified.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Each time you visit a hospital, physician, mental health professional, or other health care provider, a record of your visit is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms; examination and test results; diagnoses; treatment; in the case of a mental health professional, progress notes; and a plan for future care of treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment.
- Means of communication among the many health professionals who contribute to your care.
- Legal document describing the care you received.
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided.

- A tool in educating health professionals.
- Source of data for medical research.
- Source of information for public health officials charged with improving the health of the nation.
- A source of data for facility planning and marketing.
- Tool with which we can assess and continually work to improve the care we render and the outcomes we achieve.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS IN YOUR RECORD AND HOW YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION IS USED HELPS YOU TO:

- Ensure its accuracy.
- Better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information.
- Make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION RIGHTS

Although your health record is the physical property of my practice, the facility that compiled it, the information belongs to you. You have the following privacy rights:

1. The right to request restrictions on the use and disclosure of your PHI to carry out treatment, payment, or health care operations.
You should note that I am not required to agree to be bound by any restrictions that you request but am bound by each restriction that I do agree to.
2. In connection with any patient directory, the right to request restrictions on the use and disclosure your name, location at this treatment facility, descriptions of your condition and your religious affiliation. (I do not maintain a patient directory).
3. To receive confidential communication of your PHI unless I determine that such disclosure would be harmful to you.
4. To inspect and copy your PHI unless I determine in the exercise of my professional judgment that the access requested is reasonably likely to endanger your life or physical safety or that of another person.
You may request copies of your PHI by providing me with a written request for such copies. I will provide you with copies within ten (10) business days of your request at my office. You will be charged \$.25 for each page copied and you will be expected to pay for the copies at the time you pick them up.
5. To amend your PHI upon your written request to me setting forth your reasons for the requested amendment. I have the right to deny the request if the information is complete or has been created by another entity.
I am required to act on your request to amend your PHI within sixty (60) days but this deadline may be extended for another (30) days upon written notice to you. If I deny your requested amendment, I will provide you with written notice of my decision and the basis for my decision. You will then have the right to submit a written statement disagreeing with my decision which will be maintained with your PHI. If you do not wish to submit a statement of disagreement, you may request that I provide your request for amendment and my denial with any future disclosure of your PHI.

6. Upon request to receive an accounting of disclosures of your PHI made within the past 6 years of your request for an accounting. Accounting Request Forms are available upon request from the Privacy Officer (Linda W. McCune M.S., LPC-S). Disclosures that are exempt from the accounting requirement include the following:
- Disclosure necessary to carry out treatment, payment, and health care operations.
 - Disclosures made to you upon request.
 - Disclosures made pursuant to your authorization.
 - Disclosures made for national security or intelligence purposes.
 - Permitted disclosure to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials.
 - Disclosures that are part of a limited data set used for research, public health, or health care operations.

I am required to act on your request for an accounting within sixty (60) days but this deadline may be extended for another thirty (30) days upon written notice to you of the reason for the delay and the date by which I will provide the accounting. You are entitled to one (1) accounting in any twelve (12) month period free of charge. For any subsequent request in a twelve (12) month period you will be charged \$.25 for each page copied and you will be expected to pay for the copies at the time you pick them up.

7. To receive a paper copy of this privacy notice even if you agreed to receive a copy electronically.
8. To pay out-of-pocket for a service and the right to require that I not submit PHI to your health plan.
9. To be notified of a breach of your unsecured PHI.
10. The right to complain to me and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

Linda W. McCune M.S., LPC-S
17770 Preston Rd. Suite D
Dallas, Texas 75252
972.824.2121

To file a written complaint with the federal government, please use the following contact information:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201
Toll Free Phone: 1.877.696.6775

You may submit your complaint to me in writing setting out the alleged violation. I am prohibited by law from retaliation against you in any way for filing a complaint with me or the Department of Health and Human Services.

11. If your records are maintained electronically, the right to receive a copy of your PHI in an electronic format and to direct in writing that a third party receive a copy of your PHI in an electronic format.

USES AND DISCLOSURES

It is my policy to protect the confidentiality of your PHI to the best of my ability and to the extent permitted by law. There are times however, when use or disclosure of your PHI is permitted or mandated by law even without your authorization.

Situations where I am not required to obtain your consent or authorization for use or disclosure of your PHI include the following circumstances:

- By me for treatment, payment, or health care operations as they relate to you.
For example: Information obtained by me will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. I will document in your record our work together and when appropriate I will provide a subsequent counselor or health care provider with copies of various reports that should assist him or her in treating you once we have terminated our therapeutic relationship.

For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedure, and supplies used.

- In the event of an emergency to any treatment provider who provides emergency treatment to you.
- To defend myself in a legal action or other proceeding brought by you against me.
- When required by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in an investigation to determine my compliance with the privacy rules.
- When required by law insofar as the use or disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law.

Examples:

To a public health authority or other government authority authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect.

If I reasonably believe an adult individual to be the victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence, to a governmental authority, including a social services agency authorized by law to receive such reports to the extent the disclosure is required by or authorized by law or you agree to the disclosure and I believe that in the exercise of my professional judgment disclosure is necessary to prevent serious harm to you or other potential victims. If I make such a report I am obligated to inform you unless I believe informing the adult individual will place the individual at risk or serious injury.

In the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding in response to:

___An order of a court or administrative tribunal so long as only the PHI expressly authorized by such order is disclosed.

___A subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process, that is not accompanied by an order of a court or administrative tribunal so long as reasonable efforts are made to give you notice that your PHI has been requested or reasonable efforts are made to secure a qualified protective order, by the person requesting the PHI.

__ Child custody cases and other legal proceedings in which your mental health or condition is an issue are the kinds of suits in which your PHI may be requested. In addition I may use your PHI in connection with a suit to collect fees for my services.

__ In compliance with a court order or court ordered warrant, or a subpoena or summons issued by a judicial officer, a grand jury subpoena or summons, a civil or an authorized investigative demand, or similar process authorized by law provided that the information sought is relevant and material to a legitimate law enforcement inquiry and the request is specific and limited in scope to the extent reasonably practicable in light of the purpose for which the information is sought and de-identified information could not reasonably be used.

__ To a health oversight agency for oversight activities authorized by law as they may relate to my practice (i.e., audits; civil, criminal, or administrative investigations, inspections, licensure, or disciplinary actions; civil, administrative, or criminal proceedings or actions).

__ To a coroner or medical examiner for the purpose of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or performing other duties as authorized by law.

__ To funeral directors consistent with applicable law as necessary to carry out their duties with respect to the decedent.

__ To the extent authorized by and the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

__ If 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 and the disclosure is made to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.

__ To a public health authority that is authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purposes of preventing or controlling a disease, injury, or disability, including, but not limited to, the reporting of disease, injury, vital events such as birth, death, and the conduct of public surveillance, public health investigations, and public health interventions.

__ To a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be at risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition, if the covered entity or public health authority is authorized by law to notify such persons as necessary in the conduct of a public health intervention or investigation.

__ To a public health authority or other appropriate governmental authority authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect.

__ To a law enforcement official if I believe in good faith that the PHI constitutes evidence of criminal conduct that occurs on my premises.

__ Using my best judgment, to a family member, other relative or close personal friend, or any other person you identify, I may disclose PHI that is relevant to that person's involvement in your care or payment related to your care.

__ To authorized federal officials for the conduct of lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by the National Security Act and implementing authority.

__ To Business Associates under a written agreement requiring Business Associates to protect the information. Business Associates are entities that assist with or conduct activities on my behalf including individuals or organizations that provide legal, accounting, administrative, and similar functions.

__ To family members and others involved in your care prior to your death, unless doing so would be inconsistent with any prior expressed preferences you have made known to me, but limited to PHI relevant to the family member or other person's involvement in your health care or payment.

I may contact you with appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

If you have any questions and would like additional information you should bring this to my attention at the first opportunity. I am the designated Privacy Officer (Linda W. McCune LPC-S) for my practice and will be glad to respond to your questions or request for information (972.824.2121).