

**HIPAA Notice of Practices
to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information**

Janice M. Coco, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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

I. Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations

I may use or disclose your *protected health information (PHI)*, for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes with your consent.

To help clarify these terms, here are some definitions:

- “*PHI*” refers to individually identifiable health information. PHI includes any identifiable health information received or created by my office or me.
- “*Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations*”
 - *Treatment* is when I provide, coordinate or manage your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when I consult with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another licensed clinical social worker or psychologist.
 - *Payment* is when I obtain reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when I disclose your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage.
 - *Health Care Operations* are activities that relate to the performance and operation of my practice. Examples of health care operations are quality assessment and improvement activities, business-related matters such as audits and administrative services, and case management and care coordination.
- “*Use*” applies only to activities within my (office, clinic, practice group, etc.) such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*Disclosure*” applies to activities outside of my (office, clinic, practice group, etc.), such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.
- “*Health Information*” is information in any form that relates to any past, present, or future health of an individual.

II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization

I may use or disclose confidential information (including but not limited to PHI) for purposes of treatment, payment, and healthcare operations when your written informed consent is obtained. I may use or disclose PHI for purposes outside of treatment, payment, and health care operations when your appropriate written authorization is obtained. An “*authorization*” is written permission above and beyond the general consent that permits only specific disclosures. In those instances when I am asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes.

“*Psychotherapy notes*” are notes I have made about our conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, which I have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

You may revoke all such authorizations (of PHI or psychotherapy notes) at any time, provided each revocation is in writing. You may not revoke an authorization to the extent that (1) I have relied on that authorization; or (2) if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, and the law provides the insurer the right to contest the claim under the policy.

III. Uses and Disclosures with Neither Consent nor Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Child Abuse:** If I have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom I have had contact has been abused I may be required to report the abuse. Additionally, if I have reasonable cause to believe that an adult with whom I have had contact has abused a child, I may be required to report the abuse. In any child abuse investigation, I may be compelled to turn over PHI. Regardless of whether I am required to disclose PHI or to release documents, I also have an ethical obligation to prevent harm to my clients and others. I will use my professional judgment to determine whether it is appropriate to disclose PHI to prevent harm.
- **Mentally Ill or Developmentally Disabled Adults:** If I have reasonable cause to believe that a mentally ill or developmentally disabled adult, who receives services from a community program or facility has been abused, I may be required to report the abuse. Additionally, if I have reasonable cause to believe that any person with whom I come into contact has abused a mentally ill or developmentally disabled adult, I may be required to report the abuse. Regardless of whether I am required to disclose PHI or to release documents, I also have an ethical obligation to prevent harm to my clients and others. I will use my professional judgment to determine whether it is appropriate to disclose PHI to prevent harm.
- **Other abuse:** I may have an ethical obligation to disclose your PHI to prevent harm to you or others.
- **Health Oversight:** The Oregon State Board of Social Work Examiners may subpoena relevant records from me should I be the subject of a complaint.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** Your PHI may become subject to disclosure if any of the following occur:
 - If you become involved in a lawsuit, and your mental or emotional condition is an element of your claim, or a court orders your PHI to be released, or orders your mental evaluation.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** I may disclose confidential information when I judge that disclosure is necessary to protect against a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm being inflicted by you on yourself or another person. I must limit disclosure of the otherwise confidential information to only those persons and only that content which would be consistent with the standards of the profession in addressing such problems.
- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, this constitutes authorization for me to release your relevant mental health records to involved parties and officials. This would include a past history of complaints or treatment of a condition similar to that involved in the worker's compensation claim.

IV. Client's Rights and Licensed Clinical Social Worker's Duties

Client's Rights:

- *Right to Request Restrictions* – You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information about you. However, I am not required to agree to a restriction you request.
- *Right to Receive Confidential Communications by Alternative Means and at Alternative Locations* – You have the right to request and receive confidential communications of PHI by alternative means and at alternative locations. (For example, you may not want a family member to know that you are seeing me. Upon your request, I will send your bills to another address.)
- *Right to Inspect and Copy* – You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) of PHI and psychotherapy notes in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long

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as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your access to PHI under certain circumstances, but in some cases, you may have this decision reviewed. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the request and denial process.

- *Right to Amend* – You have the right to request an amendment of PHI for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. I may deny your request. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the amendment process.
- *Right to an Accounting* – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI for which you have neither provided consent nor authorization (as described in Section III of this Notice). On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the accounting process.
- *Right to a Paper Copy* – You have the right to obtain a paper copy of the notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Clinical Social Worker's Duties:

- I am required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.
- I reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless I notify you of such changes, however, I am required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- If I revise my policies and procedures, I will post a summary of the current notice in the office with its effective date clearly shown at the top. You are entitled to a copy of the notice currently in effect. I will contact you only via means by which you give me permission (phone numbers, email) and I may occasionally call you to remind you of appointment times at your designated number or email.

V. Complaints

If you are concerned that I have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision I made about access to your records, you may file a complaint with me at my office.

You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2201 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900, Seattle, WA 98121-1831 (Phone 206-615-2287, FAX 206-615-2297, TDD 206-615-2296). You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

VI. Health Information Security

I require my answering service and billing service to follow the same HIPAA privacy, security policies and procedures regarding access to your PHI as I do. I maintain physical, administrative and technical security measures to safeguard your PHI.

VII. Uses and Disclosures Involving Personal Representatives

A. Personal Representatives of Adults and Emancipated Minors

Where an incapacitated patient has a guardian or legal representative with authority to make health care decisions for the patient, I must treat the guardian or legal representative as the patient with respect to PHI that is relevant to and consistent with that individual's representation as authorized by state law (e.g., letting the guardian or legal representative exercise the privacy rights a patient would normally exercise, such as receiving notice, consenting to disclosure, having access to their records, and the right to amend). If I have a reasonable belief that a guardian/legal representative of the patient may subject the patient to abuse or neglect or endanger the patient in any way, or if in my professional judgment it is not in the patient's best interest to allow the guardian or legal

representative to exercise the patient's privacy rights, I may elect not to treat the guardian or legal representative as the patient.

B. Personal Representatives of Unemancipated Minors

When I am treating a child or ward, I must treat the child or ward's parent or legal guardian as the client with respect to PHI relevant to that representation (e.g., letting the parent or guardian exercise the privacy rights that a patient would normally exercise, e.g., receiving notice, consenting to disclosure, having access to their records and the right to amend).

A minor 14 years of age or older may obtain from me, without parental knowledge or consent, outpatient diagnosis or treatment of a mental or emotional disorder. However, I shall have the parents of the minor involved before the end of treatment unless the parents refuse or unless there are clear clinical indications to the contrary, for example, if the parent has sexually abused the minor. While I may treat the minor without parental knowledge or consent as indicated above, under certain circumstances I may advise the parent(s) or legal guardian of any minor described above of the diagnosis or treatment whenever the disclosure is clinically appropriate and will serve the best interests of the minor's treatment because the minor's condition has deteriorated or the risk of a suicide attempt has become such that inpatient treatment is necessary, or the minor's condition requires detoxification in a residential or acute care facility,

I shall not treat the parent or guardian as the patient when the parent or guardian has specifically agreed to a confidentiality agreement between the minor and the psychologist. I may elect not to treat a parent or legal guardian as the patient if I have a reasonable belief that the parent or legal guardian has or may subject the minor to abuse or neglect or could endanger the minor or if in my professional judgment it is not in the minor's best interest to let the parent or legal guardian exercise the minor's privacy rights.

C. Personal Representatives of Deceased Patients

I must treat the personal representative of a deceased patient as the patient with respect to PHI that is relevant to the representative's representation (letting the personal representative exercise the privacy rights that a patient would normally exercise, e.g., receiving notice, consenting to disclosure, having access to records and the right to amend). Exceptions to this guideline are if I have a reasonable belief that the personal representative has subjected the patient to abuse or neglect and in my professional judgment it is not in the patients' best interest to let the personal representative exercise the patient's privacy rights.

D. Verification of Authority of Personal Representatives

In sections "A," "B," and "C" above, I must verify that the person claiming to be the patient's legal representative has the legal authority to represent the patient and verify the scope of his/her authority.

Effective Date

This notice will go into effect on June 1, 2013. I reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new provisions effective for all PHI that I maintain. I will provide you with a revised notice when information is requested.