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Notice of HIPAA Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information

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 read 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:

- A. PHI refers to information in your health record that could identify you.
- B. Treatment refers to my providing, coordinating, or managing your health care and other services related to your health care, such as my consulting with your family physician or the psychiatrist who is prescribing your medication.
- C. Payment refers to my obtaining reimbursement for your health care, including my disclosing your PHI to your health insurer to obtain reimbursement for your health care or to determine eligibility or coverage.
- D. Health Care Operations are activities that relate to the performance and operation of my practice. Included in these activities are quality assessment and improvement of my practice, business-related matters such as audits and administrative services, and case management and care coordination.
- E. Use applies only to activities within my office, such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- F. Disclosure applies to activities outside of my office, such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.

II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization

I may use or disclose PHI for purposes outside of treatment, payment, or health care operations when your appropriate 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 or health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing our Psychotherapy Notes, i.e., those notes I have made about our conversation during a private, conjoint, or family counseling session, and phone conversations, which I have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than your PHI.

You may revoke all such authorizations (regarding 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, 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 your PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- A. Child Abuse – If I have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, I must report this suspicion to the appropriate authorities as required by law.
- B. Adult and Domestic Abuse – If I have reasonable cause to suspect you have been criminally abused, I must report this suspicion to the appropriate authorities as required by law.
- C. Health Oversight Activities – If I receive a subpoena or other lawful request from the Department of Health or the Michigan Board of Social Work, I must disclose the relevant PHI pursuant to that subpoena or lawful request.
- D. Judicial and Administrative Proceedings-If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your diagnosis and treatment or the records thereof, such information is privileged under

State law, and I will not release information without your written authorization or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated by a third party or where the evaluation is court-ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.

- E. Serious threat to Health or Safety – If you communicate to me a threat of physical violence against a reasonably identifiable third person and you have the apparent intent and ability to carry out that threat in the foreseeable future, I may disclose relevant PHI and take the reasonable steps permitted by law to prevent the threatened harm from occurring. If I believe that there is an imminent risk that you will inflict serious physical harm on yourself I may disclose information in order to protect you.
- F. Worker’s Compensation – I may disclose PHI regarding you as authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker’s compensation or other similar programs established by law that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness without regard to fault.

IV. Patient’s Rights and Social Worker’s Duties

Patient’s Rights

- A. Right to Request Restrictions – You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of PHI. However, I am not required to agree to a restriction you request.
- B. 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 alternate locations. For example, you may not want a family member to know that you are seeing me. On your request, I will send your bills to another address, or contact you only at a certain phone number specified by you.
- C. Right to Inspect and Copy – You have the right to inspect and/or obtain a copy of PHI in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long 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.
- D. 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.

- E. Right to an Accounting – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI. On your request, I will discuss with you the details of the accounting process.
- F. 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.

Social Worker's Duties:

- A. 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.
- B. I reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless I notify of you such changes however, I am required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- C. If I revise my policies and procedures, I will present you with a written copy of these revisions either in person or by mail.

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 contact me at (734) 975-6888.

You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. I can provide you with the address upon request.

Effective Date, Restrictions, and Changes to Privacy Policy

This notice will go into effect on April 14, 2003.

I reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all PHI that I maintain. I will provide you with a revised notice in person or by mail.