

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

This notice describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of protected health information, to provide individuals with notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information, and to notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured protected health information. We must follow the privacy practices that are described in this Notice while it is in effect. This Notice takes effect November 1, 2022, and will remain in effect until replaced.

We reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time, provided such changes are permitted by applicable law, and to make new Notice provisions effective for all protected health information that we maintain. When we make a significant change in our privacy practices, we will change this Notice and post the new Notice clearly and prominently at our practice location, and we will provide copies of our new Notice upon request.

You may request a copy of our Notice at any time. For more information about our privacy practices, or for additional copies of this Notice, please contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice.

Examples of Using or Disclosing Protected Health Information:

We may use and disclose your protected health information (PHI) for different purposes, including treatment, payment and healthcare operations. For each of these categories, we have provided a description and an example. Some information, such as HIV status, genetic information, alcohol and/or substance abuse records and mental health records may be entitled to special confidentiality protections under applicable state or federal law. We will abide by these special protections as they pertain to applicable cases involving these types of records.

Treatment. We may use and disclose your PHI for your treatment. For example, we may disclose your health information to a specialist also providing treatment to you.

Payment. We may use and disclose your PHI to obtain reimbursement for the treatment and services you receive from us or another entity involved with your care. Payment activities include billing, collections, claims management and determinations of eligibility and coverage to obtain payment

from you, an insurance company or another third party. For example, we may send claims to your health plan containing a mental health diagnosis.

Healthcare Operations. We may use and disclose your PHI in connection with our healthcare operations. For example, healthcare operations include quality assessment and improvement activities, conducting training programs and licensing activities.

Individuals Involved in your Care or Payment for your Care. We may disclose your PHI to your family or friends or any other individual identified by you when they are involved in your care or in the payment for your care. Additionally, we may disclose information about you to a patient representative. If a person has the authority by law to make health care decisions for you, we will treat that patient representative the same way we would treat you with respect to your health information.

Disaster Relief. We may use or disclose your PHI to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Required by Law. We may use or disclose your PHI when we are required to do so by law. Under Vermont law, this includes abuse, assault, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults or children, firearm related injuries, communicable diseases, fetal deaths, cancer, lead poisoning, blood alcohol reporting, duty to warn of harm cases. Any disclosure complies with the law and is limited to the requirements of the law.

Public Health Activities. We may disclose PHI to public health activities, including disclosures to: prevent or control disease, injury, or disability; report child abuse or neglect; report reactions to medications or problems with products or devices; notification of a recall, repair or replacement of products or devices; notification of exposure to a disease or condition; or, notification to appropriate government authority if we believe the patient has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

National Security. We may disclose to military authorities the PHI of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials PHI required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence and other national security activities. We may disclose to a correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody the PHI of an inmate or patient.

Secretary of HHS. We will disclose your PHI to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services when required to investigate or determine compliance with HIPPA.

Worker's Compensation. We may disclose your PHI to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to worker's compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Law Enforcement. We may disclose your PHI for law enforcement purposes as permitted by HIPPA, as required by law, or in response to a subpoena or court order.

Health Oversight Activities. We may disclose your PHI to an oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities may include audits, investigations, inspections and credentialing, as necessary for licensure and for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs and compliance with civil rights laws.

Judicial and Administrative Proceedings. If you are involved in a lawsuit, or a dispute, we may disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose your PHI in response to a subpoena, discovery request or other lawful process instituted by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made either by the requesting party or us, to tell you about the requestor to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

Research. We may disclose your PHI to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board or privacy board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your information.

Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors. We may release your PHI to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may also disclose PHI to funeral directors consistent with applicable law to enable them to carry out their duties.

Other Uses & Disclosures of PHI. Your authorization is required, with a few exceptions, for disclosure of psychotherapy notes, use or disclosure of PHI for fundraising, marketing and for the sale of PHI. We will also obtain your written authorization before using or disclosing your PHI for purposes other than those provided for in this Notice (or otherwise permitted or required by law). You may revoke an authorization in writing at any time. Upon receipt of the written revocation, we will stop using or disclosing your PHI, except to the extent that we have already taken action in reliance on the authorization.

Your Health Information Rights:

Access. You have the right to look at or get copies of your health information, with limited exceptions. You must make the request in writing. You may obtain a form to request access by using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. If you request information that we maintain on paper, we may provide photocopies. If you request information that we maintain electronically, you have the right to an electronic copy. We will use the form and format you request if readily producible. We will charge you a reasonable cost-based fee for the copying, supplies and postage if you want copies mailed to you. Contact us using the information listed at the end of this Notice for an explanation of

our fee structure. If you are denied a request for access, you have the right to have the denial reviewed in accordance with the requirements of applicable law.

Disclosure Accounting. With the exception of certain disclosures, you have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of your PHI in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. To request an accounting of disclosures of your PHI, you must submit your request in writing to the Privacy Official. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to the additional requests.

Right to Request a Restriction. You have the right to request additional restrictions on our use or disclosure of your PHI by submitting a written request to the Privacy official. Your written request must include (1) what information you want to limit, (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure or both, and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply. We are not required to agree to your request except in the case where the disclosure is to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or healthcare operations, and the information pertains solely to a healthcare item or service for which you, or a person on your behalf (other than the health plan), has paid our practice in full.

Alternative Communication. You have the right to request that we communicate with you about your PHI by alternative means or at alternative locations. You must make your request in writing. Your request must specify the alternative means or location and provide a satisfactory explanation of how payments will be handled under the alternative means or location you request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. However, if we are unable to contact you using the ways or locations you have requested, we may contact you using the information we have.

Amendment. You have the right to request that we amend your PHI. Your request must be in writing and it must explain why the information should be amended. We may deny your request under certain circumstances. If we agree to your request, we will amend your record(s) and notify you of such. If we deny your request for an amendment, we will provide you with a written explanation of why we denied it and explain your rights.

Right to Notification of a Breach. You will receive notifications of breaches of your unsecured PHI as required by law.

Electronic Notice. You may receive a paper copy of this Notice upon request, even if you have agreed to receive this Notice electronically on our website or by electronic mail.

Questions and Complaints:

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, disagree with a decision we made about access to your PHI, are responding to a request you made to amend or restrict the use or disclosure of your PHI, or need us to communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may submit a written statement using the contact information listed at the end of this

Notice. You also may submit a written complaint to the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We will provide you with the address to file your complaint with the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services upon request. We support your right to privacy of your protected health information and will not retaliate in any way if you choose to file a complaint.

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

Green State Counseling

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Telephone: (802) 881 - 4628