

Pathways: Counseling & Consulting Services, Inc.
9521 Shellie Road, Suite#15
Jacksonville, Fl. 32257

Notice of Privacy Practices

As required by the privacy regulations created as a result of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA)

This notice describes how health information about you (as a patient of this practice) may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to your individually identifiable health information.

Please review this notice carefully.

- A. **Our commitment to your privacy:** Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your individually identifiable health information (also called protected health information, or PHI). We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies you and provide you with this notice of our legal duties and the privacy practices concerning your PHI. By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of this Notice.

We realize that these laws are complicated, but we must provide you with the following important information:

- How we may use and disclose your PHI.
- Your privacy rights in your PHI.
- Our obligations concerning the use and disclosure of your PHI.

We may use and disclose your PHI in the following ways:

1. **Treatment.** Our practice may use your PHI to treat you.
2. **Payment.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for the services and items you may receive from us. We may contact your health insurer to certify that you are eligible for benefits (and for what range of benefits), and we may provide your insurer with details regarding your treatment to determine if your insurer will cover, or pay for, your treatment. We also may use and disclose your PHI to obtain payment from third parties that may be responsible for such costs, such as family members. Also, we may use your PHI to bill you directly for services and items. We may disclose your PHI to other health care providers and entities to assist in their billing and collection efforts.
3. **Appointment reminders.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to contact you and remind you of an appointment.
4. **Treatment options.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of potential treatment options or alternatives.
5. **Health-related benefits and services.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI to inform you of health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.
6. **Release of information to family/friends.** Our practice may release your PHI to a friend or family member that is involved in your care, or who assists in taking care of you. For example, a parent or guardian may ask that a baby sitter take their child to the pediatrician's office for treatment of a cold. In this example, the baby sitter may have access to the child's medical information.
7. **Disclosures required by law.** Our practice will use and disclose your PHI when we are required to do so by federal, state or local law.

Use and disclosure of your PHI in certain special circumstances:

1. **Public health risks.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to public health authorities that are authorized by law to collect information for the purpose of:
 - Maintaining vital records, such as births and deaths.
 - Reporting child abuse or neglect.
 - Preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.
 - Notifying a person regarding potential exposure to a communicable disease.
 - Notifying a person regarding a potential risk for spreading or contracting a disease or condition.
 - Reporting reactions to drugs or problems with products or devices.
 - Notifying individuals if a product or device they may be using has been recalled.
 - Notifying appropriate government agency (ies) and authority (ies) regarding the potential abuse or neglect of an adult patient (including domestic violence); however, we will only disclose this information if the patient agrees or we are required or authorized by law to disclose this information.
 - Notifying your employer under limited circumstances related primarily to workplace injury or illness or medical surveillance.
2. **Health oversight activities.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. Oversight activities can include investigations, inspections, audits, surveys, licensure and disciplinary actions;

civil, administrative and criminal procedures or actions; or other activities necessary for the government to monitor government programs, compliance with civil rights laws and the health care system in general.

3. **Lawsuits and similar proceedings.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI in response to a court or administrative order, if you are involved in a lawsuit or similar proceeding. We also may disclose your PHI in response to a discovery request, subpoena or other lawful process by another party involved in the dispute, but only if we have made an effort to inform you of the request or to obtain an order protecting the information the party has requested.
4. **Law enforcement.** We may release PHI if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:
 - Regarding a crime victim in certain situations, if we are unable to obtain the person's agreement.
 - Concerning a death we believe has resulted from criminal conduct.
 - Regarding criminal conduct at our offices.
 - In response to a warrant, summons, court order, subpoena or similar legal process.
 - To identify/locate a suspect, material witness, fugitive or missing person.
 - In an emergency, to report a crime (including the location or victim(s) of the crime, or the description, identity or location of a perpetrator).
5. **Serious threats to health or safety.** Our practice may use and disclose your PHI when necessary to reduce or prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. Under these circumstances, we will only make disclosures to a person or organization able to help prevent the threat.
6. **Military.** Our practice may disclose your PHI if you are a member of U.S. or foreign military forces (including veterans) and if required by the appropriate authorities.
7. **National Security.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to federal officials for intelligence and national security activities authorized by law. We also may disclose your PHI to federal and national security activities authorized by law. We also may disclose your PHI to federal officials in order to protect the president, other officials or foreign heads of state, or to conduct investigations.
8. **Inmates.** Our practice may disclose your PHI to correctional institutions or law enforcement officials if you are an inmate or under the custody of a law enforcement official. Disclosure for these purposes would be necessary: (a) for the institution to provide health care services to you, (b) for the safety and security of the institution, and/or (c) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of other individuals.
9. **Workers' compensation.** Our practice may release your PHI for workers' compensation and similar programs.

Your rights regarding your PHI:

Confidential communications. You have the right to request that our practice communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular manner or at a certain location. For instance, you may ask that we contact you at home, rather than work. In order to request a type of confidential communication, you must make a written request specifying the requested method of contact, or the location where you wish to be contacted. Our practice will accommodate reasonable requests. You do not need to give a reason for your request.

1. **Requesting restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI treatment, payment or health care operations. Additionally, you have the right to request that we restrict our disclosure of your PHI to only certain individuals involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. We are not required to agree to your request; however, if we do agree, we are bound by our agreement except when otherwise required by law, in emergencies or when the information is necessary to treat you. In order to request a restriction in our use or disclosure of your PHI, you must make your request in writing. Your request must describe in a clear and concise fashion:
 - **The information you wish restricted.**
 - **Whether you are requesting to limit our practice's use, disclosure or both.**
 - **To whom you want the limits to apply.**
2. **Inspection and copies.** You have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of the PHI that may be used to make decisions about you, including patient medical records and billing records, but not including psychotherapy notes. You must submit your request in writing in order to inspect and/or obtain a copy of your PHI. Our practice may charge a reasonable fee for the costs of copying, mailing, labor and supplies associated with your request. Our practice may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain limited circumstances; however, you may request a review of our denial. Another licensed health care professional chosen by us will conduct reviews.
3. **Amendment.** You may ask us to amend your health information, for as long as the information is kept by or for our practice. You must provide us with a reason that supports your request for amendment. Our practice will deny your request if you fail to submit your request (and the reason supporting your request) in writing. Also, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that is in our opinion: (a) accurate and complete; (b) not part of the PHI kept by or for the practice; (c) not part of the PHI which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or (d) not created by our practice, unless the individual or entity that created the information is not available to amend the information.
4. **Accounting of disclosures.** All of our patients have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures". You must submit your request in writing. All requests for an "accounting of disclosures" must state a time period, which may not be longer than six (6) years from the date of disclosure and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. The first

list you request within a 12-month period of free of charge, but our practice may charge you for additional lists within the same 12-month period. Our practice will notify you of the costs involved with additional requests, and you may withdraw your request before you incur any costs.

5. **Right to a paper copy of this notice.** You are entitled to receive a paper copy of our notice of privacy practices.
6. **Right to file a complaint.** If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our practice or with the the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in writing. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.
7. **Right to provide an authorization for other uses and disclosures.** Our practice will obtain your written authorization for uses and disclosures that are not identified by this notice or permitted by applicable law. Any authorization you provide to us regarding the use and disclosure of your PHI may be revoked at any time in writing. After you revoke your authorization, we will no longer use or disclose your PHI for the reasons described in the authorization. Please note: we are required to retain records of your care.

I have reviewed the Notice of Privacy Practices above: _____

Date: _____

Signature of patient/guardian