

Change of Heart Counseling and Consultation Services, Inc

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Notice of Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Protected Health Information (HIPPA Statement)

This notice describes how psychological and medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can obtain 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 information in your health record that could identify you.
- “*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 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 practice, such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*Disclosure*” applies to activities outside of my practice, 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 obtain an authorization before releasing your Psychotherapy Notes. “*Psychotherapy Notes*” are notes I have made about our conversations during counseling sessions, assessments, phone calls, emails or other communications. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

You may revoke all such authorizations at any time, provided each revocation is in writing. You may not revoke an authorization to the extent that I have relied on a prior authorization, or if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, since laws provide the insurer the right to contest claims 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/Elder Abuse* – (1) If I have reason to suspect, on the basis of my professional judgment, that a child is or has been abused, I am required to report my suspicions to the authority or government agency vested to conduct child abuse investigations. I am required to make such reports even if I do not see the child in my professional capacity. (2) I am mandated to report suspected child abuse if anyone 14 or older tells me that s/he committed child abuse, even if the victim is no longer in danger. (3) I am also mandated to report suspected child abuse if anyone tells me that s/he knows of any child who is currently being abused.
- *Adult and Domestic Abuse* – If I know or have reason to believe that a dependent adult has been abused and/or is threatened with imminent abuse, I must promptly report the matter to the appropriate authority.
- *Health Oversight Activities* – If the Pennsylvania Board of Psychology is investigating my competency, license or practice, I may be required to disclose protected health information regarding you.
- *Judicial and Administrative Proceedings* – If you are involved in a legal proceeding and a request is made for information about psychology services provided to you and/or the records thereof, such information is privileged under Pennsylvania law, and I will not release information without the written authorization of you or your legally appointed representative or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party, when you have waived the privilege, or when the evaluation is court ordered. I will inform you in advance if I believe this is the case.
- *Serious Threat to Health or Safety* – I may disclose protected health information regarding you when it appears there is clear and imminent danger to you or another individual or to society, and then only to appropriate professional workers or public authorities. If you are at risk, I may also contact family members or others who could assist in providing protection.
- *Worker's Compensation* – If you have filed a worker's compensation claim, I may be required to disclose PHI about any services I have provided to you that are relevant to the claimed injury.

IV. Patient's Rights and Psychologist's Duties

Patient's Rights:

- *Right to Request Restrictions* – You have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information. 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 and other communications to another address.)

- *Right to Inspect and Copy* – You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) 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. Upon 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. Upon 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 made to others. Upon 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 this notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Psychologist'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 (this notice).
- 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 provide you with a revised notice.

V. Complaints

If at any time you are concerned that I have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision I have made about access to your records, you may contact me or the professional licensing division of the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors.

VI. Effective Date, Restrictions, and Changes to Privacy Policy

This notice is effective as of July 1, 2013. 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.