

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES FOR PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

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

If you consent, Rachel D. Merlin, LMFT, C.Ht., is permitted by federal privacy laws to make uses and disclosures of your health information for purposes of treatment, payment, and health care operations. Protected health information is the information we create and obtain in providing services to you. Such information may include documenting your symptoms, examination, test results, diagnosis, treatment, and applying for future care or treatment. It also includes billing documents for those services.

Examples of uses of your health information for treatment purposes are:

- An employee of the provider's office obtains treatment information about you and records it in a health record.
- During the course of your treatment, the provider determines that he/she will need to consult with another specialist in the area. He/she will share the information with such specialists and obtain his/her input.

Examples of uses of your health information for payment purposes:

- We may submit a request for payment to your health insurance company. The health insurance company may request information from us regarding the services rendered to you. We will provide that information to them about you and the care you receive from us.
- We may verify insurance coverage prior to your first appointment and obtain prior authorization and pre-certification when required to do so by your policy coverage.

An example of use of your health information for health care operations:

- The state licensing authority may want to review records to assure that we have acted consistent with state law regarding your care. In doing so, it may want to take a sampling that includes a review of your chart. At the licensing authority's request, we will provide it with a copy of your chart.

Your health information rights:

The health record and billing records we maintain are the physical property of this office. The information in it, however, belongs to you. You have the right to:

- Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your protected health information by delivering the request in writing to our office. We are not required to grant the request, but we will comply with any reasonable request made.
- Obtain a paper copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information by requesting it from us.
- Request that you be allowed to inspect and receive a copy of your health record and billing record. You may exercise this right by delivering the request in writing to our office using the form we provide to you upon request.
- File a statement of disagreement if your amendment is denied, and require that the request for amendment and any denial be attached in all future disclosures of your protected health information.
- Appeal a denial of access to your protected health information except in certain circumstances.
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information as required to be maintained by law by delivering a written request to our office using the form we provide to you upon request. The accounting will not include internal uses of information for treatment, payment, operations,

- or disclosures made to you or made at your request.
- Request that communication of your health information be made by alternative means or at an alternative location by delivering the request in writing to our office using the form we provide to you upon request.
- Revoke any authorizations that you made previously to use or disclose information except to the extent information or action has already been taken by delivering a written revocation to our office.

You have the right to review this Notice before signing the consent authorizing use and disclosure of your protected health information for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes.

If you want to exercise any of the above rights, please contact: Rachel D. Merlin, LMFT, C.Ht at 95 Merrick Way, Suite 420, Coral Gables, FL 33134, Telephone (305) 814-5375 in person, or in writing, during normal business hours. She will provide you with assistance on the steps to take to exercise your rights. The Secretary of Health and Human Services may also be contacted.

Our Responsibilities

Rachel D. Merlin, LMFT, C.Ht. is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information as required by law
- Provide you with a notice as to our duties and privacy practices with respect to the information we collect and maintain about you
- Abide by the terms of this Notice
- Notify you if we cannot accommodate a requested restriction or request
- Accommodate your reasonable requests regarding methods to communicate health information to you

We reserve the right to amend, change, or eliminate provisions in our privacy practices and access practices and to enact provisions regarding the protected health information we maintain. If our information practices change, we will amend our Notice to reflect such changes. You are entitled to receive a revised copy of the Notice by calling or requesting a copy of our Notice or by visiting the office to obtain a copy.

To Request Information or File a Complaint

If you have questions, would like additional information, or want to report a problem regarding the handling of your information, you may contact the following person:

Rachel D. Merlin, LMFT, C.Ht. 95 Merrick Way, Suite 420, Coral Gables, FL 33134 Telephone (305) 814-5375

Additionally, if you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a written complaint with our office by delivering the written complaint to the following person: Rachel D. Merlin, LMFT, C.Ht. 95 Merrick Way, Suite 420, Coral Gables, FL 33134

You may also file a complaint by mailing or e-mailing it to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

We cannot, and will not, require you to waive the right to file a complaint with the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a condition of receiving treatment from our office.

We cannot, and will not, retaliate against you for filing a complaint with the Secretary.

Other Uses and Disclosures

- We have Business Associates with whom we may share your protected health information.
 - For example, in preparing our annual financial statement, auditors may need to review samples of medical care given. We may disclose your health information to the accounting firm to prepare this material.
 - For example, during our routine health care operations, we may need to hire computer technicians and software vendors. We may disclose your health information to these vendors to maintain daily functioning in our health care operations.

Notification

Unless you object, we may use or disclose your protected health information to notify, or assist in notifying, a family member, personal representative, or other persons responsible for your care, about your location, your general condition, or your death.

Communication with Family

Using our best judgment, we may disclose to a family member, other relative, close personal friends, or any other person you identify, health information relevant to that person's involvement in your care or in payment for your care if you do not object or in an emergency.

Disaster Relief

We may use and disclose your protected health information to assist in disaster relief efforts.

Funeral Directors/Coroners

We may disclose your protected health information to funeral directors or coroners consistent with applicable law to allow them to carry out their duties.

Marketing

We may contact you to provide you with appointment reminders, with information about treatment alternatives, or with information about other health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

Fundraising

We may contact you as a part of a fundraising effort.

Workers Compensation

If you are seeking compensation through Workers Compensation, we may disclose your protected health information to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to Workers Compensation.

Public Health

As required by law, we may disclose your protected health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

Abuse and Neglect

We may disclose your protected health information to public authorities as required by law to report abuse or neglect.

Correctional Institutions

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents there of your protected health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals.

Law Enforcement

We may disclose your protected health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law, such as when required by a court order, in cases involving felony prosecutions, or to the extent an individual is in the custody of law enforcement.

Health Oversight

Federal law allows us to release your protected health information to appropriate health oversight agencies or for health oversight activities.

Judicial/Administrative Proceedings

We may disclose your protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding as allowed or required by law, with your consent, or as directed by a proper court order or subpoena.

To avert a serious threat to health or safety, we may disclose your protected health information consistent with applicable law to prevent or lessen a serious, imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public.

For Specialized Governmental Functions

We may disclose your protected health information for specialized government functions as authorized by law such as to Armed Forces personnel, for national security purposes or to public assistance program personnel.

Other Uses

Other uses and disclosures in addition to those identified in this Notice will be made only as otherwise authorized by law or with your written authorization and you may revoke the authorization as previously stated.