

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

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU
MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET 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 clinician.
 - *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 office such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*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, and 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 and health care operations, I will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. I will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes. “*Psychotherapy notes*” are notes I have made about our conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, which I have kept separate from the rest of your medical record. These notes are given a greater degree of protection than PHI.

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

- **Child Abuse:** If I, in my professional capacity, have reasonable cause to believe that a minor child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him or her which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare (including sexual abuse), or from neglect, including malnutrition, I must immediately report such condition to the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.
- **Adult Abuse:** If I have reasonable cause to believe that an elderly person (age 60 or older) is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse (including financial exploitation), I must immediately make a

report to the Massachusetts Department of Elder Affairs. I must make a report to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission and/or other appropriate agencies, if I have reasonable cause to believe that a mentally or physically disabled person is suffering from or has died as a result of a reportable condition, which includes non-consensual sexual activity. I need not report abuse if you are a disabled person and you invoke the psychotherapist-patient privilege to maintain confidential communications.

- **Health Oversight:** The Board of Registration for my license as a health care provider has the power, when necessary, to subpoena relevant records should I be the focus of an inquiry.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your diagnosis and treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law and I will not release information without written authorization from you or your legally-appointed representative, or a court order. The privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court-ordered. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** If you communicate to me an explicit threat to kill or inflict serious bodily injury upon an identified person and you have the apparent intent and ability to carry out the threat, I must take reasonable precautions. Reasonable precautions may include warning the potential victim, notifying law enforcement, or arranging for your hospitalization. I must also do so if I know you have a history of physical violence and I believe there is a clear and present danger that you will attempt to kill or inflict bodily injury upon an identified person. Furthermore, if you present a clear and present danger to yourself and refuse to accept further appropriate treatment, and I have a reasonable basis to believe that you can be committed to a hospital, I must seek said commitment and may contact members of your family or other individuals if it would assist in protecting you.
- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a workers' compensation claim, your records relevant to that claim will not be confidential to entities such as your employer, the insurer and the Division of Worker's Compensation.

There may be additional disclosures of PHI that I am required or permitted by law to make without your consent or authorization, however the disclosures listed above are the most common.

Minors & Parents: Patients under 18 years old who are not emancipated and their parents should be aware that the law allows parents to examine their child's treatment records, unless I believe this review would be harmful to the patient and his/her treatment.

IV. Patient's Rights and Clinician'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 about you. 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 to another address.)
- *Right to Inspect and Copy* – You have the right to inspect or obtain a copy (or both) of PHI and psychotherapy notes 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.

- *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.
- *Right to an Accounting* – You generally have the right to receive an accounting of disclosures of PHI for which you have neither provided consent nor authorization (as described in Section III of this Notice). On 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 the notice from me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Clinician'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.
- 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 a revised notice, either electronically or as a hard copy, at our first contact following the effective date of the revised notice.

V. Questions and Complaints

If you have questions about this notice, disagree with a decision I make about access to your records, have other concerns about your privacy rights, or if you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you may contact me at:

Melissa Nauman, LICSW
Phone: 617-213-0728 • Email: MelissaNaumanLICSW@gmail.com

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 appropriate address upon request.

Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information

I am required by a federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), to make sure that your protected health information (PHI) is kept private. HIPAA also requires me to inform you of my privacy practices in writing. Federal law requires me to document that you received this notice. Please sign below so that this signed copy can be put in your record. Another copy is provided to you for your records.

PHI is information that alone, or in conjunction with other data that is collected from or about you, would allow you to be identified. This includes demographic information collected from you that relates to your past, present and future physical or mental health condition, the provision of health care to you, or payment for that care. This information (PHI), which goes into your record, includes information such as but not limited to, your history, the reasons you came to see me for treatment, a diagnosis or diagnoses, a treatment plan, progress notes, notes from telephone messages, emails you send me and that I send you, other written correspondence by you, records I get from others who have treated you, information about medications you take or have taken, physical conditions, testing you have done or diagnostic treatment purposes, legal information and billing and insurance information.

In order to provide treatment and collect payment for services, your PHI is used and disclosed in a number of different ways. For example, I use this information to plan your care and treatment, to discuss your treatment with other healthcare professionals who are treating you or to the professional who referred you to me, for billing purposes to your health insurance company, and for quality assurance purposes. There are a number of additional ways that the law permits your PHI to be used without your authorization. A detailed list of these additional means will be provided to you upon request or can be found by looking up information on line about HIPAA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Privacy Practices of Melissa Nauman, LICSW.

Name (Print)

Date

Name (Sign)

Date