



## **Notice of Privacy Practices**

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

### **1. Who we are...**

This notice describes the privacy practices of Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness (WVCW), including the psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, professional counselors, psychologists, social workers, practicum students, qualified mental health associates, and other persons ('we or us'). It applies to services furnished to you at any of our office locations or where a member of our staff interacts in a professional capacity with clients.

### **2. Our privacy obligations...**

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your health information (Protected Health Information or PHI) and to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your PHI. When we use or disclose your PHI, we are required to abide by the terms of this notice (or other notice in effect at the time of use or disclosure).

### **3. Permissible uses and disclosures without your written authorization...**

In certain situations, which we will describe in Section 4 below, we must obtain your written consent or your authorization in order to use and/or disclose your PHI. However, unless PHI is highly confidential information (as defined in Section 4B below) and the applicable law regulation such information imposes special restrictions on us, we may use and disclose PHI without your authorization for the following purposes:

- A. Treatment, Payment, and Healthcare Operations- We may use and disclose PHI, in order to treat you, obtain payment for services provided to you, and conduct our healthcare operations as detailed below:
  - Treatment: We use and disclose your PHI to provide treatment and other services to you -for example, to diagnose and treat your injury or illness. In addition, we may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services that may be of interest to you. We may also disclose PHI to other providers involved in your treatment.
  - Payment: We may use and disclose your PHI to obtain payment for services that we provide to you from Medicare, the Oregon Medicaid program or other governmental program that arranges or pays the cost of

some or all your healthcare. We will obtain your authorization to disclose PHI to your private health insurer, HMO, or other private payor.

- Healthcare Operations: We may use and disclose your PHI for our health care operations, which include internal administration and planning and various activities that improve the quality and cost effectiveness of the care that we deliver to you. For example, we may use PHI to evaluate the quality and competence of our treatment providers and case managers. We may disclose PHI to our Patient Relations Coordinator in order to resolve any complaints you may have and ensure that you have a comfortable visit with us.

B. Facility Directory- We do not maintain a facility directory.

C. Disclosure to Relatives, Close Friends, and Other Caregivers: We may disclose your PHI to a family member, other relative, a close friend, or other person identified by you when you present for, or otherwise available prior to, the disclosure, if we (1) obtain your agreement; (2) provide you with the opportunity to object to the disclosure and you do not object; (3) reasonably infer that you do not object to the disclosure.

- If you are not present, or the opportunity to agree or object to a use or disclosure cannot practically be provided because of your incapacity or an emergency circumstance, we may exercise our professional judgment to determine whether a disclosure is in your best interests. If we disclose information to a family member, other relative, or a close personal friend, we would disclose only information that we believe is directly relevant to the person's involvement with your healthcare payment related to your healthcare. We may also disclose your PHI in order to notify (or assist in notifying) such a person of your location, general condition, or death.

D. Public Health Activities: We may disclose your PHI for the following public health activities; (1) to report health information to public health authorities for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability; (2) to report child abuse and neglect to the Oregon Department of Human Services, Community Human Services, or other government authorities authorized by law to receive such reports; (3) to report information about products or services under jurisdiction of the US FOOD and Drug Administration; (4) to alert a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease or may otherwise be a risk of contracting or spreading a disease or condition; (5) to report information to your employer as required under laws addressing work-related illnesses and injuries or workplace medical surveillance.

E. Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence: If we reasonably believe you are a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence we may disclose your PHI to the Oregon Department of Human Services, Community Human Services, or other governmental authority, including Social Services or Protective Services agencies, authorized by law to receive reports of such abuse, neglect, or domestic violence.

- F. Health Oversight Activities: We may disclose your PHI to a health oversight agency that oversees the healthcare system and is charged with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the rules of government health programs such as Medicare or Medicaid.
- G. Judicial and Administrative Proceedings: We may disclose your PHI in the course of a judicial or administrative proceeding in response to a legal order or other lawful process. Further, unless specifically authorized by a court order, we may not use or disclose PHI identifying you as a recipient of substance abuse program services if the purpose is to initiate or substantiate any criminal charges against you or to conduct any investigation of you.
- H. Law Enforcement Officials: We may disclose your PHI to the police or other law enforcement officials as required or permitted by law or in compliance with a court order, a grand jury, or administrative subpoena.
- I. Decedents: We may disclose PHI to a coroner or medical examiner as authorized by law.
- J. Organ and Tissue Procurement: We may disclose your PHI to organizations that facilitate organ, eye, or tissue procurement, banking, or transplant.
- K. Research: We may disclose your PHI without your authorization if our Institutional Review Board/Privacy Board approves a waiver of authorization for disease and other requirements of Oregon Law are satisfied.
- L. Health and Safety: We may use or disclose your PHI to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's or the public health or safety.
- M. Specialized Governmental Functions: We may use and disclose your PHI to units of the government with special functions, such as the US Military or the US Department of State under certain circumstances.
- N. Workers Compensation: We may disclose your PHI as authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with state law relating to workers' compensation or other similar programs.
- O. As required by law: We may disclose your PHI when required to do so by any other law not already referred to in the preceding categories.

#### 4. **Uses and Disclosures Requiring your Written Authorization...**

For any purpose other than the ones described above in Section 3, we only may use or disclose your PHI when you give us your authorization on our authorization form.

- A. Private Payors: We must obtain your authorization to disclose PHI to your HMO, health insurer, or other private payor.
- B. Use and Disclosure of Your Highly Confidential Information: In addition, Federal and Oregon law impose special privacy protections for (Highly Confidential Information), which is Psychotherapy Notes and the subject of Protected Health Information that is related to: (1) treatment of a mental illness; (2) alcohol and drug abuse treatment program services; (3) child abuse and neglect; (4) sexual assault; (5) and genetic testing. In order for us to disclose your Highly Confidential Information for a purpose other than

those permitted by laws regulating Highly Confidential Information, we must obtain your authorization.

## 5. Your Rights Regarding Your Protected Health Information...

- A. Further Information: If you desire further information about your privacy rights, are concerned that we have violated your privacy rights, or disagree with a decision that we made about access to your PHI, you may contact your Privacy Office. You may also file written complaints with the Director, Office for Civil Rights of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Upon request, the Privacy Office will provide you with the correct address for the Director. We will not retaliate against you if you file a complaint with us or the Director.
- B. Rights to Request Additional Restrictions: You may request restrictions on our use and disclosure of your PHI; (1) for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations; (2) to individuals (such as a family member, other relative, close personal friend, or any other person identified by you) involved with your care or with payment related to your care; (3) to notify or assist in the notification of such individuals regarding your location and general condition. While we will consider all requests for additional restrictions carefully, we are not required to agree to a requested restriction. If you wish to request additional restrictions, please obtain and return a request form to our Privacy Office.
- C. Rights to Receive Confidential Communications: You may request, and we will accommodate, any reasonable written requests for you to receive your PHI by alternative means of communication or at alternative locations.
- D. Right to Revoke your Authorization: You may revoke your authorization(s), except to the extent that we have taken action in reliance on it, by delivering a written revocation statement to the Privacy Office identified below. A form of Written Revocation is available upon request from the Privacy Office.
- E. Right to Inspect and Copy Your Health Information: You may request access to your medical records file and billing records maintained by us in order to inspect and request copies of the records. Under limited circumstances, we may deny your access to a portion of your records. If you desire access to your records, please obtain and return a record request form to our Privacy Office. If you request copies, we will charge you \$0.25 for each page. We will also charge you our postage costs, if you request that we mail the copies to you. If you request a summary of your PHI, we will charge you \$50 per hour for each summary.
- F. Rights to Amend Your Records: You have the right to request that we amend Protected Health Information maintained in your medical file, or billing records. If you desire to amend your records, please obtain and return an amendment form to our Privacy Office. We will comply with your request unless we believe that this information that would be amended is accurate and complete or other special circumstances apply.

- G. Right to Receive an Accounting of Disclosures: Upon request, you may obtain an accounting of certain disclosures of your PHI made by us during any period of time prior to the date of your request provided such period doesn't exceed 6 years and does not apply to disclosures that occurred prior to April 14, 2006. If you request an accounting more than once during a 12 month period, we will charge you \$0.25 for each page of the accounting statement.
- H. Right to Receive Paper Copy of this Notice: Upon request, you may obtain a paper copy of the Notice, even if you have agreed to receive such notice electronically.

**6. Effective Date and Duration of this Notice...**

- A. Effective Date: This notice is effective on April 14, 2006.
- B. Right to Change Terms of this Notice: We may change the term of this Notice at any time. If we change this Notice, we may make the new notice terms effective for all Protected Health Information that we maintain, including any information created or received prior to issuing the new Notice. If we change this Notice, we will post the new Notice in waiting areas around WVCW. You may obtain any new Notice by contacting the Privacy Office.

**7. Privacy Office...**

- A. You may contact the Privacy Office at:

Privacy Office  
Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness  
606 Medical Parkway/P.O. Box 268  
Enterprise, Oregon 97828  
Phone: 541-426-4524  
Fax: 541-426-3035