

Summary of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Practices

The notice describes how clinical/medical information about you may be used and disclosed and you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

This is a summary of the longer notice that follows. Please read both the summary and actual notice.

HIPAA allows me to share your health information without your specific consent in order to:

- Facilitate your treatment
- Get paid by insurance companies
- Transcribe records

I may disclose your health information to the following entities:

- Insurance companies
- Other health care providers and therapists
- My billing office
- Law enforcement and Department of Social Services (DSS)

Note: I will NOT share your information with your family without your specific consent, unless someone's health is in immediate danger.

You have the right to:

- Request, discuss, and amend your records though your request may be denied. This decision will be discussed with you.
- Get a list of whom I share your health information with
- Ask me to limit the information I share
- Ask for a copy of my privacy notice
- Complain in writing to me if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

HIPAA Privacy Notice

Notice of Privacy Practices

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

What is this Notice and Why is it Important?

As of April 2003, a new federal law (HIPAA) went into effect. This law requires that health care practitioners create a notice of privacy practices for you to read. This notice tells you how I, Lyann Sugai, MFT (Pacific Counseling Partners of Hawaii, LLC), will protect your clinical/medical information, how I may use or disclose this information, and describes your rights. If you have any questions about this notice, please contact me at 808-391-6096.

Understanding Your Health Information

During each appointment, I record clinical information and store it in your file. Typically, this record includes a description of your symptoms, your clinical problems, your medical problems, a mental status exam, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care. This information, often referred to as your clinical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment
- Means of communication among the health professionals who contribute to your care
- Legal document of the care you receive
- Means by which you or a third-party payer (e.g. health insurance company) can verify that services you received were appropriately billed
- A tool with which I can assess and work to improve the care I provide

Your Health Information Rights

You have the following rights related to your clinical/medical record:

- *Obtain a copy of this notice.*
- *Authorization to use your health information.* Before I use or disclose your health information, other than as described below, I will obtain your written authorization, which you may revoke at any time to stop future use or disclosure.
- *Access to your health information.* You may request a copy of your clinical record from me in writing.
- *Change your health information.* If you believe the information in your record is inaccurate or incomplete, you may request that I correct or add information.
- *Request confidential communications.* You may request that when I communicate with you about your health information, I do so in a specific way (e.g. at a certain mail address or phone number). I will make every reasonable effort to agree to your request.
- *Accounting of disclosures.* You may request a list of disclosures of your health information that I have made for reasons other than treatment, payment, or health care operations.

My Responsibilities

- I am required by law to protect the privacy of your health information, to provide this notice about my privacy practices, and to abide by the terms of this notice.

- I reserve the right to change my policies and procedures for protecting health information. When I make a significant change in how I use or disclose your health information, I will also change this notice.
- Except for the purposes related to your treatment, to collect payment for my services, to perform necessary business functions, or when otherwise permitted or required by law, I will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization. You have the right to revoke your authorization at any time.

When Can I Legally Disclose Your Health Information Without Your Specific Consent?

- *In order to facilitate your clinical/medical treatment.* E.g. Your primary care physician or psychiatrist might call me to discuss your treatment, and in that situation I would disclose information about your diagnosis, your medications, and so on.
- *In order to collect payment for health care services that I provide.* E.g. In order to get paid for my services, I send a bill to you or your insurance company. If your insurance company is not managed care, then information released is usually limited to identifying information, diagnosis, dates of service, and types of services. If the insurance company is managed care, then information released can be more extensive-including symptoms, types of treatment interventions, treatment goals and plans, medications, functional status, progress, and prognosis. If you would not like your insurance company to know this information, you may choose to pay cash for my services instead of using your health insurance.
- *In order to protect people when patients are judged to be an imminent danger to themselves or others.* E.g. If you are considered to be a significant risk to kill yourself or others, I may report information to the police or potential victims in order to reduce that risk.

Will I Disclose Your Health Information to Family and Friends?

- While the new law allows such disclosures without your specific consent (as long as it contributes to your treatment), my office policy is that I will not share your clinical information with your family without a signed authorization from you. The EXCEPTION to this is if I believe you pose an immediate danger to yourself or someone else-in that case, I will do whatever is necessary, even if that means breaching confidentiality.

Less Common Situations in Which I Might Disclose Your Health Information

- **Law enforcement:** I may disclose your health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena, or court or administrative order. This includes any information requested by the Department of Social Services (DSS) related to cases of neglect or abuse of children or dependent adults.

For More Information or to Report a Concern.

If you have questions or would like additional information, you may contact me, Lyann Sugai, MFT (Pacific Counseling Partners of Hawaii, LLC), at any time at 808-391-6096. If you feel your privacy rights have been violated in any way, please let me know and I will take appropriate action.

You may also send a written complaint to:

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights,
Hubert H. Humphrey Building 200 Independence Avenue
S.W. Room 509 HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201