

# *Elizabeth Call, PsyD*

LICENSED CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

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## **Notice of Privacy Practices (HIPAA)**

This notice describes how health information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully. Protecting patient privacy is an important element of the trust between me and my patients, and an important legal and ethical obligation. I am deeply committed to protecting patients' rights to privacy, and to safeguarding patient information.

### **My Responsibilities:**

I am required by federal and state law to maintain the privacy of your health information. I am also required to give you this notice about my privacy practices, legal duties and your rights concerning your health information.

### **Uses and Disclosures of Health Information:**

The following are examples of the types of uses and disclosures of your health information that I am legally permitted to make.

Your health information may be used and disclosed as necessary for me to manage your treatment, obtain reimbursement for care provided to you, and to support the operation of my psychotherapy practice. There are also other circumstances outlined below in which I am either permitted or required to disclose your health information in accordance with applicable law.

1. **Treatment:** I may use your health information to provide and manage your health care. If I refer you for treatment, for example, to another clinician or hospital, I will provide that health care provider with the necessary information to diagnose or treat you. In addition, I may share your health information with other health care providers who consult with me about your care. I believe this is critical to provide the best health care and is necessary given the complexities of various illnesses and health conditions. Massachusetts law requires that I obtain your specific written authorization for the use or disclosure of the above information.
2. **Payment:** I may use and disclose your health information, as needed, to obtain payment for health care services. I may disclose information to your insurance company or third party payer in order to make sure your treatment is approved, to verify eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, and

to permit the payer to review services provided to you for medical necessity. For example, I may need to share relevant health information to your health plan to obtain approval for continuing authorizations.

3. **Healthcare Operations:** I may use or disclose your health information in order to conduct my business of providing health care. These health care operations may include quality assessment, training students, credentialing and various other activities that may be necessary to run my practice and to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of the care that I deliver to you.
4. **Involvement of others in your Health Care:** I will make every effort to ask you if I may share relevant health information about you with family members or any other person you identify. If you are not present, unable to communicate, or in an emergency situation, I may exercise my professional judgment to determine whether to share this information. In addition, I may need to disclose health information to notify a family member or any other person responsible for your care of your location, general condition or death. Finally, I may disclose your health information to an authorized public or private entity to assist in disaster relief efforts, and to coordinate efforts to notify someone on your behalf. Please be assured I will only do so if absolutely necessary and in the unlikely event of an emergency or disaster.
5. **Public Health:** I may disclose your health information for public health activities, including the following: to report health information to prevent or control disease, injury or disability; to report births and deaths; to report reactions to medications or problems with products; to notify a person who may have been exposed to a communicable disease, or may be at risk for contracting or spreading the disease. Massachusetts law requires that I obtain your specific written authorization for the use or disclosure of the above information.
6. **Victims of Abuse, Neglect or Domestic Violence:** If I reasonably believe you are a victim of abuse, neglect or domestic violence, I may disclose your health information to an appropriate agency authorized by law to receive such reports. Massachusetts law requires that I obtain your specific written authorization for the use or disclosure of the above information unless you are a minor child, disabled, or over the age of 65.
7. **Health Oversight:** I may be required to disclose health information to a health oversight agency for audits, investigations, inspections, and other

health oversight activities. Oversight agencies include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs and other government regulatory programs and civil rights laws.

8. **Legal Proceedings:** I may be required to disclose health information in the course of a judicial or administrative proceeding in response to a legal order or other lawful process, including a subpoena.
9. **Law Enforcement:** I may be required to disclose health information for law enforcement purposes.
10. **Coroners, Funeral Directors, and Organ Donation:** I may be required to disclose health information to a coroner or medical examiner to identify a deceased person or to determine the cause of death. I may also disclose health information to a funeral director or their designee as necessary to carry out their duties. Health information may also be disclosed to organizations that facilitate organ, eye or tissue donation and transplantation.
11. **Research:** I may use or disclose health information for research that is approved by an institutional review board when written permission is not required by Federal or State law. This may include preparing for research or telling you about research studies in which you might be interested.
12. **Specialized Government Functions:** Under certain circumstances, I may be required to disclose health information to units of the government with special functions, such as the U.S. military or the U.S. Department of State.
13. **Workers Compensation:** I may use and disclose health information as required to comply with workers compensation laws and other programs that provide benefits for work-related injuries or illnesses.
14. **Required by law:** I may be required to use or disclose your health information to the extent that the use or disclosure is required by federal, state or local law. This includes any other law not already referred to in the preceding categories. The use or disclosure will be made in compliance with the law and will be limited to the relevant requirements of the law.

Uses and disclosures of your health information, other than those described above will be made only with your written authorization. For example, you will need to sign an authorization form before I can send your health information to your life insurance company. I will also obtain your written authorization prior to using your health information to send you any marketing materials.

You may revoke your authorization at any time, in writing, except to the extent that I have taken any action in reliance on the authorization.

In addition, federal and Massachusetts laws require that I obtain your specific written authorization for the use or disclosure of certain information about you. This information includes psychotherapy process notes as defined by federal law; communications with certain behavioral health professionals; communications between domestic violence victims and domestic violence counselors and between sexual assault victims and sexual assault counselors; and information related to substance abuse treatment, HIV testing or test results, treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and genetic testing or test results.

### **Your Individual Rights**

Although your medical record is my property, the health information it contains belongs to you. The following is a statement of your rights with respect to your health information and a brief description of how you may exercise these rights.

- 1. You have the right to inspect and copy your health information.** At any time, you may inspect and obtain a copy of health information about you including your medical and billing record, which may be used to make decisions about your care. Under limited circumstances I may limit your access to all or certain portions of your record. This includes, but is not limited to psychotherapy process notes or information compiled in reasonable anticipation of or use in a civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding. If you are denied access to portions of your record, in some circumstances you may have a right to have this decision revised. All requests to access your record must be made in writing to me, and will be processed within 30 days. If you request a copy of your records, I may charge you a fee to cover the copying and mailing costs.
- 2. You have the right to request an amendment to your health information.** You may request that I amend your treatment and billing information if you think the information is incorrect or incomplete for as long as I maintain the information. If for some reason I deny your request, I must give you a written statement with the reasons for the denial and offer additional

steps available to you. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions about amending your medical record.

3. **You have the right to request a restriction of your health information.** You have the right to ask for restrictions on the use and sharing of your health information for treatment, payment, or health care operations. I am not required to agree to your request, but if I do, I must put the restriction in writing and abide by it, except if you need to be treated in an emergency. You may not ask me to restrict uses and sharing of information that I am legally required to make. All requests must be in writing to me as a solo practitioner privacy officer.
4. **You have the right to request to receive communications from me by alternative means or at an alternative location.** I will make every effort to accommodate requests, provided you supply a valid alternative address or other method of contact. In certain cases I may need to contact you and may do so at the original address or phone number if attempts to contact you at the alternative locations are not successful.
5. **You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures I have made, if any, of your health information.** This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations as described in this notice. It does not apply to disclosures I may have made to you, that are authorized by you, information provided to family members or friends about your care, or for notification purposes. You have the right to receive specific information regarding disclosures made by me that occurred after August 1, 2009. You can request an accounting of disclosures for a period up to six years, but only for disclosures made after August 1, 2009. The right to receive this information is subject to certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations. Requests must be made to my office in writing, and I will respond to your request within 60 days.
6. **You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice.** I will provide a paper copy of this notice to you, upon request, even if you have agreed to accept this notice electronically.

This Notice is effective on August 1, 2009.

**Complaint Process:**

If you believe I have violated your privacy rights, please communicate your concerns to me at my office. You may also send a written complaint to the Director, Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg., 200 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20201. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint nor will I retaliate against you by affecting your status as a patient of mine. I will make every effort to respond to your concerns immediately and professionally.

You may contact me for further information about the complaint process or my privacy practices. My mailing address is: Elizabeth Call, 263 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.