

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 IT CAREFULLY.

Our Duty to Safeguard Your Protected Health Information

Individually identifiable health information about your past, present or future health or condition, the provision of health care to you, or payment for the health care is considered "Protected Health Information" ("PHI"). We are required to extend certain protections to your PHI, and to give you this Notice about our privacy practices that explains how, when, and why we may use or disclose your PHI. Except in specified circumstances, we must use or disclose only the minimum necessary PHI to accomplish the intended purpose of the use or disclosure.

We are required to follow the privacy practices described in this Notice, the **we reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this Notice at any time**. You may request a copy of the new Notice from any New Horizons Community Service Board Program and it is also posted on our website at www.newhorizonscsb.org.

How We May Use and Disclose Your Protected Health Information

We use and disclose PHI for a variety of reasons. We have a limited right to use and/or disclose your PHI for purposes of treatment, payment or our health care operation. For uses beyond that, we must have written authorization unless the law permits or requires us to make disclosure without your authorization. If we disclose PHI to an outside entity in order for that entity to perform a function on our behalf, we must have in place an agreement from the outside entity that will extend the same degree of privacy protection to your information that we must apply to your PHI. However, the law provides that we are permitted to make some uses/disclosures without your consent or authorization. The following offers more description and some examples of our potential uses/disclosures of your PHI.

Uses and Disclosures Relating to Treatment, Payment, or Health Care Operations Generally, we may use or disclose your PHI as follows:

For treatment: We may disclose your PHI to doctors, nurses, and other health care personnel who are involved in providing your health care. For example, your PHI will be shared among members of your treatment team, or with our pharmacy staff. Your PHI may also be shared with outside entities performing ancillary services relating to your treatment, such as lab work or x-rays, or for consultation purposes, or the New Horizons Community Service Board and/or community mental health agencies involved in provision or coordination of your care.

To obtain payment: We may use/disclose your PHI in order to bill and collect payment for your health care services. For example, we may contact your employer to verify employment status, and/or release portions of your PHI to the Medicaid program, the Georgia Division of MH/DD/SA, the Regional Board, the third party external review organization, and/or a private insurer to get paid for the services that we delivered to you.

For health care operations: We may use/disclose your PHI in the course of operating our programs. For example, we may take your photograph for medication identification purposes, use your PHI in evaluating the quality of services provided, or disclose your PHI to our accountant for audit purposes. Since we are an integrated system, we may disclose your PHI to designated staff in our other facilities, programs or central access system. Release of your PHI to other state agencies might also be necessary to determine your eligibility for publicly funded services.

Appointment Reminders: Unless you provide us with alternative instructions, we may send appointment reminders and other similar material to your home.

Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization For uses and disclosures beyond treatment, payment and operations purposes we are required by law to have your written authorization, unless the use or disclosure falls within one of the exceptions described below. Authorizations can be revoked at any time to stop future uses/disclosures except to the extent that we may have already undertaken an action in reliance upon your authorization.

Uses or Disclosures of PHI from Mental Health Records Not Requiring Consent or Authorization: The law provides that we may use/disclose your PHI from mental health records without consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

When required by law: We may disclose PHI when a law requires that we report information about suspected abuse, neglect or domestic violence, or relating to suspected criminal activity, or in response to a court order. We must also disclose PHI to authorities to monitor compliance with these privacy requirements.

For public health activities: We may disclose PHI when we are required to collect information about disease or injury, or to report vital statistics to the public health authority.

For health oversight activities: We may disclose PHI to our Regional Board, the protection and advocacy agency, or another agency responsible for monitoring the health care system for such purposes as reporting or investigation of unusual incidents, and monitoring the Medicaid program.

Relating to decedents: We may disclose PHI relating to an individual's death to coroners, medical examiners or funeral directors, and to organ procurement organizations relating to organ, eye or tissue donations or transplants.

For research purposes: In certain circumstances, and under the supervision of a privacy board, we may disclose PHI to our research staff and their designees in order to assist medical/psychiatric research.

To avert threat to health or safety: In order to avoid a serious threat to health or safety, we may disclose PHI as necessary to law enforcement or other persons who can reasonably prevent or lessen the threat of harm.

For specific government functions: We may disclose PHI of military personnel and veterans in certain situations, to correctional facilities in certain situations, to government benefit programs relating to eligibility and enrollment, and for national security reasons, such as protection of the President.

Uses and Disclosure of PHI from Alcohol and Other Drug Records Not Requiring [Consent or] Authorization The law provides that we may use/disclose your PHI from alcohol and other drug records without consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

When required by law: We may disclose PHI when a law requires that we report information about suspected child abuse and neglect, or when a crime has been committed on the program premises or against program personnel, or in response to a court order.

Relating to decedents: We may disclose PHI relating to an individual's death if state or federal law requires the information for collection of vital statistics or inquiry into the cause of death.

For research, audit or evaluation purposes: In certain circumstances, we may disclose PHI for research, audit or evaluation purposes.

To avert threat to health or safety: In order avoid serious threat to health or safety, we may disclose PHI to law enforcement when a threat is made to commit a crime on the program premises or against program personnel.

Uses and Disclosures Requiring You Have an Opportunity to Object In the following situations, we may disclose a limited amount of your PHI if we inform you about the disclosure in advance and you do not object, as long as the disclosure is not otherwise prohibited by law.

Consumer Directory: Your name, location, and general condition may be put into our consumer directory for disclosure to callers or visitors who ask for you by name. Additionally, your religious affiliation may be shared with clergy.

To families, friends or others involved in your care: We may share with these people information relating directly to their involvement in your care, or payment for your care. We may also share PHI with these people to notify them about your location, general condition or death.

Your Rights Regarding Your Protected Health Information You have the following rights relating to your protected health information:

To request restrictions on uses/disclosures: You have the right to ask that we limit how we use or disclose your PHI. We will consider your request, but are not legally bound to agree to the restriction. To the extent that we do agree to any restrictions on our use/disclosure of your PHI, we will put the agreement in writing and abide by it except in emergency situations. We cannot agree to limit uses/disclosures that are required by law.

To choose how we contact you: You have the right to ask that we send information to an alternate address or by alternate means. We must agree to your request as long as it is reasonably easy for us to do.

To inspect and request a copy of your PHI: Unless your access to your records is restricted for clear and documented treatment reasons, you have the right to see your protected health information upon your written request. We will respond to your request within 30 days. If we deny your access, we will give you written reasons for the denial and explain any right to have the denial reviewed. If you want copies of your PHI, a charge for copying may be imposed, depending on your circumstances. You have a right to choose what portions of your information you want copies and to have prior information on the cost of copying.

To request amendment to your PHI: If you believe that there is a mistake or missing information in our record of your PHI, you may request, in writing, that we correct or add to the record. We will respond within 60 days of receiving your request. We may deny the request if we determine that the PHI is: (i) correct and complete; (ii) not created by us and/or not part of our records, or; (iii) not permitted to be disclosed. Any denial will state the reason(s) for denial and explain your rights to have the request and denial, along with any statement in response that you provide, appended to your PHI. If we approve the request for amendment, we will change the PHI and so inform you and tell others that need to know about the change in the PHI.

To find out what disclosures have been made: You have the right to get a list of when, to whom, for what purpose, and what content of your PHI has been released other than instances of disclosure: for

treatment, payments, and operations; to you, your family, or the facility directory; or pursuant to your written authorization. The list will also not include any disclosures made for national security purposes, to law enforcement officials or correctional facilities, or disclosures made before April 2003. We will respond to your written request for such a list within 60 days of receiving it. Your request can relate to disclosures going back as far as six years. There will be no charge for up to one such list each year. There may be a charge for more frequent requests.

To receive this notice: You have a right to receive a paper copy of this Notice and/or an electronic copy by email upon request.

How to Complain about Our Privacy Practices

If you think we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your PHI, you may file a complaint with the New Horizons Community Service Board Privacy Officer listed below or you may contact:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Office for Civil Rights, Region IV
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street SW, Suite 3B70
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
(404) 562-7886

You may also file a written complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20201 or call 1-877-696-6775. We will take no retaliatory action against you if you make such a complaint.

New Horizons Community Service Board Contact Person for Information, or to Submit a Complaint:

If you have any questions about this Notice or any complaints about our privacy practices, please contact

New Horizons Community Service Board Privacy Officer
706-596-5575 or 1-877-355-7330

You may also contact the Consumer Rights Committee or the Consumer Advocate with complaints regarding privacy practices.

Effective Date: This notice is effective as of January 1, 2003.
Revised: April 16, 2003

