

08/04/2017

## **Notice of Germantown Psychological Associates, P.C. Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information**

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS NOTICE, GPA, PC WILL REFER TO GERMANTOWN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES, P.C. AND ITS CLINICAL STAFF.

### **I. Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations**

GPA, PC 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 GPA, PC provides, coordinates or manages your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when GPA, PC consults with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another psychologist.
  - *Payment* is when GPA, PC obtains reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when GPA, PC discloses 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 GPA, PC’s 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 GPA, PC such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*Disclosure*” applies to activities outside of GPA, PC, such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.

### **II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization**

GPA, PC 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 GPA, PC is asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, GPA, PC will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. GPA, PC will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes. “*Psychotherapy notes*” are notes your therapist has made about your conversation during a private, group, joint, or family counseling session, which he/she has 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) GPA, PC has 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**

GPA, PC may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

**Child Abuse:** If your GPA, PC has knowledge of any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, or disability, or physical or mental condition of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect, GPA, PC is required by law to report such harm immediately to Tennessee Department of Children’s Services or to the judge having juvenile jurisdiction, or to the office of the sheriff or the chief law enforcement official of the municipality where the child resides. Also, if GPA, PC has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused, GPA, PC must report such information, regardless of whether the child has sustained any injury.

- **Adult and Domestic Abuse:** If GPA, PC has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation, GPA, PC is required by law to report such information to the Tennessee Department of Human Services.
- **Health Oversight:** If a complaint is filed against a therapist with the Tennessee Division of Health Related Boards, the Board has the authority to subpoena confidential mental health information from GPA, PC relevant to that complaint.
- **Judicial or administrative proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about the professional services that GPA, PC has provided you and/or the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and GPA, PC must not release this information without your written authorization or a court order. This privilege does not apply when you are being evaluated for a third party or where the evaluation is court ordered. GPA, PC must inform you in advance if this is the case.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** If you communicate to a therapist an actual threat of bodily harm against a clearly identified victim, and your therapist has determined or reasonably should have determined that you have the apparent ability to commit such an act and are likely to carry out the threat unless prevented from doing so, GPA, PC is required to take reasonable care to predict, warn of, or take precautions to protect the identified victim from your violent behavior.
- **Workers' Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, and your therapist is seeing you for treatment relevant to that claim, GPA, PC must, upon request, furnish to your employer or insurer, and to you, a complete report as to the claimed injury, the effect upon you, the prescribed treatment, and estimate of duration of hospitalization, if any, and a statement of charges.

#### **IV. Patient's Rights and GPA, PC'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, GPA, PC is 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 a therapist. Upon your request, GPA, PC 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 in my mental health and billing records used to make decisions about you for as long as the PHI is maintained in the record. On your request, GPA, PC will discuss with you the details of the request 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. GPA, PC may deny your request. On your request, GPA, PC 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 regarding you. On your request, GPA, PC 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 GPA, PC upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

##### **GPA, PC's Duties:**

- GPA, PC is required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of GPA, PC's legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.
- GPA, PC reserves the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless GPA, PC notifies you of such changes, however, GPA, PC is required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- GPA, PC reserves the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all PHI that it maintains. If GPA, PC revises policies and procedures, GPA, PC will provide you with a revised notice.

#### **V. Complaints**

If you are concerned that GPA, PC has violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision GPA, PC made about access to your records, you may contact: HIPAA Officer, 7516 Enterprise Ave., Suite 1, Germantown, TN 38138. You may also send a written complaint to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The person listed above can provide you with the appropriate address upon request.