



## **NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES POLICY**

**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.**

If you have any questions about this notice, please call Broome County OFA at (607)778-2411.

### **WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE**

This notice describes the information privacy practices followed by our employees.

### **YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

This notice applies to assessments we have about your health, health status, and health care services you receive.

We are required by law to give you this notice. It will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose health information about you and describes your rights and our obligations regarding the use and disclosure of that information.

### **HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

**For Treatment** We may disclose health information about you to doctors, nurses, therapists, office staff or other personnel who are involved in taking care of you and your health. Different personnel in our office may share information about you and disclose information to people who do not work in our office in order to coordinate your care, such as contacting licensed agencies who provide your aide service. Family members and other health care providers may be part of your medical care outside this office and may require information about you that we have.

**For Payment** We may use and disclose health information about you so that the services you receive may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company or a third party. For example, we may need to give your health plan information about a service we authorized so your health plan will reimburse for the service. We may also tell your health plan about a treatment you are going to receive to obtain prior approval, or to determine whether your plan will cover the treatment.

**For Health Care Operations** We may use and disclose health information about you in order to run our office and make sure that you and our other clients receive quality care.

You may revoke your *Consent* at any time by giving us written notice. Your revocation will be effective when we receive it, but it will not apply to any uses and disclosures that occurred before that time.

If you do revoke your Consent, we will not be permitted to use or disclose information for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations, and we may therefore choose to discontinue providing you with services we authorize.

### **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

We may use or disclose health information about you without your permission for the following purposes, subject to all applicable legal requirements and limitations:

**To Avert a Serious Threat to Health or Safety** We may use and disclose health information about you when necessary to prevent a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of the public or another person.

**Required By Law** We will disclose health information about you when required to do so by federal, state or local law.

**Research** We may use and disclose health information about you for research projects that are subject to a special approval process. We will ask you for your permission if the researcher will have access to your name, address or other information that reveals who you are, or will be involved in your care.

**Workers' Compensation** We may release health information about you for workers' compensation or similar programs. These programs provide benefits for work-related injuries or illness.

**Public Health Risks** We may disclose health information about you for public health reasons in order to prevent or control disease, injury or disability; or report births, deaths, suspected abuse or neglect, non-accidental physical injuries, reactions to medications or problems with products.

**Health Oversight Activities** We may disclose health information to a health oversight agency for audits, investigations, inspections, or licensing purposes. These disclosures may be necessary for certain state and federal agencies to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

**Lawsuits and Disputes** If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose health information about you in response to a court or administrative order. Subject to all applicable legal requirements, we may also disclose health information about you in response to a subpoena.

**Law Enforcement** We may release health information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official in response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process, subject to all applicable legal requirements.

**Coroners, Medical Examiners and Funeral Directors** We may release health information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death.

**Information Not Personally Identifiable** We may use or disclose health information about you in a way that does not personally identify you or reveal who you are.

**Family and Friends** We may disclose health information about you to your family members or friends if we obtain your verbal agreement to do so or if we give you an opportunity to object to such a disclosure and you do not raise an objection. We may also disclose health information to your family or friends if we can infer from the circumstances, based on our professional judgment that you would not object. For example, we may assume you agree to our disclosure of your personal health information to your spouse if he/she would be present and participate in our home visit and assessment process.

In situations where you are not capable of giving consent (because you are not present or due to your incapacity or medical emergency), we may, using our professional judgment, determine that a disclosure to your family member or friend is in your best interest. In that situation, we will disclose only health information relevant to the person's involvement in your care. We may also use our professional judgment and experience to make reasonable inferences that it is in your best interest to allow another person to act on your behalf to pick up, for example, filled prescriptions or durable medical equipment.

## **OTHER USES AND DISCLOSURES OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

We will not use or disclose your health information for any purpose other than those identified in the previous sections without your specific, written *Authorization*. We must obtain your *Authorization* separate from any *Consent* we may have obtained from you. If you give us *Authorization* to use or disclose health information about you, you may revoke that *Authorization*, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your *Authorization*, we will no longer use or disclose information about you for the reasons covered by your written *Authorization*, but we cannot take back any uses or disclosures already made with your permission

If we have HIV, mental health or substance abuse information about you, we cannot release that information without a special signed, written authorization (different from the *Authorization* and *Consent* mentioned above) from you. In order to disclose these types of records for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations, we will have to have both your signed *Consent* and a special written *Authorization* that complies with the law governing HIV, mental health or substance abuse records.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU**

You have the following rights regarding health information we maintain about you:

**Right to Inspect and Copy** You have the right to inspect and copy assessments used to make decisions about your care. You must submit a written request to Broome County OFA in order to inspect and/or copy your health information. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing or other associated supplies. We may deny your request to inspect and/or copy in certain limited circumstances. If you are denied access to your health information, you may ask that the denial be reviewed. If such a review is required by law, the Broome County legal department will select a licensed health care professional to review your request and our denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request, and we will comply with the outcome of the review.

**Right to Amend** If you believe health information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete; you may ask the originator of the information to make an amendment. Broome County OFA assessments are based on information given to our employees by the clients themselves; involved caregivers designated by the client and/or from records originated from other health care facilities/providers e.g. hospitals, nursing facilities.

**Right to an Accounting of Disclosures** You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosures." This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you for purposes other than treatment, payment and health care operations. To obtain this list, you must submit your request in writing to Broome County OFA. It must state a time period, which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. We may charge you for the costs of providing the list. We will notify you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time before any costs are incurred.

**Right to Request Restrictions** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the health information we use or disclose about you for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the health information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for it, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a surgery you had.

**We are Not Required to Agree to Your Request** If we do agree, we will comply with your request unless the information is needed to provide you emergency treatment.

To request restrictions, you may complete and submit *the Request for Restriction on Use/Disclosure of Medical Information* to Broome County OFA.

**Right to Request Confidential Communication** – You have the right to request alternative means or location for receiving communications of your personal health information from Broome County OFA. In addition, we will provide confidential communication by alternative means or at alternative locations when the disclosure of all or part of that information could endanger you or your safety.

**Right to a Paper Copy of This Notice** You have the right to a paper copy of this notice. You may ask us to give you a copy of this notice at any time. To obtain such a copy, contact Broome County OFA.

### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

We reserve the right to change this notice, and to make the revised or changed notice effective for medical information we already have about you as well as any information we receive in the future. You are entitled to a copy of the notice currently in effect.

### **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with our office or with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.