

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

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

Summary: By law, we are required to provide you with our Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP). As a patient, you have the following rights:

1. The right to inspect and copy your information.
2. The right to request corrections to your information.
3. The right to request that your information be restricted.
4. The right to request confidential communications;
5. The right to a report of disclosures of your information; and
6. the right to a paper copy of this Notice.

We want to assure you that your medical/protected health information is secured with us. This Notice contains information about how we will ensure that your information remains private.

If you have any questions about this Notice, please contact our privacy officer, Tami Hough, phone number (248) 528-0157 or by email at HoughCounseling@msn.com.

Acknowledgement of Notice of Private Practices

"I hereby acknowledge that I have received **Hough Counseling & Assessments, PLLC**, Notice of Privacy Practices. I understand this Notice provides me with information on my privacy and rights and how my health information may be used and disclosed".

Patient or Representative Name (Please print) Patient or Representative Signature Date

Patient Refused to sign

Patient was unable to sign because:

- Emergency Treatment Situation
- Unconscious
- Mentally Incompetent
- Language Barrier
- Other, please explain:

Signature of Staff Member

Date

For more information on Hipaa laws, you may visit <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>

or visit our webpage at <http://www.houghcounseling.com/>

Hough Counseling and Assessments, PLLC
675 E. Big Beaver, Suite 101, Troy, Michigan 48083
Phone (248) 528-0157 Fax (248) 528-0158

Notice of Privacy Practices

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Introduction to our clients:

This notice will tell you how we handle your medical information. It tells how we use this information here in this office, how we share it with other professionals and organizations, and how you can see it. We want you to know all of this so that you can make the best decisions for yourself and your family. If you have any questions or want to know more about anything in this notice, please ask our privacy officer for more explanations or more details.

What we mean by your medical information:

Each time you visit us or any doctor's office, hospital, clinic, or other health care provider, information is collected about your physical and mental health. It may be information about your past, present, or future health or conditions, or the tests and treatment you got from us or from others, or about payment for health care. The information we collect from you are called "PHI," which stands for "**protected health information.**" This information goes into your **medical or health care records** in our office.

In this office, your PHI is likely to include these kinds of information:

- Your history: Things that happened to you as a child; your school and work experiences; your marriage and other personal history.
- Reasons you came for treatment: Your problems, complaints, symptoms, or needs.
- Diagnoses: These are the medical terms for your problems or symptoms.
- A treatment plan: This is a list of the treatments and other services that we think will best help you.
- Progress notes: Each time you come in, we write down some things about how you are doing, what we notice about you, and what you tell us.
- Records we get from others who treated you or evaluated you.
- Psychological test scores, school records, and other reports.
- Information about medications you took or are taking.
- Legal matters.
- Billing and insurance information

There may also be other kinds of information that go into your health care records here.

We use PHI for many purposes. For example, we may use it:

- To plan your care and treatment.
- To determine how well our treatments are working for you.
- When we talk with other health care professionals who are also treating you, such as your family doctor or the professional who referred you to us.
- To show that you actually received services from us, which we billed to you or to your health insurance company.

- For teaching and training other healthcare professionals.
- To improve the way we do our job by measuring the results of our work.

When you understand what is in your record and what it is used for, you can make better decisions about who, when, and why others should have this information.

Although your health care records in our office are our physical property, the information belongs to you. You can read your records, and if you want a copy, we can make one for you (but we may charge you for the costs of copying and mailing, if you want it mailed to you). In some very rare situations, you cannot see all of what is in your records. If you find anything in your records that you think is incorrect or believe that something important is missing, you can ask us to amend (add information to) your records, although in some rare situations we don't have to agree to do that. If you want, our privacy officer, whose name is at the end of this notice, can explain more about this.

Privacy and the laws about privacy:

We are required to tell you about privacy because of a federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). HIPAA requires us to keep your PHI private and to give you this notice about our legal duties and our privacy practices. We will obey the rules described in this notice. If we change our privacy practices, they will apply to all the PHIs we keep. We will also post the new notice of privacy practices in our office where everyone can see. You or anyone else can also get a copy from our privacy officer at any time. It is also posted on our website at www.HoughCounseling.com.

How your protected health information can be used and shared:

Except in some special circumstances, when we use your PHI in this office or disclose it to others, we share only the **minimum necessary** PHI needed for those other people to do their jobs. The law gives you rights to know about your PHI, to know how it is used, and to have a say in how it is shared. So, we will tell you more about what we do with your information. Mainly, we will use and disclose your PHI for routine purposes to provide for your care, and we will explain more about these below. For other uses, we must tell you about them and ask you to sign a written authorization form. However, the law also says that there are some uses and disclosures that don't need your consent or authorization.

Uses and disclosures with your consent:

After you have read this notice, you will be asked to sign a separate **consent form** to allow us to use and share your PHI. In almost all cases we intend to use your PHI here or share it with other people or organizations to provide treatment to you, arrange for payment for our services, or some other business functions called "health care operations." In other words, we need information about you and your condition to provide care to you. You have to agree to let us collect the information, use it, and share it to care for you properly. Therefore, you must sign the consent form before we begin to treat you. If you do not agree and consent, we cannot treat you.

Basic uses and disclosure for treatment, payment, and health care operations:

Next, we will tell you more about how your information will be used for treatment, payment, and health care operations.

For treatment:

We use your medical information to provide you with psychological treatments or services. These might include individual or group therapy; psychological, educational, or vocational testing; treatment planning; or measuring the benefits of our services.

We may share your PHI with others who provide treatment to you. We are likely to share your information with your personal physician. If you are being treated by a team, we can share some of your PHI with the team members, so that the services you receive will work best together. The other professionals treating you will also enter their findings, the actions they took and their plans for your medical record, and so we all can decide what treatments work best for you and make up a treatment plan. We may refer you to other professionals or consultants for services we cannot provide. When we do this, we need to tell them things about you and your conditions. We will get back their findings and opinions, and those will go into your records here. If you receive treatment in the future from other professionals, we can also share your PHI with them. These are some examples so that you can see how we use and disclose your PHI for treatment.

For payment:

We may use your information to bill you, your insurance, or others, so we can be paid for the treatments we provide to you. We may contact your insurance company to find out exactly what your insurance covers. We may have to tell them about your diagnoses, what treatments you have received, and the changes we expect in your conditions. We will need to tell them about how we met your progress, and other similar things.

Other uses and disclosures in health care:

Appointment reminders:

We may use and disclose your PHI to reschedule or remind you of appointments for treatment or other care. If you want us to call or write to you only at your home or your work, or you prefer some other way to reach you, we usually can arrange that. Just tell us.

Treatment alternatives:

We may use and disclose your PHI to tell you about or recommend possible treatments or alternatives that may be of help to you.

Other benefits and services:

We may use and disclose your PHI to tell you about health-related benefits or services that may be of interest to you.

Business associates:

We may hire other businesses to do some jobs for us. In the law, they are called our “business associates.” Examples include a copy service to make copies of your health records, and a billing service to figure out, print, and mail our bills. These business associates need to receive some of your PHI to do their jobs properly. To protect your privacy, they have agreed in their contract with us to safeguard your information.

Uses and disclosures that require your authorization:

If we want to use your information for any purpose besides those described above, we need your permission on an **authorization form**. We don't expect to need this very often. If you do allow us to use or disclose your PHI, you can cancel that permission in writing at any time. We would then stop using or disclosing your information for that purpose. Of course, we cannot take back any information we have already disclosed or used with your permission.

Uses and disclosures that don't require your consent or authorization:

The law lets us use and disclose some of your PHI without your consent or authorization in some cases. Here are some examples of when we might do this.

When required by law:

There are some federal, state, or local laws that require us to disclose PHI:

-Child Abuse

We have to report suspected child abuse. If you are involved in a lawsuit or legal proceeding, and we receive a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process, we may have to release some of your PHI. We will only do so after trying to tell you about the request, consulting your lawyer, or trying to get a court order to protect the information they requested.

We have to disclose some information to the government agencies that check on us to see that we are obeying the privacy laws.

-For law enforcement purposes:

We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official to investigate a crime or criminal.

-Relating to decedents:

We may disclose PHI to coroners, medical examiners, or funeral directors, and to organizations relating to organ, eye, or tissue donations or transplants.

-For specific government functions:

We may disclose PHI of military personnel and veterans to government benefit programs relating to eligibility and enrollment. We may disclose your PHI to workers' compensation and disability programs, to correctional facilities if you are an inmate, or to other government agencies for national security reasons.

-To prevent a serious threat to health or safety:

If we come to believe that there is a serious threat to your health or safety, or that of another person or the public, we can disclose some of your PHI. We will only do this to persons who can prevent the danger.

Uses and disclosures where you have an opportunity to object:

We can share some information about you with your family or close others. We will only share information with those involved in your care and anyone else you choose, such as close friends or clergy. We will ask you which persons you want us to tell, and what information you want us to tell them, about your condition or treatment. You can tell us what you want, and we will honor your wishes as long as it is not against the law.

If it is an emergency, and so we cannot ask if you disagree, we can share information if we believe that it is what you would have wanted and if we believe it will help you if we do share it. If we do share information, in an emergency, we will tell you as soon as we can. If you don't approve, we will stop, as long as it is not against the law.

An accounting of disclosures we have made when we disclose your PHI, we may keep some records of whom we sent it to, when we sent it, and what we sent. You can get an accounting (a list) of many of these disclosures.

Your rights concerning your health information:

You can ask us to communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular way or at a certain place that is more private for you. For example, you can ask us to call you at home, and not at work, to schedule or cancel an appointment. We will try our best to do as you ask.

You have the right to ask us to limit what we tell people involved in your care or with payment for your care, such as family members and friends. We don't have to agree to your request, but if we do agree, we will honor it except when it is against the law, or in an emergency, or when the information is necessary to treat you.

You have the right to look at the health information we have about you, such as your medical and billing records. You can get a copy of these records, but we may charge you. Contact our privacy officer to arrange how to see your records.

If you believe that the information in your records is incorrect or missing something important, you can ask us to make additions to your records to correct the situation. You have to make this request in writing and send it to our privacy officer. You must also tell us the reasons you want to make the changes.

You have the right to a copy of this notice. If we change this notice, we will post the new one in our waiting area, and you can always get a copy from the privacy officer.

You have the right to file a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You can file a complaint with our privacy officer and with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. All complaints must be in writing. Filing a complaint will not change the health care we provide to you in any way.

You may have other rights that are granted to you by the laws of our state, and these may be the same as or different from the rights described above. We will be happy to discuss these situations with you now or as they arise.