



changing tides
family services

Effective Date: June 25, 2009

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.

If you have questions about this notice, please contact:

**Changing Tides Family Services
ATTN: Privacy Officer
2259 Myrtle Ave.
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8293**

WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE

This notice describes the practices of the following program of the Changing Tides Family Services:
Family Empowerment Services including:

- Specialty Mental Health Services, including all case management services
- Clinical Services, including assessment, evaluation, individual and family therapy, and group therapy
- Therapeutic Behavioral Services

OUR PLEDGE REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION

We understand that medical information about you and your health is personal.

We are committed to protecting medical information about you. We create a record of the care and services that you receive from Changing Tides Family Services' Family Empowerment Services program. We need this record to provide you with quality care and to comply with certain legal requirements.

This notice will tell you about the ways in which we may use and disclose medical information about you. We also describe your rights and certain obligations we have regarding the use and disclosure of medical information.

WE ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO:

- Make sure that medical information that identifies you is kept private (with certain exceptions);
- Give you this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to medical information about you; and
- Follow the terms of the notice that is currently in effect.

HOW WE MAY USE AND DISCLOSE MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

The following categories describe different ways that we use and disclose medical information. "Use" means how we utilize information within Changing Tides Family Services. "Disclose" means how we share information with others. For each category of uses or disclosures we will explain what we mean and try to give some examples. Not every use or disclosure in a category will be listed. However, all of the ways we are permitted to use and disclose information will fall within one of the categories.

FOR TREATMENT

We may use medical information about you to provide you with medical treatment or services. We may disclose medical information about you to doctors, nurses, technicians, or other department personnel who are involved in providing you services.

FOR PAYMENT

We may use and disclose medical information about you so that the treatment and 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 services you received so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you for the services. We may also tell your health plan about a service you are going to receive to obtain prior approval or to determine whether your plan will cover the services.

FOR HEALTH CARE OPERATIONS

We may use and disclose medical information about you for health care operations. These uses and disclosures are necessary to run the agency and make sure that all of our clients receive quality care. For example, we may use medical information to review our treatment and services and to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also combine medical information about many clients to decide what additional new services the agency should offer, what services are not needed, and whether certain new services are effective. We may also disclose information to other staff for review and learning purposes. We may also combine the medical information we have with medical information from other agencies to compare how we are doing and see where we can make improvements in the care and services we offer. We may remove information that identifies you from this set of medical information so others may use it to study health care and health care delivery without learning who the specific clients are.

APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

We may use and disclose medical information to contact you as a reminder that you have an appointment for treatment or medical care.

TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES

We may use and disclose medical information to tell you about or recommend possible treatment options or alternatives that may be of interest to you.

INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN YOUR CARE OR PAYMENT FOR YOUR CARE

We may release medical information about you to a friend or family member who is involved in your medical care. We may also give information to someone who helps pay for your care.

We may disclose medical information about you to an entity assisting in a disaster relief effort so that your family can be notified about your condition, status, and location.

AS REQUIRED BY LAW

We will disclose medical information about you when required to do so by federal, state, or local law.

TO AVERT A SERIOUS THREAT TO HEALTH OR SAFETY

We may use and disclose medical 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. Any disclosure, however, would only be to the person threatened and law enforcement.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Workers' Compensation

We may release medical 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 medical information about you for public health activities. These activities generally include the following:

- To prevent or control disease, injury or disability;
- To report births and deaths
- To report the abuse or neglect of children, elders, and dependent adults;
- To report reactions to medications or problems with products;
- To notify people of recalls of products they may be using;
- To notify a person who may have been exposed to a disease or may be at risk for contracting or spreading a disease or condition;
- To notify the appropriate government authority if we believe a client has been the victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. We will only make this disclosure if you agree or when required or authorized by law.

HEALTH OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES

We may disclose medical information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law. These oversight activities include, for example, audits, investigations, inspections, and licensure. These activities are necessary for the government to monitor the health care system, government programs, and compliance with civil rights laws.

LAWS AND DISPUTES

If you are involved in a lawsuit or a dispute, we may disclose medical information about you in response to a court or administrative order. We may also disclose medical information about you in response to a subpoena, discovery request, or other lawful process by someone else involved in the dispute, but only if efforts have been made to tell you about the request (which may include written notice to you) or to obtain an order protecting the information requested.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

We may release medical information if asked to do so by a law enforcement official:

- In response to a court order, subpoena, warrant, summons or similar process;
- To identify or locate a suspect, fugitive, material witness, or missing person;
- About the victim of a crime if, under certain limited circumstances, we are unable to obtain the person's agreement;
- About a death we believe may be the result of criminal conduct;
- About criminal conduct at the hospital; and
- In emergency circumstances to report a crime, the location of a crime or victims; or the identity, description or location of the person who committed the crime.

CORONERS, MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS

We may release medical information to a coroner or medical examiner. This may be necessary, for example, to identify a deceased person or determine the cause of death. We may release medical information about clients to funeral directors as necessary to carry out their duties.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

We may release medical information about you to authorized federal officials for intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities authorized by law.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS

We may disclose medical information about you to authorized federal officials so they may provide protection to the President, other authorized persons of foreign heads of state or conduct special investigations

INMATES

If you are an inmate of a correctional institution or under the custody of a law enforcement official, we may release medical information about you to the correctional institution or law enforcement official. This release would be necessary (1) for the institution to provide you with health care; (2) to protect your health and safety or the health and safety of others; or (3) for the safety and security of the correctional institution.

YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

You have the following rights regarding medical information we maintain about you:
When responding to the rights in this notice, you can mail your request to the following address:

**Changing Tides Family Services
ATTN: Privacy Officer
2259 Myrtle Ave.
Eureka, CA 95501**

RIGHT TO INSPECT AND COPY

You have the right to inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about your care. Usually, this includes medical and billing records, but may not include some mental health information such as psychotherapy notes.

To inspect and copy medical information that may be used to make decisions about you, you must submit your request in writing to the address listed above.

If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request.

We may deny your request to inspect and copy in certain very limited circumstances. If you are denied access to medical information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. Another authorized person at the agency will review your request and denial. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. We will comply with the outcome of the review.

RIGHT TO AMEND

If you feel that medical information we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment for as long as the information is kept by or for the agency.

To request an amendment, your request must be made in writing and submitted to the address listed above. Additionally, you must provide a reason that supports your requests.

We may deny your request for an amendment if it is not in writing or does not include a reason to support the request. In addition, we may deny your request if you ask us to amend information that:

- Was not created by us, unless the person or entity that created the information is not longer available to make the amendment;
- Is not part of the medical information kept by or for the agency
- Is not part of the information which you would be permitted to inspect and copy; or
- Is accurate and complete.

Even if we deny your request for amendment, you have the right to submit a written addendum, not to exceed 250 words, with respect to any item or statement in your record you believe is incomplete or incorrect. If you clearly indicate in writing that you want the addendum to be made part of your medical record we will attach it to your records and include it whenever we make a disclosure of the item or statement you believe to be incomplete or incorrect.

RIGHT TO AN ACCOUNTING OF DISCLOSURES

You have the right to request an "accounting of disclosure." This is a list of the disclosures we made of medical information about you other than our own uses for treatment, payment, and health care operations, (as those functions are described above) and with other expectations according to the law.

To request this list or account of disclosures, you must submit your request in writing to the address listed on page one of this notice. Your request must state a time period that may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2004. Your request should indicate in what format you want the list (for example, paper, electronically). The first list you request within a 12-month period will be free. For additional lists, 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 RESTRICTIONS

You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the medical information we use or disclose about your for treatment, payment or health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the medical information we disclose about you to someone who is involved in your care or the payment for your care, like a family member or friend. For example, you could ask that we not use or disclose information about a treatment 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 must make your request in writing to the address on page one of this notice. In your request, you must tell us (1) what information you want to limit; (2) whether you want to limit our use, disclosure, or both; and (3) to whom you want the limits to apply (for example, disclosures to your spouse).

RIGHT TO REQUEST CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location. For example, you can ask that we only contact you at work or by mail.

To request confidential communications, you must make your request in writing to the address listed on page one of this notice. We will not ask you the reason for your request. We will accommodate all reasonable requests. Your request must specify how or where you wish to be contacted.

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. Even if you have agreed to receive this notice electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy of this notice.

You may obtain a copy of this notice at our website: www.ChangingTidesFamilyServices1.org

To obtain a paper copy of this notice, please ask a receptionist at the front desk, or ask any other staff person you have an appointment with for a copy of it.

CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE

We reserve the right to change this notice. We reserve the right 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. We will post a copy of the current notice in the agency. The notice will contain on the first page, in the top right hand corner, the effective date. In addition, you will be offered a copy of the current notice in effect each time it is revised.

COMPLAINTS

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with the Changing Tides Family Services or with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at the following:

Changing Tides Family Services
ATTN: Privacy Officer
2259 Myrtle Ave.
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8293

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 22
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 437-8310

All complaints must be submitted in writing.

You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

OTHER USES OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

Other uses and disclosures of medical information not covered by this notice or the laws that apply to us will be made only with your written permission. If you provide us permission to use or disclose medical information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, at any time. If you revoke your permission, this will stop any further use or disclosure of your medical information for the purposes covered by your written authorization, except if we have already acted in reliance on your permission. You understand that we are unable to take back any disclosures we have already made with your permission, and that we are required to retain our records of the care that we provided to you. We are not allowed to condition your treatment upon you agreeing to sign an authorization to release your records to someone else.