

**Your Information.  
Your Rights.  
Our Responsibilities.**

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.**

**Your Rights**

**You have the right to:**

- Get a copy of your paper or electronic medical record
- Correct your paper or electronic medical record
- Request confidential communication
- Ask us to limit the information we share
- Get a list of those with whom we've shared your information
- Get a copy of this privacy notice
- Choose someone to act for you
- File a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated

► **See page 2** for more information on these rights and how to exercise them

**Your Choices**

**You have some choices in the way that we use and share information as we:**

- Tell family and friends about your condition
- Provide disaster relief
- Provide mental health care
- Market or communicate our services to you

► **See page 3** for more information on these choices and how to exercise them

**Our Uses and Disclosures**

**We may use and share your information as we:**

- Treat you
- Run our organization
- Bill for your services
- Help with public health and safety issues
- Do research
- Comply with the law
- Work with a medical examiner or funeral director
- Address workers' compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests
- Respond to lawsuits and legal actions

► **See pages 3 and 4** for more information on these uses and disclosures

## Your Rights

### When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.

This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.

#### Get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record

- You can ask to see or get an electronic or paper copy of your medical record and other health information we have about you. **Ask us how to do this.**
- If your request is approved, we may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee. **(See “Special Notes” p.4)**

#### Ask us to correct your medical record

- You can ask us to correct health information about you that you think is incorrect or incomplete. **Ask us how to do this.**
- We may say “no” to your request, but we’ll tell you why in writing within 60 days.

#### Request confidential communications

- You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home or office phone) or to send mail to a different address.
- We will say “yes” to all reasonable requests.

#### Ask us to limit what we use or share

- You can ask us **not** to use or share certain health information for treatment, payment, or our operations. We are not required to agree to your request, and we may say “no” if it would affect your care.
- If you pay for a service or health care item out-of-pocket in full, you can ask us not to share that information for the purpose of payment or our operations with your health insurer. We will say “yes” unless a law requires us to share that information.

#### Get a list of those with whom we’ve shared information

- You can ask for a list (accounting) of the times we’ve shared your health information for six years prior to the date you ask, who we shared it with, and why.
- We will include most disclosures with some exceptions. **(See “Special Notes” p.4)**
- We’ll provide one accounting a year for free but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another one within 12 months.

#### Get a copy of this privacy notice

- You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically. We will provide you with a paper copy promptly.

#### Choose someone to act for you

- If you have given someone medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information.
- We will make sure the person has this authority and can act for you before we take any action.

#### File a complaint if you feel your rights are violated

- **You can complain if you feel we have violated your rights by contacting us using the information on page 5.**
- You can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 26 Federal Plaza – Suite 3312, New York, NY 10278, calling (212) 264-3313, or visiting <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/>.
- **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.**

## Your Choices

**For certain health information, you can tell us your choices about what we share.** If you have a clear preference for how we share your information in the situations described below, talk to us. Tell us what you want us to do, and we will follow your instructions.

**In these cases, you have both the right and choice to tell us to:**

- Share information with your family, close friends, or others involved in your care
- Share information in a disaster relief situation

*If you are not able to tell us your preference, for example if you are unconscious, we may go ahead and share your information if we believe it is in your best interest. We may also share your information when needed to lessen a serious and imminent threat to health or safety.*

**In these cases we will not share your information without your written permission:**

- For marketing purposes
- Mental health, alcohol and drug, AIDS/HIV and genetic testing information, as well as most sharing of psychotherapy notes (unless legally required) **(See “Special Notes” p.4)**

**In the case of fundraising:**

- We will not contact you for fundraising. We do not participate in fundraising activities.

## Our Uses and Disclosures

### How do we typically use or share your health information?

We typically use or share your health information in the following ways.

**Treat you**

- We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you.

**Example:** Your psychiatrist and therapist may discuss your treatment plan.

**Run our organization**

- We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary.

**Example:** We use health information about you to manage your treatment and services.

**Bill for your services**

- We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from health plans or other entities.

**Example:** We give information about you to your health insurance plan so it will pay for your services.

*continued on next page*

**How else can we use or share your health information?** We are allowed or required to share your information in other ways – usually in ways that contribute to the public good, such as public health and research. We have to meet many conditions in the law before we can share your information for these purposes. For more information see: [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/index.html).

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**Help with public health and safety issues**

- We can share health information about you for certain situations such as:
  - Preventing disease
  - Helping with product recalls
  - Reporting adverse reactions to medications
  - Reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or domestic violence
  - Preventing or reducing a serious threat to anyone’s health or safety

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**Do research**

- We can use or share your information for health research.

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**Comply with the law**

- We will share information about you if state or federal laws require it, including with the Department of Health and Human Services if it wants to see that we’re complying with federal privacy law.

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**Respond to organ and tissue donation requests**

- We can share health information about you with organ procurement organizations.

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**Work with a medical examiner or funeral director**

- We can share health information with a coroner, medical examiner, or funeral director when an individual dies.

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**Address workers’ compensation, law enforcement, and other government requests**

- We can use or share health information about you:
  - For workers’ compensation claims
  - For law enforcement purposes or with a law enforcement official
  - With health oversight agencies for activities authorized by law
  - For special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services

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**Respond to lawsuits and legal actions**

- We can share health information about you in response to a court or administrative order, or in response to a subpoena.

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**Special Notes:**

*If you request to inspect, to receive a copy of, or to receive a summary of your medical record, we will respond within 10 days of receiving your request. We may need to deny you access to certain information. If we do, we will give you the reason in writing and will explain how you may appeal the decision. If your request is approved, we may charge a fee of no more than 75 cents per page. You will not be denied access to your information if you are unable to pay the fee.*

*Although under some laws we are allowed to share your information without your consent for treatment, payment and health care operations, we will follow the strictest applicable laws when disclosing your information. Unless legally required to do so, we will not release sensitive information such as mental health, alcohol and drug, HIV/AIDS and genetic testing without your written authorization. For other sensitive information such as pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases, we will follow applicable laws on disclosing your information. Please talk to us about how we share your information.*

*As required by New York State Mental Hygiene Law, we will account for disclosures except those for the following: mental hygiene legal service, compliance audits, and government agencies requiring information necessary for payments.*

## Our Responsibilities

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- We are required by law to maintain the privacy and security of your protected health information.
- We will let you know promptly if a breach occurs that may have compromised the privacy or security of your information.
- We must follow the duties and privacy practices described in this notice and give you a copy of it.
- We will not use or share your information other than as described here unless you tell us we can in writing. If you tell us we can, you may change your mind at any time. Let us know in writing if you change your mind.

For more information see: [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html).

## Changes to the Terms of this Notice

We can change the terms of this notice, and the changes will apply to all information we have about you. The new notice will be available upon request, in our office, and on our web site.

*Effective Date: September 23, 2013*

**This Notice of Privacy Practices applies to the following:**

- ***All programs within Tompkins County Mental Health Services including the Continuing Day Treatment Wellness Program, the Care Coordination Program, the Outpatient Clinic and the Representative Payee Program***
- ***Tompkins County Mental Health Services administrative departments with access to your protected health information***

***If you have any questions, please ask us.***

***Please contact the following people with questions or complaints:***

***Tompkins County Healthcare Information Security and Privacy Officer***

***(607) 274-6300***

***[mhprivacy@tompkins-co.org](mailto:mhprivacy@tompkins-co.org)***

***If unavailable:***

***Please call the Tompkins County Mental Health Commissioner***

***(607) 274-6300***