

Notice of Strong Integrated Behavioral Health’s 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.

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

Strong Integrated Behavioral Health 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 we provide, coordinate or manage your health care and other services related to your health care. An example of treatment would be when we consult with another health care provider, such as your family physician or another psychologist.
 - *Payment* is when we obtain reimbursement for your healthcare. Examples of payment are when we disclose 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 our 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 my [office, clinic, practice group, etc.] such as sharing, employing, applying, utilizing, examining, and analyzing information that identifies you.
- “*Disclosure*” applies to activities outside of my [office, clinic, practice group, etc.], such as releasing, transferring, or providing access to information about you to other parties.

II. Uses and Disclosures Requiring Authorization

Strong IBH 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 we are asked for information for purposes outside of treatment, payment and health care operations, we will obtain an authorization from you before releasing this information. We will also need to obtain an authorization before releasing your psychotherapy notes. “*Psychotherapy notes*” are notes your therapist has made about conversations held during a private, group, joint, or

family counseling session, which has been 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) we have 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

We may use or disclose PHI without your consent or authorization in the following circumstances:

- **Child Abuse:** If we have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom we have had contact has been abused, we are required to report the abuse to the Oregon Department of Human Services or the local law enforcement agency. Additionally, if we have reasonable cause to believe that an adult with whom we have had contact has abused a child, we may be required to report the abuse.
- **Adult and Domestic Abuse:** If we have reasonable cause to believe that any adult with whom we have had contact has been abused, we are required to report the abuse to the Oregon Department of Human Services or the local law enforcement agency. Additionally, if we have reasonable cause to believe that an adult with whom we have had contact has abused an adult, we may be required to report the abuse.
- **Health Oversight:** The respective Oregon boards overseeing the practice of our therapists may subpoena relevant records from me should be the subject of a complaint.
- **Judicial or Administrative Proceedings:** If you are involved in a court proceeding and a request is made for information about your evaluation, diagnosis and treatment and the records thereof, such information is privileged under state law, and we must not release your information without written authorization by you or your personal or legally-appointed representative, 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. You will be informed in advance if this is the case.
- **Serious Threat to Health or Safety:** We may disclose confidential information when I judge that disclosure is necessary to protect against a clear and substantial risk of imminent serious harm being inflicted by you on yourself or another person. We must limit disclosure of the otherwise confidential information to only those persons and only that content which would be consistent with the standards of the profession in addressing such problems.

- **Worker's Compensation:** If you file a worker's compensation claim, this constitutes authorization for us to release your relevant mental health records to involved parties and officials. This would include a past history of complaints or treatment of a condition similar to that in the complaint.

There may be additional disclosures of PHI that we are required or permitted by law to make without your consent or authorization, however the disclosures listed above are the most common.

IV. Patient's Rights and Psychologist'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, we are 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 receiving treatment. Upon your request, we 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. We may deny your access to PHI under certain circumstances, but in some cases, you may have this decision reviewed. On your request, we will discuss with you the details of the request and denial 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. We may deny your request. On your request, we 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 for which you have neither provided consent nor authorization (as described in Section III of this Notice). On your request, we 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 me upon request, even if you have agreed to receive the notice electronically.

Duties Required by Strong Integrated Behavioral Health:

- We are required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with a notice of my legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI.
- We reserve the right to change the privacy policies and practices described in this notice. Unless we notify you of such changes, however, we are required to abide by the terms currently in effect.
- If we revise our policies and procedures, we will inform you of this at your next appointment.

V. Questions and Complaints

If you have questions about this notice, disagree with a decision we make about access to your records, or have other concerns about your privacy rights, you may contact Teri Strong, PhD, at 66 Club Road, Suite 120, Eugene, OR 97401 or by calling 541-393-5983.

If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated and wish to file a complaint with the office, you may send your written complaint to: Teri Strong, PhD, at 66 Club Road, Suite 120, Eugene, OR 97401 or by calling 541-393-5983.

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.

You have specific rights under the Privacy Rule. We will not retaliate against you for exercising your right to file a complaint.

VI. Effective Date, Restrictions and Changes to Privacy Policy

This notice will go into effect on September 1, 2016.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this notice and to make the new notice provisions effective for all PHI that we maintain. We will provide you with a revised notice at your next appointment.