

**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 contact the **Director of Client Services** at our office at **614-299-2437** or at **1751 East Long Street, Columbus, OH 43203**.

**WHO WILL FOLLOW THIS NOTICE**

This notice describes the information privacy practices followed by our employees, staff and other office personnel.

**YOUR HEALTH INFORMATION**

This notice applies to the information and records we have about your health, health status, mental health care, mental health status, alcohol and other drug treatment, and services you receive from our employees.

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 use health information about you to provide you with mental health or AOD treatment or services. For example, a case manager may obtain health information about you and create a record of this information. This record may then be used to determine the course of treatment that should best work for you.

**For Payment** We may use and disclose health information about you so that the treatment and services you receive at this office or at another provider site may be billed to and payment may be collected from you, an insurance company, CATF, or another third party. For example, we may need to give your health plan information about a service you received here so your health plan will pay us or reimburse you 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. We will authorize payment with provider sites for specific services through a program at CATF including but not limited to pharmacy, laboratory, mental health, and physician services.

**For Health Care Operations** We may use and disclose health information about you in order to run the office and make sure that you and our other patients receive quality care. For example, we may use your health information to evaluate the performance of our staff in caring for you. We may also use health information about all or many of our patients to help us decide what additional services we should offer, how we can become more efficient, or whether certain new treatments are effective. Case management client information will be accessible to the case management network agencies.

You may receive case management, mental health, housing, and recovery-related communication through telephone, written, and electronic contact. If you do not wish to participate or wish for us to only contact you by certain means, you may notify us in writing, by telephone, or in person.

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, which 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 health care treatment and services.

**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.

**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 when you bring your spouse with you into the exam room during treatment or while treatment is discussed.

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.

#### **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 or substance abuse information about you, we cannot release that information without a special signed, written authorization from you. In order to disclose these types of records for purposes of treatment, payment or health care operations, we will have to have a special written *Authorization* that complies with the law governing HIV 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 your health information, such as treatment and billing records, that we use to make decisions about your care. You must submit a written request to the **Director of Client Services** 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 law requires such a review, we 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 us to amend the information. You have the right to request an amendment as long as the information is kept by this office.

To request an amendment, complete and submit a letter stating what information in your medical record that you would like to amend/correction to the **Director of Client Services**. 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:

- a) We did not create, unless the person or entity that created the information is no longer available to make the amendment.
- b) Is not part of the health information that we keep.
- c) You would not be permitted to inspect and copy.
- d) Is accurate and complete.

**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 the **Director of Client Services**. It must state a time period, which may not be longer than six years and may not include dates before April 14, 2003. Your request should indicate in what form you want the list (for example, on paper, electronically). 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 submit a letter requesting the restriction of the use/disclosure of private health information to your **Case Manager**.

**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 may submit a letter stating your request to restrict the use/disclosure of medical/mental health information and/or confidential information to your **Case Manager**. 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 it electronically, you are still entitled to a paper copy. To obtain such a copy, contact your **Case Manager**.

#### **CHANGES TO THIS NOTICE**

We are required to abide by the terms of this notice. However, 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. We will post a summary of the current notice in the office with its effective date in the top right hand corner. 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 at 1-800-368-1019. To file a complaint with our office, contact the **Privacy Officer, Columbus AIDS Task Force, Columbus, OH 43203**. You will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

**Effective Date: September 1, 2003**