

NOTICE OF PRIVACY POLICY

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.

- 1. When it comes to your health information, you have certain rights.** This section explains your rights and some of our responsibilities to help you.
- 2. 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. Electronic copies are provided through our secure patient portal, ask us how to get access to this portal. We will provide a copy or a summary of your health information, usually within 30 days of your request. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Request confidential communications:** You can ask us to contact you in a specific way (for example, home, office, or cell phone) or to send mail to a different address. We will say “yes” to all reasonable requests.
- 5. 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,” for example, if it could affect your care. If we agree to your request, we may still share this information in the event that you need emergency treatment. 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.
- 6. 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 all the disclosures except for those about treatment, payment, and health care operations, and certain other disclosures (such as any you asked us to make). 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.
- 7. Get a copy of this privacy notice:** You can ask for a paper copy of this notice at any time by requesting a paper copy in person at our organization. Electronic copies can be found on our website at the bottom of the homepage at **www.pastoralinstitute.org**

If someone has authority to act as your personal representative, such as if someone has your medical power of attorney or if someone is your legal guardian, that person can exercise your rights and make choices about your health information. Our organization will require a Release of Information to comply with this request. 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 file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights by sending a letter to 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, calling 1-877-696-6775, or visiting <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/index.html>. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Your Choices.

- 1. 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 or payment for your care. Our organization will require a Release of Information to comply with this request.
- 2. 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.
- 3. In these cases we never share your information unless you give us written permission for marketing, and our organization will never sell your protected health information.**
- 4. In the case of fundraising:** We may contact you for fundraising efforts for the center, but you can tell us not to contact you again. All electronic communication will have an opt-out section. If we have your substance use disorder patient records, subject to 42 CFR part 2, we will give you clear and obvious notice in advance and a choice about whether to receive fundraising communications that use your Part 2 information.

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:

- 1. Treat you** We can use your health information and share it with other professionals who are treating you. As mental health providers, our organization will work with your emergency contacts and/or law enforcement if we deem you to be at risk to yourself or others without a Release of Information.
- 2. Run our organization** We can use and share your health information to run our practice, improve your care, and contact you when necessary.
- 3. Bill for your services** We can use and share your health information to bill and get payment from your health plans or other entities that pay for your services.
- 4. Do research** We can use or share your information for health research. 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. In all cases, including those listed below, if we have substance use disorder patient

records about you, subject to 42 CFR part 2, we cannot use or share information in those records in civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative investigations or proceedings against you without (1) your consent or (2) a court order and a subpoena.

5. **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. *Pastoral Institute, Inc. Effective March 15, 2026*
6. **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, and for special government functions such as military, national security, and presidential protective services
7. **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.

Our Responsibilities

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 in this notice 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 contact our **HIPAA Compliance Officer Debra Love at 706-649-6500** or see: www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/noticepp.html.

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 website.