



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.

Introduction

At LifeSkills, we are committed to treating and using protected health information about you responsibly. This Notice of Health Information Practices describes the personal information we collect, and how and when we use or disclose that information. It also describes your rights as they relate to your protected health information. This Notice is effective April 14, 2003 and applies to all protected health information as defined by federal regulations.

Understanding Your Health Record/Information

Each time you receive a service from LifeSkills, a record of your service is made. Typically, this record contains your symptoms, content of sessions, examination and test results, mental health history, diagnoses, treatment, and a plan for future care or treatment. This information, often referred to as your health or medical record, serves as a:

- Basis for planning your care and treatment,
- Means of communication among the various staff who contribute to your care,
- Legal document describing the care you received,
- Means by which you or a third-party payer can verify that services billed were actually provided,
- A tool in educating health professionals,
- A source of data for research,
- A source of information for government oversight agencies charged with monitoring and improving health care in the state,
- A source of data for internal planning and quality improvement

Understanding what is in your record and how your health information is used helps you to: ensure its accuracy, better understand who, what, when, where, and why others may access your health information, and make more informed decisions when authorizing disclosure to others.

Your Health Information Rights

Although your health record is the physical property of LifeSkills, the information belongs to you. You have a right to:

- Obtain a paper copy of this notice of information practices upon request
- Inspect your health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.524 (you are entitled to one free copy of your medical record; a nominal copying fee will be charged for subsequent copies),
- Request amendment to your health record as provided for in 45 CFR 164.528,
- Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your health information for purposes other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations as provided in 45 CFR 164.528,
- Request communications of your health information by alternative means or at alternative locations,
- Request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your information as provided by 45 CFR 164.522. [NOTE: While you have the right to request such restrictions, LifeSkills is not required by law to grant such restrictions]
- Revoke your authorization to use or disclose health information except to the extent that action has already been taken.

Our Responsibilities

LifeSkills is required to:

- Maintain the privacy of your health information,
- Provide you with this notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to information we collect and maintain about you,
- Abide by the terms of this notice,
- Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction,
- Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- Get your written authorization to disclose information for purposes other than treatment, payment or health care operations.

We reserve the right to change our practices at any time and to make the new provisions effective for all protected health information we maintain. You may request an updated copy of these information use policies at any time. Current copies of this privacy notice will always be posted conspicuously in all of our service locations.

We will not use or disclose your health information without your authorization, except as described in this notice or as otherwise allowable or required by law.

For More Information or to Report a Problem

If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact LifeSkills' Privacy Officer, Jami Hughes at 270-901-5000 Extension 1316.

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Privacy Officer, or with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint with either the Privacy Officer or the Office for Civil Rights. The address for the OCR is listed below:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C., 20201

Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations

We will use your health information for treatment.

For example: Information obtained by a staff member involved in your treatment will be recorded in your record and used to determine the course of treatment that should work best for you. Information from your record, both written and oral will be shared among LifeSkills team members who are directly involved in your treatment.

We will use your health information for payment.

For example: A bill may be sent to you or a third-party payer. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, and services provided. Only the minimum amount of information necessary to obtain payment will be sent.

We will use your health information for regular health operations.

For example: Members of LifeSkills' staff who are not directly involved in your treatment may use information in your health record to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare and service we provide.

Business Associates: There are some services provided in, or on behalf of, our organization through contacts with business associates. Examples include auditors, attorneys, and subcontractors. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do. To protect your health information, however, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

Research. We may disclose information to researchers when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

Marketing. We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits that may be of interest to you.

Workers compensation: We may disclose health information to the extent authorized by and to the extent necessary to comply with laws relating to workers compensation or other similar programs established by law.

Public health: As required by law, we may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

Law enforcement: We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes as required by law or in response to a valid subpoena or court order.