



# NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF GREATER TARRANT COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS PROGRAM

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

Your health record contains personal information about you and your health. This information, which may identify you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services, is referred to as Protected Health Information (“PHI”). This Notice of Privacy Practices describes how I may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law. It also describes your rights regarding how you may gain access to and control your PHI.

Communities in Schools of Greater Tarrant County (CIS) is required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with notice of the legal duties and privacy practices with respect to PHI. We are required to abide by the terms of this Notice of Privacy Practices. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices at any time. Any new Notice of Privacy Practices will be effective for all PHI that we maintain at that time. We will provide you with a copy of any revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting a copy on the CIS website, sending a copy to you in the mail or email upon request, or providing one to you at your next appointment.

### **HOW I MAY USE AND DISCLOSE HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU:**

*For Treatment.* Your PHI may be used and disclosed by those who are involved in your care for the purpose of providing, coordinating, or managing your health care treatment and related services. This includes consultation with clinical supervisors or other treatment team members. We have the right to disclose your PHI to any other consultant but only with your authorization.

*For Health Care Operations.* We may use or disclose, as needed, your PHI in order to support our business activities including, but not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, reminding you of appointments, to provide information about treatment alternatives or other health related benefits and services, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. In addition, CIS may share your PHI with third parties that perform various business activities (e.g., billing or typing services) provided we have a written contract with the business that requires it to safeguard the privacy of your PHI. For training or teaching purposes PHI will be disclosed only with your authorization.

*Required by Law.* Under the law, we must make disclosures of your PHI to you upon your request. In addition, we must make disclosures to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of investigating or determining my compliance with the requirements of the Privacy Rule.

Following is a list of the categories of uses and disclosures permitted by HIPAA without an authorization.

Abuse and Neglect	Judicial and Administrative Proceedings
Emergencies	Law Enforcement
National Security	Public Safety (Duty to Warn)

*Without Authorization.* Applicable law and ethical standards permit me to disclose information about you without your authorization only in a limited number of other situations. The types of uses and disclosures that may be made without your authorization are those that are:

- Required by law, such as the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect or mandatory government agency audits or investigations (such as the social work licensing board or health department)
- Required by Court Order
- Necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public. If information is disclosed to prevent or lessen a serious threat, it will be disclosed to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat.

*Verbal Permission.* CIS may use or disclose your information to family members that are directly involved in your treatment with your verbal permission which will be noted in your file once given.

*With Authorization.* Uses and disclosures not specifically permitted by applicable law, as well as the use and disclosure of psychotherapy notes, will be made only with your written authorization, which may be revoked.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI**

You have the following rights regarding your personal PHI maintained by our office. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing to the CIS Privacy Officer, Kaitlin Tollison, LCSW, at 5601 Bridge Street, Suite 501, Fort Worth, Texas, 76112.

- **Right of Access to Inspect and Copy.** You have the right, which may be restricted only in exceptional circumstances, to inspect and copy PHI that may be used to make decisions about your care. Your right to inspect and copy PHI will be restricted only in those situations where there is compelling evidence that access would cause serious harm to you. The law provides that a reasonable charge may be assessed as a cost-based fee for copies of your PHI.

- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that the PHI I have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask me to amend the information, although I am not required to agree to the amendment.

- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to request an accounting of certain of the disclosures that are made of your PHI.

- **Right to Request Restrictions.** You have the right to request a restriction or limitation on the use or disclosure of your PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations. I am not required to agree to your request unless the request is to restrict disclosure of PHI to a health plan for purposes of carrying out payment or health care operations, and the PHI pertains to a health care item or service that you paid for out of pocket. In that case, CIS is required to honor your request for a restriction.

- **Right to Request Confidential Communication.** You have the right to request that we communicate with you about medical matters in a certain way or at a certain location.

- **Breach Notification.** If there is a breach of unsecured protected health information concerning you, we may be required to notify you of this breach, including what happened and what you can do to protect yourself. You authorize Communities In Schools of Greater Tarrant County to provide notice to me by telephone or verbally in the event of a breach of my protected health information (PHI)

- **Request for Non-Disclosure of PHI for Services Paid Out-of-Pocket.** Clients who pay for services out-of-pocket have the right to request that Communities In Schools of Greater Tarrant County not disclose PHI to the client's health insurance provider concerning those services.

- **Right to a Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a copy of this notice.

## **COMPLAINTS**

If you believe someone, including CIS, has violated your privacy rights, you have the right to file a complaint in writing with Kaitlin Tollison, LCSW, our Privacy Officer, at 5601 Bridge Street, Suite 501, Fort Worth, Texas, 76112, or with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201, or by calling (202) 619-0257. The law prohibits any **retaliation against you for filing a complaint.**

The effective date of this Notice is January 31, 2020