

Guadalupe “Lupe” Garcia, LPC, NCC
Garcia Counseling, PLLC

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES (NPP) – BRIEF VERSION

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.

Our commitment to your privacy:

Our practice is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your personal health information as part of providing professional care. We also are required by law to keep your information private. These laws are complicated, but we must give you this important information. This information is a shorter version of the full, legally required NPP which is available upon your request and contains more information regarding your protected health information. Please talk to your Privacy Officer (see the end of this pamphlet) about any questions or problems.

We will use the information about your health which we get from you or from others mainly to provide you with treatment, to arrange payment for our services, and for some other business activities which are called, in the law, health care operations. After you have read this NPP we will ask you to sign a Consent Form to let us use and share your information. If you do not consent and sign this form, we cannot treat you.

If we or you want to use or disclose (send, share, release) your information for any other purposes we will discuss this with you and ask you to sign an Authorization form to allow this.

Of course we will keep your health information private but there are some times when the laws require us to use or share it. For example:

1. When there is a serious threat to your health and safety or the health and safety of another individual or the public. We will only share information with a person or organization that is able to help prevent or reduce the threat.
2. Some lawsuits and legal or court proceedings.
3. If a law enforcement official requires to do so.
4. For Workers Compensation and similar benefit programs.

There are some other situations like these but which don't happen very often. They are described in the longer version of the NPP.

Your rights regarding your health information

1. You can ask us to communicate with you about your health and related issues in a particular way or at a certain place which is more private for you. For example, you can ask us to call you at home and not at work to schedule or cancel an appointment. We will try our best to do as you ask.
2. You have the right to ask us to limit what we tell people involved in your care or the payment for your care, such as family members and friends. While we don't have to agree to your request, if we do agree, we will keep our agreement except if it is against the law, or in an emergency, or when the information is necessary to treat you.
3. You have the right to look at the health information we have about you such as your medical and billing records. You can even get a copy of these records but we may charge you. We will provide one accounting a year for free, but will charge a reasonable, cost-based fee if you ask for another within 12 months. Contact your Privacy Officer to arrange how to see your records. See below.
4. If you believe the information in your records is incorrect or missing important information, you can ask us to make some kinds of changes (called amending) to your health information. You have to make this request in writing and send it to your Privacy Officer. You must tell us the reasons you want to make the changes.
5. You have the right to a copy of this notice. If we change this NPP we will post the new version in our waiting area and you can always get a copy of the NPP from your Privacy Officer.
6. You have the right to file a complaint if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You can file a complaint with your Privacy Officer Guadalupe Garcia, LPC, NCC at 2217 Park Avenue, Pearland, TX 77581. All complaints to our Privacy Officer must be in writing. You can also file a complaint with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights at 200 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201, or by calling 1-877-696-6775 or by visiting www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/complaints/. Filing a complaint will not change the health care we provide to you in any way.

If you have any questions regarding this notice or our health information privacy policies, please contact your Privacy Officer who is Guadalupe Garcia, LPC, NCC and can be reached by phone at 281-997-8400.

All privacy and security questions, requests, and concerns should be directed to me, Guadalupe Garcia, and I will be responsible for handling them.