



Grounds for Therapy

HIPAA Policy

Effective Date: 7/13/2024

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines to ensure compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Florida state laws regarding the protection of patient health information (PHI) in the context of mental health counseling.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and associates of Grounds for Therapy LLC who have access to PHI.

Policy

1. Definitions

- **Protected Health Information (PHI):** Any information, including demographic data, that relates to the individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition, the provision of health care to the individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe it can be used to identify the individual.
- **Covered Entity:** Health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers who transmit any health information in electronic form in connection with a HIPAA transaction.

2. Privacy Practices

- **Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP):** Grounds for Therapy LLC will provide all clients with a Notice of Privacy Practices at the first point of contact, which explains how their PHI will be used and disclosed, and their rights regarding their PHI.
- **Client Consent:** Prior to the use or disclosure of PHI for treatment, payment, or health care operations, Grounds for Therapy LLC will obtain the client's written consent.

3. Use and Disclosure of PHI

- **Permitted Uses and Disclosures:** PHI may be used and disclosed for treatment, payment, and health care operations without additional authorization from the client.
- **Authorization Required:** Any use or disclosure of PHI not covered by the NPP will require a specific, written authorization from the client.
- **Minimum Necessary Standard:** Employees will make reasonable efforts to ensure that only the minimum necessary PHI is used or disclosed to accomplish the intended purpose.

4. Client Rights

- **Access to PHI:** Clients have the right to inspect and obtain a copy of their PHI, subject to certain exceptions.
- **Amendments:** Clients have the right to request an amendment to their PHI if they believe it is incorrect or incomplete.
- **Accounting of Disclosures:** Clients have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures of their PHI made by Grounds for Therapy LLC.
- **Restrictions:** Clients may request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of their PHI.

5. Safeguards

- **Administrative Safeguards:** Grounds for Therapy LLC will implement policies and procedures to manage the selection, development, implementation, and maintenance of security measures to protect PHI.
- **Physical Safeguards:** Physical measures will be taken to protect the electronic information systems and related buildings and equipment from natural and environmental hazards and unauthorized intrusion.
- **Technical Safeguards:** Grounds for Therapy LLC will implement technology and policies to protect electronic PHI and control access to it.

6. Training and Awareness

- **Employee Training:** All employees, contractors, and associates of Grounds for Therapy LLC will receive training on HIPAA policies and procedures as part of their orientation and on an ongoing basis.

7. Breach Notification

- **Breach Identification:** Grounds for Therapy LLC will identify and respond to breaches of unsecured PHI in accordance with HIPAA regulations.
- ****Notification Requirements:**** In the event of a breach, affected individuals will be notified without unreasonable delay, but no later than 60 days following the discovery of the breach.

8. Sanctions

- **Disciplinary Actions:** Employees who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

9. Complaints

- **Filing Complaints:** Clients may file complaints regarding the use or disclosure of their PHI or other HIPAA rights with Grounds for Therapy LLC or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **Non-Retaliation:** Clients will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint.

10. Policy Review and Updates

Annual Review: This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to comply with changes in laws and regulations.

Contact Information

For questions about this policy or the NPP, please contact:

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