



Steamboat Springs Therapy LLC

**William Hambleton Bishop**  
**LPC, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor**  
SteamboatSpringsTherapist@gmail.com  
(303) 718 7292  
[www.SteamboatSpringsTherapy.com](http://www.SteamboatSpringsTherapy.com)

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that is designed to protect the privacy of patient information, provide for the electronic and physical security of health and patient medical information, and simplify billing and other electronic transactions by standardizing codes and procedures. A piece of this law recently took effect and is known as the HIPAA Privacy Rule. The HIPAA Privacy Rule creates a minimum federal standard for the use and disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) by health care organizations. One of the requirements of the Privacy Rule is that we give to you a **Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP)** which describes your rights and protections regarding your health care records (PHI).

### **Notice of Privacy Practices**

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH 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 about you that may identify you and that 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 we may use and disclose your PHI in accordance with applicable law and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. It also describes your rights regarding how you may gain access to and control your PHI.

We are required by law to maintain the privacy of PHI and to provide you with notice of our 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 the revised Notice of Privacy Practices by sending a copy to you in the mail upon request or providing one to you at your next appointment.

#### **HOW WE 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 may disclose PHI to any other consultant only with your authorization.

**For Payment:** We may use and disclose PHI so that we can receive payment for the treatment services provided to you. This will only be done with your authorization. Examples of payment-related activities are: making a determination of eligibility or coverage for insurance benefits, processing claims with your insurance company,



reviewing services provided to you to determine medical necessity, or undertaking utilization review activities. If it becomes necessary to use collection processes due to lack of payment for services, we will only disclose the minimum amount of PHI necessary for purposes of collection.

**For Healthcare 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, case management, employee review activities, licensing, and conducting or arranging for other business activities. For example, we 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.

**Your Authorization:** Under the law, we must make disclosures of your PHI to you upon your request. You may give us written authorization to use your health information or to disclose it to anyone for any purpose. If you give us an authorization, you may revoke it in writing at any time. Your revocation will not affect any use of disclosures permitted by your authorization while it is in effect. Unless you give us a written authorization, we cannot use or disclose your PHI for any reason except those described in this Notice.

**To Your Family and Friends:** We must disclose your PHI to you. We may disclose your PHI to a family member, friend, or other person to the extent necessary to help with your healthcare or with payment for your healthcare, but only if you agree that we may do so.

**Verbal Permission:** We may use or disclose your information to family members that are directly involved in your treatment with your verbal permission.

**Persons Involved in Care:** We may use or disclose PHI to notify, or assist in the notification of (including identifying or locating) a family member, your personal representative or another person responsible for your care, of your location, your general condition, or death. IF you are present, then prior to use of disclosure of your PHI, we will provide you with an opportunity to object to such uses or disclosures. In the event of your incapacity or emergency circumstances, we will disclose health information based on a determination using our professional judgment disclosing only PHI that is directly relevant to the person's involvement in your healthcare.

**Marketing Health-Related Services:** We will not use your health information for marketing communications without your written consent.

**Required by Law:** We may use or disclose your health information when we are required to do so by law.

**Abuse or Neglect:** We may disclose your PHI to appropriate authorities if we reasonably believe that you are a possible victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence or the possible victim of other crimes. We may disclose your health information to the extent necessary to avert a serious threat to your health or safety or the health or safety of others.

**National Security:** We may disclose to military authorities the health information of Armed Forces personnel under certain circumstances. We may disclose to authorized federal officials health information required for lawful intelligence, counterintelligence, and other national security activities. We may disclose to correctional institution or law enforcement official having lawful custody of protected health information of inmate or client under certain circumstances.

**Appointment Reminders:** We may use or disclose your PHI to provide you with appointment reminders (such as voicemail messages).

**Without Authorization:** Applicable law and ethical standards permit us 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 child abuse or neglect or mandatory government agency audits or investigations (such as the social work licensing board or the 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.

## **YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING YOUR PHI**

You have the following rights regarding PHI we maintain about you. To exercise any of these rights, please submit your request in writing William Hambleton Bishop, MA:

- **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. We may charge a reasonable, cost-based fee for copies. If access is denied, you or your personal representative will be provided with a written denial, setting forth the basis for the denial, a description of how you may appeal the decision and a description of how you may complain to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Right to Amend.** If you feel that the PHI we have about you is incorrect or incomplete, you may ask us to amend the information although we are not required to agree to the amendment.
- **Right to an Accounting of Disclosures.** You have the right to receive a list of instances in which we disclosed your health information for purposes other than treatment, payment, healthcare operations and certain other activities. If you request this accounting more than once in a 12-month period, we may charge you a reasonable, cost-based fee for responding to these additional requests.
- **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. We are not required to agree to your request.
- **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.
- **Right to a Copy of this Notice.** You have the right to a copy of this notice.

## **QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS**

If you want more information about our privacy practices or have questions or concerns, please contact us.

If you are concerned that we may have violated your privacy rights, or you disagree with a decision we made about access to your health information or in response to a request you made to amend or restrict the use of disclosure of your health information or to have us communicate with you by alternative means or at alternative locations, you may complain to us using the contact information listed at the end of this Notice. You also may file a complaint in writing with the Secretary of Health and Human Services at 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201 or by calling (202) 619-0257. **We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.**

**The effective date of this Notice is April 14, 2003.**

*Contact information:*

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