

NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES

Walter B. Jones Center

THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW HEALTH INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION

PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY

Responsibilities of Walter B. Jones Center:

Walter B. Jones Center is required by state and federal law to protect the privacy of your health information that may identify you. This health information includes mental health, developmental disability and/or substance abuse services that are provided to you, payment for those health care services, or other health care operations provided on your behalf.

This agency is required by law to inform you of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to your health information through this *Notice of Privacy Practices*. This *Notice* describes the ways we may share your past, present and future health information, ensuring that we use and/or disclose this information only as we have described in this *Notice*. We do, however, reserve the right to change our privacy practices and the terms of this *Notice*, and to make the new *Notice* provisions effective for all health information we maintain. Any changes to this *Notice* will be posted in our agency offices. Copies of any revised *Notices* will be available to you upon request.

If at any time, you have questions or concerns about the information in this *Notice* or about our agency's privacy policies, procedures and practices, you may contact our agency Privacy Officer at 252-830-3426.

Use and Disclosure of Health Information Without Your Authorization

Treatment

Walter B. Jones Center may use your health information, as needed, in order to provide, coordinate or manage your health care and related services. This includes sharing your health information with other health care providers within this agency.

Example: Your treatment/habilitation team, composed of staff such as doctors, nurses, and social workers will need to review your treatment and discuss plans for your discharge. We will disclose your health information outside of this agency only with your consent or when otherwise allowed under state or federal law. If you request treatment and rehabilitation for drug dependence, your request will be treated as confidential. We will not refer you to another person for treatment and rehabilitation without your authorization.

Example: We may share your health information with a health care provider for emergency services.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

The treatment provided to you will be shared with our agency's billing department so a bill can be prepared for services rendered. We may also share your health information with agency staff who review services provided to you to make certain you have received appropriate care and treatment. We will not disclose your health information outside of this agency for billing purposes (i.e., bill your insurance company) without your consent.

Example: Our billing department will collect insurance and other financial information for you at the time of admission.

HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

Walter B. Jones Center may use or disclose your health information in performing a variety of business activities that we call "health care operations". Some examples of how we may use or disclose your health information for health care operations are:

- Review the care you receive here and evaluate the performance of your treatment/habilitation team to ensure you have received quality care
- Review and evaluate the skills, qualifications and performance of health care providers who are taking care of you.
- Provide training programs for agency staff, students and volunteers.
- Cooperate with outside organizations that review and determine the quality of care you receive
- Provide information to professional organizations that evaluate, certify or license health care providers, staff or facilities
- Allow our agency attorney to use your health information when representing this agency in legal matters.
- Resolve grievances within our agency.
- Provide information to your internal patient advocate who is available to represent your interests upon your request.
- Monitor activities in hallways and outside buildings via camera/video for safety.
- As deemed appropriate by medical staff, patients will be accompanied to off site appointments by assigned staff. The assigned staff may remain with the patient for the duration of the appointment.

Other Circumstances

Walter B. Jones Center may disclose your health information for those circumstances that have been determined to be so important that your authorization may not be required. Prior to disclosing your health information, we will evaluate each request to ensure that only necessary information will be disclosed. Those circumstances include disclosures that are:

- Required by law;
 - For public health activities. For example, we may disclose health information to public health authorities if you have a communicable disease and we have reason to believe, based upon information provided to us, that there is a public health risk

such as evidence of your noncompliance with your treatment plan. If you suffer from a communicable disease such as tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS, information about your disease will be treated as confidential. Walter B. Jones Center will not release any information about your communicable disease except as required to protect public health or the spread of a disease, or at the request of the State or Local Health Director;

- Regarding suspected child abuse or neglect;
- For health oversight activities such as Joint Commission and CMS Accreditation
- For Audit and evaluation. To conduct outcome studies, utilizing the North Carolina Treatment Outcomes and Program Performance System (NC TOPPS) tool, for monitoring and planning for improved patient services.
- To communicate with law enforcement personnel about a crime or threatened crime on the premises of this agency or against program personnel.
- Walter B. Jones Center will not disclose your name to any police officer or other law-enforcement officer unless you authorize such disclosure.
- For court proceedings such as court orders to appear in court;
- To avert a serious threat to the health or safety of a person or the public;
- Related to specialized government activities such as national security;
- To correctional institutions or other law enforcement officials when you are in their custody; and,
- To participate in medical research an Authorization for Release of Private Health Information (PHI) is required

Disclosure of Your Health Information That Allows You An Opportunity to Object

There are certain circumstances where we may disclose your health information and you have an opportunity to object. Such circumstances include:

- Disclosure to public or private agencies providing disaster relief.
- Patient is incapacitated and unable to give consent.

Example: We may share your health information with the American Red Cross following a major disaster such as a flood.

If you would like to object to our disclosure about your health information in an emergency situation such as those examples listed above, please contact our agency Privacy Officer, or designee, listed in this *Notice* for consideration of your objection.

Disclosure of Your Health Information That Requires Your Authorization

Walter B. Jones Center will not disclose your health information without your authorization except as allowed or required by state or federal law. For all other disclosures, we will ask you to sign a written authorization that allows us to share or request your health information. Before you sign an authorization, you will be fully informed of the exact information you are authorizing to be disclosed/requested and to/from whom the information will be disclosed/requested.

You may request that your authorization be revoked by informing our agency Privacy Officer, or designee, that you do not want any additional health information about you exchanged with a particular person/agency. You will be asked to sign and date the Authorization Revocation section of your original authorization. Your authorization will then be considered invalid at that point in time; however, any actions that were taken on the authorization prior to the time you revoked your authorization are legal and binding.

Walter B. Jones Center does not conduct fundraising or marketing efforts.

Your Rights Regarding Your Health Information

You have the following rights regarding your health information as created and maintained by this agency.

Right to receive a copy of this *Notice*

You have the right to receive a copy of Walter B. Jones Center's *Notice of Privacy Practices*. At your first treatment encounter with this agency, you will be given a copy of this *Notice* and asked to sign an acknowledgment that you have received it. In the event of emergency services, you will be provided the *Notice* as soon as possible after emergency services have been provided.

In addition, copies of this *Notice* have been posted in several public areas throughout this agency. You have the right to request a paper copy of this *Notice* at any time from our agency Admissions Officer or our agency Privacy Officer, or designee.

Right to request different ways to communicate with you

You have the right to request to be contacted at a different location or by a different method. For example, you may request all written information from this agency by sent to your work address rather than your home address. We will agree with your request as long as it is reasonable to do so; however, your request must be made in writing and forwarded to our agency Privacy Officer, or designee.

Right to request to see and copy your health information

Whether you are an incompetent adult or competent adult contained in the designated record set, you have the right to request to see and receive a copy of your health information that is used to make decisions about you. Your request must be in writing and forwarded to our agency Privacy Officer, or designee. You can expect a response to your request within 30 days. If your request is approved, you may be charged a fee to cover the cost of the copy.

Instead of providing you with a full copy of your health information record, we may give you a summary or explanation of your health information, if you agree in advance to that format and to the cost of preparing such information.

Your request may be denied by your physician or a professional designated by our agency director under certain circumstances. If we do deny your request, we will explain our reason for doing so in writing and describe any rights you may have to request a review of our denial. In addition, you have the right to contact our Privacy Officer, or designee, to request a copy of your health information be sent to a physician or psychologist of your choice.

Whenever you have a personal representative who consented to your treatment, the personal representative has the same rights to request to see and copy your health information.

Right to request amendment of your health information

You have the right to request changes in your health information contained in the designated record sets used to make decisions about you. If you believe that we have information that is either inaccurate or incomplete, you may submit a request in writing to our agency Privacy Officer, or designee, and explain your reasons for the amendment. We must respond to your request within 30 days of receiving your request. If we accept your request to change your health information, we will add your amendment but will not destroy the original record. In addition, we will make reasonable efforts to inform others of the changes, including persons you name who have received your health information and who need the changes.

We may deny your request if:

- The information was not created by this agency (unless you prove the creator of the information is not longer available to change the information);
- The information is not part of the records used to make decisions about you;
- We believe the information is correct and complete; or
- Your request for access to the information is denied.

If we deny your request to change your health information, we will explain to you in writing the reasons for denial and describe your rights to give us a written statement disagreeing with the denial. If you provide a written statement, the statement will become a permanent part of your record. Whenever disclosures are made of the information in question, your written statement will be disclosed as well.

Right to request a listing of disclosures we have made

You have a right to a written list of disclosures of your health information. The list will be maintained for at least six years for any disclosures made after April 14, 2003. This listing will include the date of the disclosures, the name (and address, if available) of the person or organization receiving the information, a brief description of the information disclosed and the purpose of the disclosure.

This agency is not required to include the following on the Disclosure Log:

- Disclosure for your treatment;
- Disclosure for billing and collection of payment for your treatment;
- Disclosures related to our health care operations;
- Disclosures that you authorized;
- Disclosures when you are in the custody of local law enforcement; or
- Disclosures made to individuals involved in your care

Your first request for a listing of disclosures will be provided to you free of charge. However, if you request a listing of disclosures more than once in a 12 month period, you shall be charged a customary fee. We will inform you of the cost involved and you may choose to withdraw or modify your request at that time, before any costs are incurred.

Right to request restrictions on uses and disclosures of your health information

You have the right to request that we limit our use and disclosure of your health information for treatment, payment and health care operations. You also have the right to request a limit on the health information we disclose about you to your next of kin or someone who is involved in your care. (Example: you should ask that we not disclose information about your family history of heart disease.) We will provide you with a form to document your request.

We will make every attempt to honor your request but are not **required** to agree to such a request. However, if we do agree, we must follow the agreed upon restriction (unless the information is necessary for emergency treatment or unless it is a disclosure to the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services).

You may cancel the restrictions at any time and we will ask that your request be in writing. In addition, this agency may cancel a restriction at any time, as long as we notify you of the cancellation.

Violations/Complaints

Violation of the Federal law and regulations relative to a substance abuse program is a crime. Suspected violations may be reported to our agency Privacy Officer, or designee, who will report the violation to appropriate authorities in accordance with Federal regulations.

If you believe we have violated your privacy rights, or if you want to file a complaint regarding our privacy practices, you may contact our agency Privacy Officer, or designee. Contact information is as follows:

Walter B. Jones Center
Privacy Officer
2377 West Fifth Street
Greenville, N. C. 27834
Agency Phone Number: 252-830-3426
Agency Fax Number: 252-830-8585

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services operates an information and referral service located in the Office of Citizen Services, known as **CARE-LINE**, which has been designated to receive and document complaints and concerns regarding your privacy. Contact information is as follows:

CARE-LINE
2012 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-2012
Voice Phone: (English and Spanish):
1-800-661-7030 (Toll Free)
919-733-4261 (Triangle Area and Out of State)
Fax: (919) 715-8174
TTY: 1-877-452-2514 (TTY Dedicated)
(919) 733-4851 (TTY Dedicated for local or out of state calls)
Email: care-line@ncmail.net

You may also send a written complaint to the United States Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. Contact information is as follows:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3B70
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909

Voice Phone: (404) 562-7886
Fax: (404) 562-7881
TDD: (404) 331-2867

If you file a complaint, we will not take any action against you or change the quality of health care services we provide to you in any way.

Legal References

Primary Federal and State laws and regulations that protect the privacy of your health information are listed below.

Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records – 42 U.S.C 290dd-3 and 42 U.S.C. 290cc-3 for Federal laws and 42 CFR Part 2 for Federal regulations.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Administrative Simplification, Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information – 42 U.S.C 1320d-1329d-8 and 42 U.S.C. 1320d-2 (note) for Federal laws and 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 for Federal regulations.

NC General Statutes – Chapter 122C, Article 3 (Client’s Rights and Advance Instruction), Part 1 (Client’s Rights). Chapter 90 (Medicine and Allied Occupations), Article 1 (Practice of Medicine).

NC Administrative Code – 10 NCAC 18 D (Confidentiality Rules).